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TRAITS; VERBAL AGGRESSIVENESS, ARGUMENTATIVENESS, AND
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presented by

Sachiyo Morinaga

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Major professor

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TRAITS; VERBAL AGGRESSIVENESS, ARGUMENTATIVENESS, AND
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By

Sachiyo Morinaga

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION
TRAITS; VERBAL AGGRESSIVENESS, ARGUMENTATIVENESS, AND
ASSERTIVENESS.

By

Sachiyo Morinaga

This study compares aggressive communication traits in

three countries, China, Japan and the United States.

Aggressive communication traits can be distinguished into

two categories; constructive traits (i.e. assertiveness,

argumentativeness) and destructive traits (i.e. hostility,

verbal aggressiveness). This study analyzed tendencies of

these communication traits displayed among participants in

three countries, employing the Argumentativeness Scale

(Infante & Rancer, 1982), the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale

(Infante & Wigley, 1986), and the Assertiveness Scale

(Richmond & McCroskey, 1992). The results indicated

significant interaction effects of country and sex with the

main effects of both on all three communication traits. In

addition, implications and limitations of these findings as

well as suggestions for future research are discussed.

To My Parents;

Teru and Satoshi, Morinaga

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List of Abbreviations

ARGap: argumentativeness approache (the tendency to approach arguments)

ARGav: argumentativeness avoidance (the tendency to avoid arguments)

ARGgt: argumentativeness general (the general trait to be arugmentative)

CFA: confirmatory factor analysis

Df: Degree of freedom

N: Sample Size

Std. Dev.: Standard Deviation

Sig.: Significance level

Chapter 1

Introduction

This study investigates cultural differences in

aggressive communication traits. Aggressive communication

traits can be classified into two kinds: destructive traits

and constructive traits (Infante and Rancer, 1996).

Destructive traits include verbal aggressiveness and

hostility. Constructive traits refer to argumentativeness

and assertiveness. This study examines three of these

traits, verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness and

assertiveness. Three countries (i.e. China, Japan, and the

United States) were chosen for consideration for this study.

Numerous studies have examined communication behaviors

in terms of individual predispositions or traits. Infante,

Rancer, and Womack (1990) described communication traits as

hypothetical constructs that explain "enduring consistencies

and differences in individuals' message-sending and message-

receiving behaviors"(p. 143). Also, according to Martin and

Anderson (1996), "communication traits are subsets of

personality traits concerned with human symbolic behavior"

(p.58). This study investigates whether cultural and sex

differences exist in three communication traits; verbal

aggressiveness, argumentativeness, and assertiveness.

These communication traits were selected for the present study for several reasons. First, they have educational implications, such as training and second language instruction. Argumentativeness and assertiveness are described as elements of communication competence and considered to be desirable communication traits, whereas verbal aggressiveness represents one of the undesirable communication traits (Infante, 1987; McCroskey & Richmond, 1992). The distinction between argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness has been emphasized by many scholars. Argumentativeness often leads to positive outcomes, such as obtaining goals, keeping self-esteem, better understanding, and relational development; whereas verbal aggressiveness often leads to negative outcomes. However, much of the research examining aggressive communication traits that has been conducted in the U. S. might not hold true for people from other cultures. Therefore, in communicating cross-culturally, it is crucial to understand the general communication traits predominantly displayed by people in other cultures.

A second reason for the importance of studying aggressive communication is to understand how people from

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different cultures deal with conflictual situations that often result in arguing. Now that it is increasingly important for most of the countries on the earth to communicate with each other, it is beneficial for us to know what types of communicative traits are displayed in different countries. Folger, Poole, and Stutman (1993) discussed that argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were important predisposional traits that affected the processes and outcomes of interpersonal conflicts (pp.51-51). Therefore, exploration of verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness should provide insight for the study of conflict across cultures.

Chapter 2

Culture Overview

Definitions of Culture

"Culture" connotes large and profound meanings, which

complicates the task of definition. There have been many

attempts to examine culture. Among the prevalent definitions

of culture, intercultural communication has been influenced

mostly by definitions proposed by anthropologists and

psychologists. For example, Clifford Geertz(1973) defined

culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meaning

embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions

expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men

communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about

and attitudes toward life"(p.89). A renowned social

psychologist, Geert Hofstede(1980) defined culture

similarly, when he defined it as the "programming of the

mind" and as the "integrative aggregate of common

characteristics that influence a human group's response to

its environment" (Hofstede, 1980, p.21). In the

communication field, Samover, Porter, and Jain (1994)

defined culture as "the deposit of knowledge, experience,

beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion,

notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving" (p.11).

With this plethora of definitions of culture, all seem to agree on the notion that culture explains shared behaviors, values or assumptions of a specific group of people. Thus, it can be said one of the factors that makes us behave the way we do is this shared assumption of the group or the culture. The cultural literature claims that people in different cultures behave differently because they have divergent beliefs. Several studies show that culture explains the differences of behavior among different cultures. There is ample justification for assuming that an individual's predisposition to act in a predictable way in an argumentative situation may be strongly influenced by culture. Based on this notion, the present study examines whether cultural factors can be one way of explaining communicative traits, verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness, and assertiveness.

Cultural Variability

Many intercultural literatures have the basic assumption that individual's behaviors are affected by

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culture. However, general cultural influence is so vague and difficult to pin down. Efforts to narrow it down and identify cultural variability have been made by several scholars. Hofstede (1980) did very extensive research on cultural variability displayed in the multinational corporation. Hofstede (1980) and other scholars studied organizational behaviors in IBM subsidiaries in 53 countries around the world and identified several dimensions and variables of culture. Many studies have been conducted on the dimensions of cultural variability that Hofstede introduced. These dimensions include Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity-Femininity, and Individualism-Collectivism. Power distance refers to "the extent to which the members of a society accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1983, p. 336). This dimension deals with the perception of equality and power. Uncertainty avoidance is defined as "the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, which leads them to support beliefs promising certainty and to maintain institutions protecting conformity" (Hofstede, 1983, p.336). This dimension deals with how people in a culture react to uncertainty. Masculinity represents "a

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preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material success", while femininity represents "a preference for relationship, modesty, caring for the weak, and the quality of life"(Hofstede, 1983, p. 337). Masculinity and femininity deal with the different values that tend to predominate in a culture. Lastly, Hofstede (1983) described individualism as a "loosely knit social framework in society in which individuals are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only", in contrast with collectivism, which is illustrated as a "tightly knit social framework in which individuals can expect their relatives, clan or other in-group to look after them, in exchange for unquestioning loyalty"(p.337). This dimension deals with the relationships of people in a culture. The present study particularly focuses on Individualism-Collectivism, for this dimension has been actively used for intercultural communication research.

Individualism-Collectivism

Individualism-Collectivism defines the opposing anchor points of a continuum of values along which cultures are arrayed. Individualism-Collectivism is a widely accepted dimension which has been studied both conceptually and empirically (Hofstede, 1980; Hui, 1988; Triandis, 1995;

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Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, Lucca, 1988; Triandis, McCusker, Hui, 1990).

In individualistic cultures, individual goals are emphasized more than group goals. In comparison, in collectivistic cultures, group goals are valued more than goals of individuals. Individualistic cultures tend to focus more on individual initiative and achievement, while collectivistic cultures tend to put emphasis on inclusion and group harmony.

The Individualism-Collectivism dimension can also be illustrated well with the notion of "ingroup". Triandis et al. (1988) defined ingroup as follows, "ingroups are groups of people about whose welfare one is concerned, with whom one is willing to cooperate without demanding equitable returns and separation from whom leads to discomfort or even pain" (p.75). People in individualistic cultures tend to have several ingroups to which they belong to, such as family, social clubs, work places, schools, religious groups and so on, while members of collectivistic cultures tend to belong to fewer general ingroups. Also, ingroups have less influence in individualistic cultures, while they have strong influence on activities in collectivistic cultures. Individualistic cultures tend to be universalistic and apply

the same value standard to all situations, while collectivistic cultures tend to be particularistic and apply different value standards depending on the groups, ingroup and outgroup (Gudykunst & Matsumoto, 1996).

Triandis (1995) further explained Individualism-Collectivism by describing the power relationships that people in each culture have. Triandis (1995) termed these as "vertical culture" and "horizontal culture". In vertical culture people are expected to stand out from others, and tend to see themselves as different from others, while those who are in a horizontal culture tend to see themselves the same as others, valuing conformity to groups and devaluing individual freedom. One good example of this is illustrated by contrasting proverbs from each country. In Japan, a proverb says, "the nail that sticks out will get hammered (Deru Kui Wa Utareru)". This proverb teaches Japanese not to stand out as an individual and instead emphasized the importance of being one of a coordinated member. Also, in Chinese, a proverb says "the roof support beam that sticks out most rots first (Mao Jian De Suen Zi Xian Lau)". This proverb tells the Chinese not to be the first one who stands out or speaks out. By contrast, in the U.S., a proverb says, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease". This proverb teaches

Americans that calling attention to yourself is a good strategy to get some form of rewards.

Earlier on, Hall (1976) identified the difference between high-context communication and low-context communication. Hall (1976) explained high-low context communication as follows. A high context communication or message is one in which "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (p76). On the other hand, a low-context communication or message is one in which the "mass of information is vested in the explicit code" (p. 70).

Several studies revealed the relationship of High-Low Context communication and the Individualism-Collectivism Scale. Gudykunst and Matsumoto (1996) claimed that "high and low context communication are a function of individualism-collectivism" (p.33).

Gudykunst & Matsumoto (1996) argued that both individualism and collectivism coexist in all cultures, but either one tends to predominate. For example, cultures that tend to be individualistic include Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden,

Switzerland, and the United States. Cultures that tend to

be collectivistic include Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt,

Greece, India, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria,

Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Venezuela,

and Vietnam (Gudykunst & Matsumoto, 1996, p. 24).

Cultures selected

In this study, three countries, the People's Republic

of China, Japan, and the United States were chosen for

consideration, because they contrast greatly in their

communication behavior. These three countries differ in

several cultural dimensions, such as collectivism-

individualism (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis et al., 1988), and

high-low context communication (Hall, 1976). Furthermore,

the United States is considered as representative of

individualism, while China and Japan are considered as

representative of collectivism.

According to the scores displayed by Gudykunst and

Ting-Toomey (1988), Japan scored 46 on individualism and can

be considered as a high-context communication culture. The

United States scored 91 on individualism scale and can be

considered as a low-context communication culture.

Unfortunately, because of the political condition with the

People's Republic of China, they did not have scores of

China. They, however, presented scores for Taiwan, Hong

Kong, and Singapore. All three cultures showed very low

individualism scores; Taiwan scored 17, Hong Kong scored 25,

and Singapore scored 20 on individualism scale. Even though

these three countries have many Chinese immigrants and share

the same historical background, it might be problematic for

us to assume that these three countries would display

similar orientation to individualism.

Several studies have examined whether Individualism-

Collectivism is a function of divergent communication

behaviors. For example, Kim (1994) confirmed that people

from collectivistic cultures are more concerned about

hurting others and making requests from others, while people

from individualistic cultures are concerned more about

speaking clearly in conversation. Also, Kim and Wilson

(1994) observed that people in individualistic cultures tend

to regard clarity as the essential element of effective

communication in comparison to people from collectivistic

cultures.

Overall, culture seems to reinforce different values

in different cultures, and accordingly makes people behave

different ways. Because collectivistic cultures reinforce

concern for group harmony, while individualistic cultures

reinforce concern for individual goals, the divergent

attitudes and communication behaviors will predictably be

displayed in an arguing situation. Therefore, this study

attempts to compare the differences in aggressive

communication traits of individuals from an individualistic

country (i.e. the U.S.) with collectivistic countries (i.e.

Japan and China).

Chapter 3

Aggressive Communication

Infante and Rancer (1996) claimed that "aggression can be good or bad or both good and bad" and distinguished aggressive communication traits and divided into two categories; constructive aggression and destructive aggression (p.322). The constructive traits include assertiveness and argumentativeness, while destructive communication traits include verbal aggressiveness and hostility.

Argumentativeness and assertiveness are seen as constructive communication traits. According to Infante and Rancer (1996), assertiveness is the more global trait and argumentativeness is "a subset of assertiveness because all argument is assertive, but not all assertiveness involves argument" (p.322). A more formal definition of each trait will be provided later in this text, but in general, the reader should be aware that assertiveness deals with being forthright about your needs and worth, while argumentativeness deals with offering reasons to support your position.

Conversely, verbal aggressiveness and hostility are

considered as destructive traits of aggressive communication and are viewed "as a subset of a more global trait, in this case, hostility", because "all verbal aggression is hostile, but not all hostility involves verbal aggression" (Infante & Rancer, 1996. P.323). Hostility is the general mode of being hostile to others, while verbal aggressiveness entails personal attacks on others verbally.

The distinction between constructive aggression and destructive aggression has been often emphasized, especially, verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness both conceptually (Infante & Rancer, 1996; Infante, Rancer,& Womack, 1993) and empirically (Infante & Rancer, 1982; Infante & Wigley, 1986). This distinction is important also because argumentativeness often leads to positive outcomes, such as obtaining goals, retaining self-esteem, better understanding and relational development, while verbal aggressiveness often leads to negative outcomes.

Verbal aggressiveness

Verbal aggressiveness refers to one's tendency to derogate another person, or attack the self-esteem of another, while argumentativeness refers to one's tendency to provide logic and reasoning to support one's position on controversial issues. Infante and Wigley (1986) described

verbal aggressiveness as "attacking an individual's self-concept in order to make a person feel less favorably about self" (p.61). Verbal aggressiveness is differentiated from argumentativeness in the focus of the attack; verbal aggressiveness deals with attacking the self-concept of others, while argumentativeness deals with attacking the opinions of others. Several studies support the idea that verbal aggression is a self-concept attack directed toward another's self-concept (Geen & Donnerstein, 1983; Roloff & Greenberg, 1979). Verbally aggressive messages include "character attacks, competence attacks, insults, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, profanity, and nonverbal emblems" (p.61). According to Kinney (1994), three broad domains of self-concept attack are presented; group membership, personal failings, and relational failings. Kinney (1994) also identified four attributions of verbal aggression; psychopathology, disdain, social learning and argumentative skill deficiencies. First, psychopathology causes verbal aggression in that some people try to solve problems by being verbally aggressive with others who they identify their problem. Second, disdain causes verbal aggression when by looking down on others motivates one to be verbally aggressive. Third, social learning can also be

the cause for one's verbal aggression, since the environment can reinforce one to use verbally aggressive messages. Bayer and Cegala (1992) examined the relationships between trait verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness with parenting style. They found that verbal aggression correlates positively with control-hostile parenting style. Fourth, argumentative skill deficiencies, or lack of the ability to argue causes some to be verbally aggressive. Infante et al. (1987) concluded that the verbal aggression is partly a result of a lack of argumentative skill, since they found that a highly argumentative person was the least provoked to appeal to verbal aggression. In addition, frustration, in which one is discouraged or hindered from doing something, was considered as one reason for verbal aggression (Infante, 1987).

Verbal Aggressiveness and Culture. Several cross-cultural studies are available on conflict management and assertiveness, but less on verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness. Harman, Klopf, and Ishii (1990) examined differences in verbal aggressiveness between Japanese and American college students. They found no significant overall differences between Japanese and Americans, Japanese females and American Females, and Japanese males and American males,

but they found a significant difference between males and females collapsing the country factor. Sueda and Wiseman (1992) examined how Americans and Japanese differ in dealing with embarrassment. Sueda and Wiseman (1992) found that Americans used so called, "autonomy-preserving strategies" such as mere presentation of the fact, justification, humor, and aggression significantly more often than Japanese did in dealing with embarrassment. This finding is consistent with the former studies that concluded individuals in low-context cultures tended to use more autonomy-preserving strategies than individuals in high-context cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1988). In a cross-ethnicity study, which was conducted with co-cultural groups in the U.S., Sanders, Gass, Wiseman and Bruschke (1992) examined the three argumentation trait's measures; verbal aggression, argumentativeness and need for cognition. Sanders et al. (1992) found that argumentativeness will correlate positively with a need for cognition, while verbal aggressiveness will correlate negatively with a need for cognition. Sanders et al. (1992) also examined the relationship between an individuals' ethnicity and verbal aggressiveness as well as argumentativeness. They found Asian Americans to be significantly higher on the verbal aggressiveness scale than

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either European Americans or Hispanics, although they found

no significant differences on the argumentativeness scale

among Asian Americans, European Americans and Hispanics,

contrary to other findings that concluded Asian Americans

tended to be more indirect or assertive than Caucasians (Sue

& Sue, 1977; Zane, Sue, Hu and Kwon, 1991). Although there

are some studies that concluded culture explains their

choice of conflict strategies, there is no evidence

supporting that culture explains an individual's trait to be

verbally aggressive. Therefore, the following hypothesis is

posited.

H1: There will be no significant difference in verbal

aggressiveness among three countries; China, Japan, and the

United Status.

<u>Verbal Aggressiveness and Sex.</u> Several studies demonstrate

the sex differences in verbal aggressiveness concluding that

males tend to be more verbally aggressive than females

(Infante et al., 1984; Infante & Wigley, 1986; Nicotera &

Rancer, 1994). Infante (1989) examined whether males and

females responded differently to highly argumentative

others. Infante (1989) observed that males responded with

more verbal aggression when others used verbal aggression,

whereas females became more argumentative. Harman, Klopf,

and Ishii (1990) found significant sex differences in verbal aggressiveness among Japanese and American subjects collapsing the country factor.

Several explanations have been offered to describe the sex differences in verbal aggressiveness. One of the explanations is that males and females differ in their perception of verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness. Nicotera and Rancer (1994) reported significant differences between the sexes on both self-reported and stereotyped perceptions of verbal aggressiveness as well as argumentativeness. Another explanation is that there is sex difference in social expectations. It is said that males are expected to be more aggressive than females (Burgoon & Miller, 1983). Based on these observations, the following hypothesis is warranted.

H2: Males in all three countries can be expected to exhibit more verbal aggressiveness than females counterparts.

Argumentativeness

According to Infante and Rancer (1982), Argumentativeness is defined as "a generally stable trait that predisposes the individual in communication situations to advance positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions that other people take on these

issues" (p. 72). As argued in the verbal aggressiveness section, argumentativeness is differentiated from verbal aggressiveness in that they differ in the focus of attack. Namely, argumentativeness refers to an individual's tendency to argue on controversial issues, while verbal aggressiveness refers to the tendency to attack another person's self-esteem.

Argumentativeness is conceptualized in terms of approach-avoidance, or excitation-inhibition of conflict. The highly argumentative person feels excitement toward argument and has a strong tendency to approach arguments, without feeling inhibition to argue or avoiding arguments. The low argumentative person has a strong tendency to avoid arguments and shows no favorable excitement with strong inhibitions and avoidance tendencies (Infante & Rancer, 1982). Therefore, the general trait to be argumentative (Hereafter abbreviated as ARGgt) is constituted by two factors; tendency to approach argument (Hereafter abbreviated as ARGap) and tendency to avoid arguments (Hereafter abbreviated as ARGav). The general trait for argumentativeness was hypothesized as the difference of sum of ARGap minus ARGav. Hence,

$$ARGgt = ARGap - ARGav.$$

The highly argumentative person is high in an argumentative approach and low in avoidance, while a low argumentative individual would be low in an argumentative approach and high in avoidance. In case the score for approach and avoidance is close in number, a person will have moderate score in general argumentativeness. This person is classified as a moderate, and divided into two types of moderates; conflict feeling moderates and apathetic moderates. Conflict feeling moderates are high on both approach and avoidance. They want to argue, but are reluctant to do so at the same time. Apathetic moderates are low in both approach and avoidance. They do not want to engage in arguments, though they are not intentionally avoiding argument.

However, some evidences suggests that the Argumentativeness Scale is in fact unidimensional (Boster & Lavubnem 1988; Kazoleas, 1993; Roberto & Finucase, 1997). If the Argumantativeness Scale is not actually unidimentional, it is not appropriate for us to substruct those scores. Therefore, the present study conducts analyses for both a unidimensional solution and a multidimensional solution.

Argumentativeness and Culture. Several studies have related Individualism-Collectivism to a conflict style (Ting-Toomey,

1988, 1991; Ting-Toomey, Gao, Trubiskey, Yang, Kim, Lin, & Nishida, 1991). Ting-Toomey and associates consistently found that people in collectivistic cultures tend to use avoidance strategy more often than people in individualistic cultures. Prunty, Klopf, and Ishii (1990a, 1990b) examined differences in argumentativeness between Japanese and American college students. They found that Americans were significantly higher on both tendencies to approach arguments and the general trait to be argumantative. In conflict management, Ohbushi and Takahashi (1994) studied the cross-cultural comparison of conflict style and its motivations for the strategies chosen. They found that Japanese tend to avoid conflict more than Americans and Japanese avoidance was motivated by their perception of shared responsibility and desire to maintain relationships. Similarly, Sueda and Wiseman (1992) found that Americans used so called, "autonomy-preserving strategies" such as mere presentation of facts, justification, humor, and aggression significantly more than Japanese did in dealing with embarrassment. In Japan, having no excuse for one's failure, or being able to surrender is often considered as a virtue, because it often leads us to peaceful interpersonal relationships. Morris et al. (1998) examined conflict

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management style of managers in the U.S., China, Philippines, and India and concluded that Chinese managers rely more on an avoiding style, whereas American managers rely more on a competing style. A review of several studies supported the evidence regarding the differences in argumentative communication traits across cultures. Therefore, following hypothesis is warranted.

H3: There will be significant difference in the argumentativeness scale among three countries; China, Japan, and the United Status, Americans being more argumentative than Japanese and Chinese.

Argumentativeness and Sex. Numerous scholars have found gender differences in argumentativeness (Infante, 1982; Nicotera & Rancer, 1994; Shultz & Anderson, 1984). Infante (1989) examined whether males and females responded differently to highly argumentative others, and observed that females become more argumentative with verbally aggressive others, while males tended to rely more on verbal aggressiveness.

Several explanations have been offered to describe sex differences in argumentativeness. One of the explanations is the perception of sex role in conflictual situations. For example, Nicotera and Rancer (1994) examined how

perceptions of sex role affect argumentative behavior. They
found that there were significant differences between males
and females on both self-reported and stereotyped
perceptions of argumentativeness. Also, Rancer and Dierks-
Stewart (1985) examined both biological and psychological
gender differences in argumentativeness and observed no
differences based on biological sex, but found significant
differences in argumentativeness based on psychological
gender perception. Namely, Individuals who self-reported as
instrumental (masculine) were higher in argumentativeness
than those who identified as expressive (feminine).
Similarly, Rancer and Baukus (1987) explained that gender
differences in argumentativeness are based on individual's
beliefs about arguing. They found that significantly more
females than males believed that arguing was a hostile
behavior used to control or dominate others. Hence, the
following hypothesis is warranted.

H4: Males will be more argumentative than females in all
three countries; Japan, China, and the U. S.

Assertiveness

Alberti and Emmons (1978) conceptualized the
assertiveness as "people acting in their own best interests,
defending their rights without undue anxiety, expressing

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honest feelings comfortably, and exercising their rights without denying others' rights"(p. 2). Similarly, Thompson, Ishii, and Klopf (1990) defined assertiveness as "an individual's ability to make requests, actively disagree, express positive or negative personal rights and feelings, initiate, maintain, or disengage from conversations, and stand up for one's own self without attacking others"(p.829). Assertiveness also should be differentiated from aggression such as verbal aggressive behavior in that it is constructive in nature. Assertiveness refers to maintaining your own rights, stands without inflicting any pain on others, whereas "aggressive people express their feelings, needs, and ideas at the expense of others"(Thompson, Klopf, & Ishii, 1991, p.166).

Assertiveness and Culture. Several studies have examined differences in assertiveness between Americans and Japanese. Various studies have indicated that Americans are more assertive and direct than Japanese (Barnland, 1975; Barnland & Araki, 1985; Nomura & Barnland, 1983; Thompson, Klopf, & Ishii, 1990). In collectivistic cultures, group harmony is valued and conformity to the group or opinion of others is much more respected than in individualistic cultures. Therefore, assertiveness is not seen as a positive behavior.

Also, in the context of social conflict, Japanese have shown more preference for the use of less assertive, mitigating tactics (Obuchi & Takahashi. 1994), and also mitigating accounts, such as apologies or excuses and less assertive accounts, such as justifications or denial (Itoi, Ohibushi, and Fukuno, 1996). Sueda and Wiseman (1992) found that when dealing with embarrassment, Americans used strategies such as justification, presentation of the facts and aggression more than Japanese. This finding is consistent with the study by Ting-Toomey (1988) that concluded individuals in low-context cultures tend to use more autonomy-preserving strategies than individuals in high-context cultures. Nomura and Barnland (1983) compared the interpersonal criticism between Americans and Japanese. They found that Japanese tend to remain silent, tell their remarks to a third person, use nonverbal signs of rejection more often than Americans did. Burnland and Araki (1985) found that Japanese prefer to use nonverbal strategies to express a compliment. Overall, the Japanese preference toward an ambiguous way of communication is supported.

Several cross-ethnicity studies in the U.S., however, indicated conflicting conclusions that Asian Americans tend to be less assertive than Caucasians on their self-report

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measure of assertiveness (Sue & Sue, 1977. Zane et al. 1991), except that Chinese-American males are as assertive as Caucasians on behavioral measures but not on perception (Sue, Ino & Sue. 1983)

In China, self-effacing behavior was preferred (Bond, Leung, & Wan, 1982). They explain that in China, making the self-effacing attribution is considered as a virtue, because it usually leads to harmonious interpersonal relationships. Self-effacing is acting humble, "attributing success to good luck and failure to lack of ability"(Bond et al., 1982, p.158). Self-effacing behavior oftentimes is associated with non-assertiveness. While assertiveness might be valued in an individualistic country like the U.S., non-assertiveness is valued in a collectivistic social context.

From these observations, it can be explained that people from collectivistic cultures will be less assertive than people from individualistic cultures, therefore, the following hypothesis is warranted.

H5: Japanese and Chinese participants will be less assertive than American participants.

Assertiveness and Sex. There have been several studies, which examined sex differences in assertive behavior in U.S. Martin and Anderson (1996) examined age and sex differences

in aggressive and responsive communication traits. They found that there are significant main effects for sex on assertiveness. They found that American males were significantly more assertive than American females. Dubrin (1991) examined sex difference and gender difference on assertive behavior. Suggesting that the gender difference is greater than sex difference, Dubrin (1991) found that male are perceived as more likely to manipulate situations, and to be assertive compared to females. Similar research was conducted both in Japan and China. Thompson, Ishii and Klopf (1990/1991) observed a significant main effect on assertiveness using the Richmond and McCroskey (1985) Assertiveness-Responsiveness Scale. Hamid (1994) found no significant sex difference on assertiveness for students in Hong Kong, while they found that males scored higher than females. However, Anderson, Martin, Zhong, & West (1997) examined assertiveness in China and found that Chinese males were more assertive than Chinese females.

These gender differences are explained through the process of socialization and expectation. Several studies also showed that the socialization process causes American boys to be more assertive than girls (Leonard, 1995; Wall & Holden, 1994). In the U. S., the assertive model is often

associated with masculinity (Wildman & Clementz, 1986) and perceived as skillful but not as preferable (Delamater & McNamara, 1991; Kelly et al., 1980). Delamater and McNamara (1991) studied female perceptions of assertiveness in conflict situations, and found that a non-assertive confederate was more preferred than an assertive or even empathetic-assertive confederate. Kelly et al. (1980) examined reactions to assertive and non assertive behavior. They found that even though assertive models were viewed as skilled and able, they were given lower ratings of likeability. Further, female assertive behaviors indicated more negative evaluations than male assertive behaviors. The majority of studies support sex differences in assertive behavior, therefore the following hypothesis is warranted. H6: Male participants will be more assertive than females in all three countries.

Chapter 4

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Are there any significant differences in verbal aggressiveness among participants in three countries, China, Japan and the United Status?

Research Question 2: Are there any significant differences in argumentativeness among participants in three countries, China, Japan and the United Status?

Research Question 3: Are there any significant differences in assertiveness among participants in three countries, China, Japan and the United Status?

Research Question 4: What gender differences exist in the three communication traits: verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness, and assertiveness across three countries?

Research Question 5: What gender, culture, and interaction differences exists across the three communication traits?

Chapter 5

Methods

Participants from three countries (i.e. China, Japan and the United States) completed the questionnaire that included three scales with some demographic questions. The questionnaires were distributed and self-reported by the participants. Confirmatory factor analysis, and Pearson correlations were used to examine the scales, and then analysis of variance and independent sample t-tests were used to interpret the data.

Participants

The sample consisted of 666 undergraduate students from three countries; the People's Republic of China, Japan and the United States.

U.S. American participants were 204 undergraduate students attending a large mid-western university (80 males, 120 females, and 4 were unclassified). American students were given extra credit for participation in this study.

The Japanese sample consisted of 282 undergraduate students attending a university located in Tokyo, Japan (106 males, 170 females, and 6 who were unclassified). Japanese participants in this study were those who agreed to

participate voluntarily without any credit or compensation.

The Chinese sample consisted of 180 undergraduate students, attending a university located in Beijing, China (78 males, 101 females, and 1 who were unclassified). The Chinese participants were paid 8 yuan for their completion of this study.

<u>Procedures</u>

The participants were asked to consent for their participation in the study and then filled out a questionnaire that included the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986), the Argumentativeness Scale (Infante & Raner, 1982) and the Assertiveness Scale (Richmond & McCroskey, 1992) with some demographic questions. In addition, a research induction which was part of another study was also administered.

<u>Translation</u>

The questionnaires were translated from English into the respective languages. To ensure that the translated questionnaires had equivalence with the original ones, the method of back translation was followed (Brislin, 1976). The Japanese and Chinese versions of the questionnaire were translated by a bilingual and then back translated into

English by a second bilingual. Discrepancies between the
original and the English back-translator were reviewed and
then the two translators reviewed the Japanese or Chinese
characters for clarity. These revised questionnaires were
then piloted with a small sample of graduate students from
each of the countries.

Instrumentation

The Verbal Aggressiveness Scale. The Verbal Aggressiveness
Scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986) that consists of 20 items
including 10 positively worded items and 10 negatively
worded items was employed to measure participants' trait to
be verbally aggressive. Items were rated on a five point
Likert scale with the larger sums of scores indicating
greater verbal aggressiveness, after reflecting negatively
worded items. Infante and Wigley (1986) reported .81
internal reliability for this scale. Previous studies have
supported the reliability and validity of the scale in the
U.S. (Infante, et al., 1989; Infante & Golden, 1985) and in
Japan (Suzuki & Rancer, 1994).

The Argumentativenss Scale. The Argumentativeness Scale
(Infante & Rancer, 1982) is employed to measure
participants' trait to be argumentative. Eighteen items (out
of 20 original items) were rated on a five point Likert

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scales with the larger score indicating a greater preference

for either approaching arguments or avoiding arguments.

Infante and Rancer (1982) reported .91 reliability for

argumentative approach items and .86 for argumentative

avoidance items. The reliability and validity of this scale

has been supported by several previous studies in the U.S.

(Infante & Gorden, 1989; Rancer & Infante, 1985; Rancer,

Kosverg, & Baukus, 1992) and Japanese samples (Suzuki &

Rancer, 1994).

Several studies have claimed that the

Argumentativeness Scale is, in fact, unidimensional (Boster

& Levine, 1988; Kazoleas, 1993, Roberto, 1997). Therefore,

this study examined both a unidimensional solution and two-

factor solution for the Argumentativeness scale.

The Assertiveness Scale. In this study, a 10 item

Assertiveness Scale is employed which is part of Richmond

and McCroskey's (1998) Assertiveness-Responsiveness Measure.

Richmond and McCroskey (1990) reported a reliability of .88

for assertiveness and .93 for responsiveness, and they are

uncorrelated (-. 027). This Assertiveness scale was employed

to measure participant's trait to be assertive. All items

were rated on a five point Likert scale with the greater

score indicating more assertiveness. Several studies both in

the U.S. and in other countries have supported the

reliability and validity of this scale (Thompson, C. A.,

Ishii, S., & Klopf, D., 1990; Thompson, C. A., Klopf, D. W.

& Ishii, S., 1991).

<u>Preliminary Analyses</u>

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982)

was performed on three scales collapsing the country factor.

CFA was used to ensure the validity of the scales, as well

as to test the unidimensionality of the scale across three

countries. This procedure was employed to determine which

items of each scale measure the same construct throughout

three countries. Therefore, CFA analysis was conducted for

three scales separately. Based on the results of the test of

internal consistency, items that do not meet the criteria

for acceptance are deleted from each scale and this CFA

procedure was repeated until acceptable unidimensional

solution was reached. CFA analyses resulted in deleting

several items from each scale.

After performing the CFA procedure, five items

remained to comprise the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale.

Correlations and errors of items from the Verbal

Aggressiveness Scale remaining after tests of internal

consistency are presented in table 1.

Therefore, five items were used to compute the Verbal Aggressiveness score, with the minimum being 5 and the maximum being 25 points. The Cronbach alpha reliability for this measure was .69 (M=12.5, SD=3.8).

Originally, the general trait to be argumentative was considered as a multidimensional model having two factors; the tendency to approach arguments and the tendency to avoid arguments. Argumentativeness was conceptualized as the combination of tendency to approach arguments and tendency to avoid arguments, as shown in the equation explained on p.20. However, there are some evidences suggesting that the Argumentativeness Scale be in fact unidimensional (Boster & Lavubnem 1988; Kazoleas, 1993; Roberto, Finucase, 1997). As Roberto and Finucane (1997) argued that, if the argumentativeness scale is multidimensional, "it is inappropriate to sum across the items to compute ARGgt", because subtracting ARGav from ARGap means summing up two unrelated construct (p.22). Therefore, the present study conducted CFA analyses both for a one-factor solution and a two-factor solution by reflecting items to see which model apply for the participants of this study.

CFA analyses revealed that the Argumentativenesss

Scale had a two-factor model; the tendency to approach and the tendency to avoid, which was consistent with the previous findings (Infante & Rancer, 1982; Rancer & Infante, 1985; Rancer, Kosverg, & Baukus, 1992; Suzuki & Rancer, 1994).

Therefore, the present study measures the trait argumentativeness using two separate scales, the tendency to approach arguments (ARGap) and the tendency to avoid arguments (ARGav).

Again, several items of both factors were deleted based on the tests of internal consistency. Five items were left for the ARGap Scale, or the tendency to approach argument, and four items were left for the ARGav Scale, or the tendency to avoid arguments. Correlations and errors of items from the Argumentativeness Scale remaining after tests of internal consistency are presented in table 2 for ARGap and table 3 for ARGav.

[Table 2 and table 3 about here]

Five items were summed up to calculate argumentativeness approach score, the minimum being 5 and the maximum being 25, and also four items for the tendency to avoid, the minimum being 5 and the maximum being 20. The Cronbach alpha reliability was .80(M=10.7, SD=3.6) for the

ARGap Scale, and .83 (M=15.1, SD=3.9) for the ARGav Scale
(Cronbach, 1951).

Finally for the Assertiveness Scale, four items were
kept after performing CFA procedures. Correlations and
errors of items from the Assertiveness Scale left after
tests of internal consistency are presented in table 4.

[Table 4 about here]

Four items were summed up to have an assertiveness
score, the minimum being 5 and the maximum being 20. The
Cronbach alpha reliability was .80 (M=10.9, SD=4.3)
(Cronbach, 1951).

Therefore, this study actually deals with four scales,
Verbal Aggressiveness, Argumentativeness-Approach (ARGap),
Argumentativenee-Avoidance (ARGav), and Assertiveness.

Chapter 6

Results

<u>Scale Intercorrelations</u>

Pearson correlations were computed among the three
scales to ascertain whether they were measuring what they
are supposed to measure.

[Table 5 about here]

Verbal aggressiveness and both ARGap and ARGav are
expected to correlate negatively, because verbal
aggressiveness is differentiated from an argumentative
approach and also a argumentative avoidance. Verbal
aggressiveness is correlated positively with ARGap($r = .128$,
$p < .01$), and positively with Assertiveness($r = .088$, $p < .05$) as
expected, but also positively with ARGav($r = .153$, $p < .01$)
which was not expected.

Assertiveness is expected to correlate positively with
ARGap and negatively with ARGav and positively with verbal
aggressiveness. The results showed that Assertiveness is
correlated positively with ARGap($r = .263$, $p < .01$) and
correlated negatively with ARGav($r = -.147$, $p < .01$) as
expected. As expected, ARGap and ARGap were highly

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negatively correlated(r=-.459, p<.01), which was the largest

intercorrelation among four scales.

The only unexpected correlation was the one between

Verbal Aggressiveness and ARG-avoidance. However, we might

be able to reason that both avoidance and verbal

aggressiveness were associated with one's inability to argue

by logic, or reasoning. Because people are not competent in

argument in some situations, they tend to appeal to

avoidance and maybe verbal aggression. This correlation

hints to us that avoidance strategy is associated with

verbal aggressiveness in some way. Overall these

correlation figures were small enough in magnitude to

conclude that the scales were measuring different

constructs, though there are some overlaps.

Descriptive Statistics

First of all, the descriptive statistics (i.e. Means,

Standard Deviations, and Sample Size.) for four scales, the

Verbal Aggressiveness, the ARGap Scale, the ARGav scale and

the Assertiveness scale are examined. The means of all four

scales was displayed for the three countries combined,

sorted by three countries, and sorted by countries and by

sex.

[Table 6, 7, 8 and 9 about here]

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Two-way ANOVA results country by sex

To examine country and sex main effect and country by sex interaction effect, a two-way analysis of variance was conducted. Results of the Two-way analysis of variance are presented in table 10, 12, 14, and 16. Line graphs of the mean score for all four scales sort by both country and sex are presented in figure 1-4.

The Verbal Aggressiveness Scale. Two-way ANOVA results for the Verbal Aggressiveness showed a significant interaction effect ($F[2, 628]=11.297$, $p<.0001$, $\eta^2=.023$), with main effects for country ($F[2,628]=135.103$, $p<.0001$, $\eta^2=.28$) and sex ($F[1,628]=21.21$, $P<.0001$, $\eta^2=.022$). This interaction effect shows that the sex difference in U.S. is greater than in Japan and China, as clearly shown in figure 1.

[Table 10, Figure 1 about here]

T-test results of each country pair. In order to find out which country caused this difference, the independent sample t-tests for each pair of countries were conducted. The verbal aggressiveness scores for Chinese (M=15.66, SD=2.918) are significantly higher than those for Americans (M=12.36, SD= 3.569) and Japanese (M=10.62, SD=2.951). Also, scores for Americans are significantly higher than their Japanese

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counterparts.

[Table 11 about here]

The ARGap Scale. Two-way ANOVA results for the ARGap showed a significant interaction effect ($F[2, 628]=12.998$ $p<.0001$, $\eta^2=.038$), with main effects for country ($F[2,628]=11.965$, $p<.0001$, $\eta^2=.035$) and sex ($F[1,628]=10.189$, $P<.001$, $\eta^2=.015$). As clearly shown in figure 2, there is no interaction effect between Japan and China. What drives this interaction effect is the sex difference in the U.S. and its relation with Japan and China.

[Table 12, Figure 2 about here]

T-test results of each country pair. In order to find out which country caused this difference, independent sample t-tests for each pair of country were conducted. The argumentativeness approach score for Japanese ($M=15.85$, $SD=3.922$) was significantly higher than those for Americans ($M=15.02$, $SD=3.973$) and Chinese ($M=14.04$, $SD=3.350$). Also, scores for Americans are significantly higher than Chinese counterparts.

[Table 13 about here]

The ARGav Scale. Two-way ANOVA results for the ARGav showed a significant interaction effect ($F[2, 628]=9.031$, $p<.0001$,

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$\eta^2 = .021$), with main effects for country (F[2,628]=82.064, p<.0001, $\eta^2 = .19$) and sex (F[1,628]=39.031, P<.0001, $\eta^2 = .045$). Similar to the ARGap and shown clearly in figure 3, there is no or little interaction effect between Japan and China. What drives this interaction effect is the sex difference in the U.S. and its relation with Japan and China.

[Table 14, Figure 3 about here]

T-test results of each country pair. In order to see which country caused this difference, the independent sample t-test for each pair of countries were conducted. The argumentativeness avoidance score for Chinese (M=12.35, SD=2.891) was significantly higher than for Americans (M=11.62, SD= 3.604) and for Japanese (M=8.791, SD=3.090). Also, scores for Americans are significantly higher than their Japanese counterparts.

[Table 15 about here]

The Assertiveness Scale. Two-way ANOVA results for the Assertiveness showed a significant interaction effect (F[2, 628]=4.768, p<. 01, $\eta^2 = .01$), with main effects for country (F[2,628]=176.077, p<.0001, $\eta^2 = .36$) and sex (F[1,628]=12.836, P<.0001, $\eta^2 = .013$). There are slight

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interaction effects, which might be caused the sex differences between the U.S. and China.

[Table 16, Figure 4 about here]

T-test results of each country pair. The results of a series of independent sample t-test revealed that the assertiveness score for American (M=14.36, SD=3.611) are significantly higher than those for Japanese (M=10.27, SD= 3.540) and Chinese (M=8.111, SD=3.290). Also, the scores for Japanese are significantly higher than the Chinese scores.

[Table 17 about here]

Comparison by Sex

T-tests between country. Male and female scores of the four scales were compared by independent sample t-tests collapsing the country factor. The results of t-tests are presented in Table 18.

The results indicated that male participants were significantly more aggressive than female participants across the three countries (t=4.789, p<. 0001). As for ARGap, the male participants scored significantly higher than female participants across the three countries (t=2.744, p< .006). In comparison, the male participants scored significantly less on ARGav than female participants across three countries (t=-5.080, p< .0001). Lastly, male

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participants were significantly more assertive than female participants (t=2.852, p<. 004).

[Table 18 about here]

T-tests within country. T-tests to compare the mean scores of male and female in each country were conducted.

T-test of four scales comparing the means scores of the male and female participants in the United States yielded all significant results. The significant sex differences were displayed in the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale(t=5.424, p<.0001), the ARGap scale(t=5.795, p<.0001), the ARGap scale(t=-.6.491, p<.0001), and the Assertiveness Scale(t=4.437, p<.0001).

[Table 19 about here]

As for Japan, the Verbal Aggressiveness score showed significant difference (t=3.596, p<.0001). Also, significant differences were displayed in ARGap (t=-3.011, p<. 01) and Assertiveness scale (t=2.308, p<.05). Therefore, except for the ARGap scale, three other scales showed significant sex difference.

[Table 20 about here]

As for the Chinese, there are no significant differences on all four scales.

[Table 21 about here]

Chapter 7

Discussion

The results of this study showed that there exist

differences in aggressive communication traits among three

countries; the People's Republic of China, Japan and the

United States. Some of these findings are consistent with

former findings and others are not.

As for Verbal Aggressiveness, Chinese participants

scored highest, followed by American and Japanese

participants. Although previous studies have shown no

difference on verbal aggressive communication traits between

Japanese and Americans (Harman, Klopf, and Ishii, 1990), the

present study revealed that Americans are more verbally

aggressive than Japanese, with Chinese being more verbally

aggressive than either Americans or Japanese. Interestingly,

Chinese males and females showed no significant difference

in verbal aggressiveness, while Japanese males and American

males are more verbally aggressive than Japanese females and

American females. The results for these two constructs are

consistent with the previous studies which concluded that

males tend to be more verbally aggressive than females in

the U.S. (Burgoon & Miller, 1983; Infante et al., 1984;

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Infante & Wigley, 1986; Nicotera & Rancer, 1994) and in

Japan (Harman, Klopf, and Ishii, 1990), though not in China.

Former studies found that Americans are more

argumentative than Japanese (Prunty, Klopf, and Ishii,

1990a, 1990b), Japanese participants in this study were

found to have a higher tendency to approach argument (ARGap)

than either American or Chinese participants. However, the

highest mean score for ARGap was obtained from American

males (M=16.91, SD=3.464), and lowest score was from

American females (M=13.80, SD=3.834). Therefore as a

country, the overall Japanese mean (M=15.85) was higher than

the overall American mean (M=15.80), because the American

females lowered the mean of the US data. Interestingly, both

in the Japanese and the Chinese data, no significant sex

differences were displayed, while American males scored

significantly higher than American females. It can be

assumed that sex role is still reinforced among the

participants in the U.S.

The results for ARGav were consistent with the results

of ARGap. Chinese scored highest on ARGav, followed by

Americans and Japanese, which showed clear contrast with the

result of ARGap. Japanese scored high on approach and low on

avoidance and verbal aggressiveness. It can be said that, at

least for the particiapnts of this study, Japanese are in fact very argumentative, though not verbally aggressive. In contrast, the Chinese data was low on approach and high on avoidance and verbal aggression. Both Japanese and Chinese are described as valuing harmony and expected to avoid argument; however, they showed characteristic differences, which suggests the necessity of further research to understand these communication behaviors.

Again, significant sex differences is indicated in the American and the Japanese data, while no sex difference was found for the Chinese participants of this study. Another interesting finding is that American females scored highest among the entire group on the ARGav scale (M=12.86, SD=3.497), while Japanese males scored lowest (M=8.068, SD=3.246). This indicates that American females tends avoid arguments more than other groups and Japanese males indicates their willingness to engage in arguments more than other groups.

American participants were found to be more assertive than either Japanese or Chinese, and Japanese participants were more assertive than Chinese participants. The data was consistent with previous studies showed that Americans are more assertive than Japanese (Barnland, 1975; Barnland &

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Araki, 1985; Nomura & Barnland, 1983; Itoi, Ohibushi, and

Fukuno, 1996; Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994; Thompson, Klopf, &

Ishii, 1991). Thompson, Klopf, and Ishii (1990) utilized

Richmond and McCroskey's (1985) assertiveness scales, and

compared Japanese and Americans assertiveness-

responsiveness. In the replication of Thompson, Klopf, and

Ishii (1991), their finding was consistent, Americans are

highly more assertive, while Japanese were moderately so.

An interesting contrast is that Chinese scored lowest on the

Assertiveness scale (M=8.111, SD=3.290), even though they

scored highest on the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (M=15.66,

SD=2.918). Inconsistent with Anderson, et al. (1997),

Chinese females are not significantly different from Chinese

males on their assertiveness scores. Again, American males

were significantly higher than American females and so are

Japanese participants.

Hamid (1994) argued that there is a danger in assuming

nonassertiveness as maladaptive in cross-cultural

counseling. Hamid (1994) argues that "assertiveness is

generally linked to healthy personality adjustment in

Western psychology", but in China (Hong Kong), "people are

expected to be deferent to authority (p.127)". Because of

its social norm, and political situation, Chinese people put

more emphasis on conformity to others and maintenance of harmonious relations, which might lead to non-assertive behavior.

It is interesting if we focus this sex difference within country. The largest significant sex differences were found in American data. As for Japanese, significant sex differences were found in three scales except the ARGap scale, though not as significant as the American counterpart. Interestingly, no sex differences were evident among all four scales with Chinese data. As clearly shown in the four figures, we can see the larger sex differences in the American data. How can that be explained? Is there something in individualism that reinforces sex differences? Several researchers claimed that the language silence women (Key, 1975; Lakoff, 1975), as the English language itself favors men placing women on the negative end of continuum (Kaplan, 1986, Spender, 1980).

Inconsistent with Anderson, et al. (1997), Chinese females are not significantly different from Chinese males on their assertiveness scores. Again, American males were significantly higher than American females and so are Japanese participants.

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behavior.

Limitations

The finding of this study considered several

limitations. A first problem is the measurements of this

study. The instruments may be culturally biased. When scales

are administered to people from different cultural

backgrounds, assumptions that underlie items might not hold

true. Across cultures, for example, what Americans

understands as verbally aggressive may have little overlap

with what Japanese and Chinese perceive. Other sampling

problem is that all the subjects recruited in this study are

students, as with most of previous studies in general.

Students as subjects make the population limited in terms of

region, age, and socio-economical status. This should be

one caution for generalization. Lastly, sex research has

been of great interest to many researchers. According to the meta-analysis of Canary and Hause (1993), however, there are virtually no sex differences and sex differences are mostly moderated by a number of factors. Canary and Hause (1993) warned that we rely too much on stereotypes and caused polarization of sexes, and called for more theory on sex and communication. It is suggested psychological and sociological gender should be used rather than biological sex (Canary & Hause, 1993; Dubrin, 1991).

A second possible problem is other mediating factors. The biggest problem of all is the social desirability bias (Nicotera, 1990). Nicotera(1993) examined the relationship between argumentativeness and social desirability biases. Nicotera (1993) observed that sex difference diminished after removing social desirability biases and suggested future research of the effect of social desirability. Especially, in intercultural research, social desirability bias complicates data, because socially desirable behavior itself differs between cultures and also some countries focus more on socially desirable activities than others.

Hamid (1994) argues that in the U.S. assertiveness is seen as one character of a well-adjusted person, while in China, non-assertiveness is more socially desirable. As he

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points out, the communicative behavior valued in one culture is not always valued in the same way in another culture. The finding of this study calls for more research on cross-cultural differences in the meaning of aggression and aggressive behavior including verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness and assertiveness.

Another important mediating factor is situation. Trait theorists have been criticized by situationists. Traits of one's behavior are studied with the assumption that our behavior is somewhat consistent across situations. People tend to use the expression like "she is like that" or "he is not usually like this". This view is based on the trait theories. On the other hand, situationists contend that we behave differently across situations, and situations will determine our behaviors. The argument is over to what extent our behavior can be explained by our traits and or by situations. This view of including both individual's traits and situational variables is called the interaction approach (Infante, et al. 1990, 1993). It has been recommended that communication research should take an interaction approach (Andersen, 1987; Infante, 1987). It is argued that Infante and Rancer's (1982) model of argumentativeness takes an interactionist position in that it includes influences of

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situational variables. This study, however, takes the traits approach, in that it measured aggressive communication traits of people from three countries. Therefore future study can examine the aggressive communication behavior taking situation specific factors into consideration.

Actually, not so many studies have been done in Mainland China because of its past political situation. Those previous studies that are mentioned in this study for Chinese were mostly conducted in Hong Kong, Taiwan or Singapore. Thus, more research about Mainland China would be very beneficial in cross-cultural research. Japan and China, both classified as collectivistic cultures, showed significant differences in their communication traits. As we see from the significant differences between Japan and China, countries classified as collectivistic can exhibit differences and need to be examined further.

Investigating the effect of culture and the respondents' gender on aggressive communication traits yielded several important findings. This study provided an attempt to understand three aggressive communication traits (i.e. Verbal Aggressiveness, Argumentativeness Approach and Avoidance, and Assertiveness) of three countries, China, Japan and the U.S. Hopefully, the results might help us to

have a better understanding of cultural differences in

communication behavior in arguing situation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Tables

Tables 1: Correlations and errors of the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale items left after the test of Internal Consistency*

	7	11	13	16	19
7		*.01*	*-.04*	*-.04*	*.00*
11	.33		*-.03*	*.02*	*-.01*
13	.22	.38		*.01*	*-.01*
16	.27	.28	.24		*.01*
19	.32	.44	.34	.27	
F	.50	.68	.52	.45	.64

*Bold numbers are the indicators in the original scale.

*The numbers in the lower triangle are obtained correlations. The numbers in the upper triangle with italicized figures represent errors. Errors are calculated by the subtraction of obtained correlation from predicted correlation.

Tables 2: Correlations and errors of the ARGap Scale items left after the test of Internal Consistency*

	6	12	14	15	18
6		*.01*	*-.03*	*-.01*	*.00*
12	.34		*-.03*	*.02*	*-.03*
14	.44	.55		*.00*	*.02*
15	.44	.53	.64		*-.03*
18	.38	.51	.54	.63	
F	.53	.67	.78	.83	.73

*Bold numbers are the indicators in the original scale.

*The numbers in the lower triangle are obtained correlations. The numbers in the upper triangle with italicized figures represent errors. Errors are calculated by the subtraction of obtained correlation from predicted correlation.

Tables 3: Correlations and errors of the ARGav Scale items left after the test of Internal Consistency*

	3	11	17	13
3		*.00*	*-.03*	*.02*
11	.47		*.02*	*-.02*
17	.54	.50		*.01*
13	.46	.52	.52	
F	.68	.70	.75	.71

*Bold numbers are the indicators in the original scale.

*The numbers in the lower triangle are obtained correlations. The numbers in the upper triangle with italicized figures represents errors. Errors are calculated by the subtraction of obtained correlation from predicted correlation.

Tables 4: Correlations and errors of the Assertiveness Scale items left after the test of Internal Consistency*

	6	8	9	10
6		*-.02*	*.00*	*.01*
8	.58		*.01*	*-.04*
9	.60	.62		*-.02*
10	.46	.50	.55	
F	.73	.77	.82	.65

*Bold numbers are the indicators in the original scale.

*The numbers in the lower triangle are obtained correlations. The numbers in the upper triangle with italicized figures represent errors. Errors are calculated by the subtraction of obtained correlation from predicted correlation.

Table 5: Scale Intercorrelations of four scales

	AGGRESS	ARGap	ARGap	ASSERT
AGGRESS	1.000			
ARGap	**.128	1.000		
ARGav	**.153	**-.459	1.000	
ASSERT	*.088	**.263	**-.147	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size) of the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale

		Mean	Std. Dev.	N
U.S.	overall	12.36	3.56	220
	male	13.94	3.39	79
	female	11.33	3.83	119
Japan	overall	10.65	2.95	278
	male	11.39	3.41	140
	female	10.09	2.52	168
China	overall	15.66	2.91	180
	male	15.42	3.12	101
	female	15.79	2.71	78
Three countries Combined	overall	12.53	3.75	660
	male	13.37	3.72	261
	female	11.95	3.65	388

This scale's maximum total score is 25, minimum being 5.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size) of ARGap Scale

		Mean	Std. Dev.	N
U.S.	overall	15.02	3.97	200
	male	16.91	3.46	79
	female	13.80	3.83	119
Japan	overall	15.85	3.92	270
	male	15.80	3.97	104
	female	15.88	3.91	165
China	overall	14.04	3.35	180
	male	13.98	3.59	78
	female	14.01	3.10	101
Three countries Combined	overall	15.09	3.85	650
	male	15.59	3.87	261
	female	14.75	3.81	385

This scale's maximum total score is 25 minimum being 5.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size) of the ARGav Scale

		Mean	Std. Dev.	N
U.S.	overall	11.62	3.69	202
	male	9.75	2.98	79
	female	12.86	3.49	120
Japan	overall	8.791	3.09	268
	male	8.068	3.24	102
	female	9.22	2.91	165
China	overall	12.35	2.89	180
	male	12.10	3.02	78
	female	12.58	2.76	101
Three countries Combined	overall	10.65	3.58	645
	male	9.79	3.51	259
	female	11.23	3.52	386

This scale's maximum total score is 20 minimum being 4.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size) of the Assertiveness Scale

		Mean	Std. Dev.	N
U.S.	overall	14.36	3.611	202
	male	15.71	2.98	80
	female	13.50	3.675	119
Japan	overall	10.27	3.54	272
	male	10.89	3.444	104
	female	9.880	3.56	167
China	overall	8.111	3.29	180
	male	7.974	3.47	78
	female	8.099	2.94	101
Three countries Combined	overall	10.91	4.25	649
	male	11.49	4.51	262
	female	10.52	4.03	387

This scale's maximum total score is 20 minimum being 4.

Table 10: Two-way ANOVA results of the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale country by sex

AGRESS	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2
Country	2428.341	2	1241.171	135.103	.000	.273
Sex	194.873	1	194.873	21.212	.000	.022
Country by Sex	207.566	2	103.783	11.297	.000	.023
Residual	5723.419	623	9.187			
Total	8893.672	628	14.162			

Table 11: T-test result of the Verbal Aggressiveness scales comparing three pairs of countries

	T score	Df	Sig.
United States vs. Japan	5.824	478	.000
United States vs. China	-9.804	380	.000
China vs. Japan	-17.889	456	.000

Table 12: Two-way ANOVA results of the ARGap Scale country by sex

ARGAp	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2
Country	327.866	2	163.933	11.965	.000	.035
Sex	139.179	1	139.179	10.198	.001	.015
Country by Sex	356.179	2	178.089	12.998	.000	.038
Residual	8536.006	623	13.701			
Total	9348.754	628	14.887			

Table 13: T-test result of the ARGap scales comparing three three pairs of countries

	T score	Df	Sig.
United States vs. Japan	12.335	472	.000
United States vs. China	17.620	380	.000
China vs. Japan	6.543	450	.000

Table 14: Two-way ANOVA results of the ARGap scale country by sex

ARGav	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2
Country	1568.145	2	784.072	82.064	.000	.193
Sex	327.912	1	372.912	39.030	.000	.040
Country by Sex	172.563	2	86.281	45.364	.000	.021
Residual	5952.382	623	9.554			
Total	8119.485	628	12.929			

Table 15: T-test result of the ARGav scales comparing three three pairs of countries

	T score	Df	Sig.
United States vs. Japan	9.170	468	.000
United States vs. China	-2.140	380	.033
China vs. Japan	-12.260	446	.000

Table 16: Two-way ANOVA results of the Assertiveness Scale country by sex

ASSERT	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2
Country	4139.076	2	2069.538	176.077	.000	.356
Sex	150.865	1	150.865	12.836	.000	.013
Country by Sex	112.080	2	56.040	4.768	.009	.010
Residual	7322.481	623	11.754			
Total	11617.701	628	18.500			

Table 17: T-test result of the Assertiveness Scale comparing three three pairs of countries

	T score	Df	Sig.
United States vs. Japan	-2.261	468	.024
United States vs. China	2.573	372	.010
China vs. Japan	5.070	448	.000

Table 18: T-test results of four scales between males and females across three countries

	T score	Df	Sig.
Aggress	4.789	647	.000
ARGap	2.744	644	.006
ARGav	-5.080	643	.000
Assert	2.852	647	.004

Table 19: T-test results of four scales between males and females in the United States

U. S.	T score	Df	Sig.
Aggress	5.424	198	.000
ARGap	5.795	196	.000
ARGav	-6.491	197	.000
Assert	4.437	197	.000

Table 20: T-test results of four scales between males and females in Japan

Japan	T score	Df	Sig.
Aggress	3.596	270	.000
ARGap	-.157	267	.876
ARGav	-3.011	265	.003
Assert	2.308	269	.022

Table 21: T-test results of four scales between males and females in China

China	T score	Df	Sig.
Aggress	-.844	117	.400
ARGap	-.065	117	.948
ARGav	-1.110	117	.269
Assert	-.260	117	.795

Appendix B

Figures

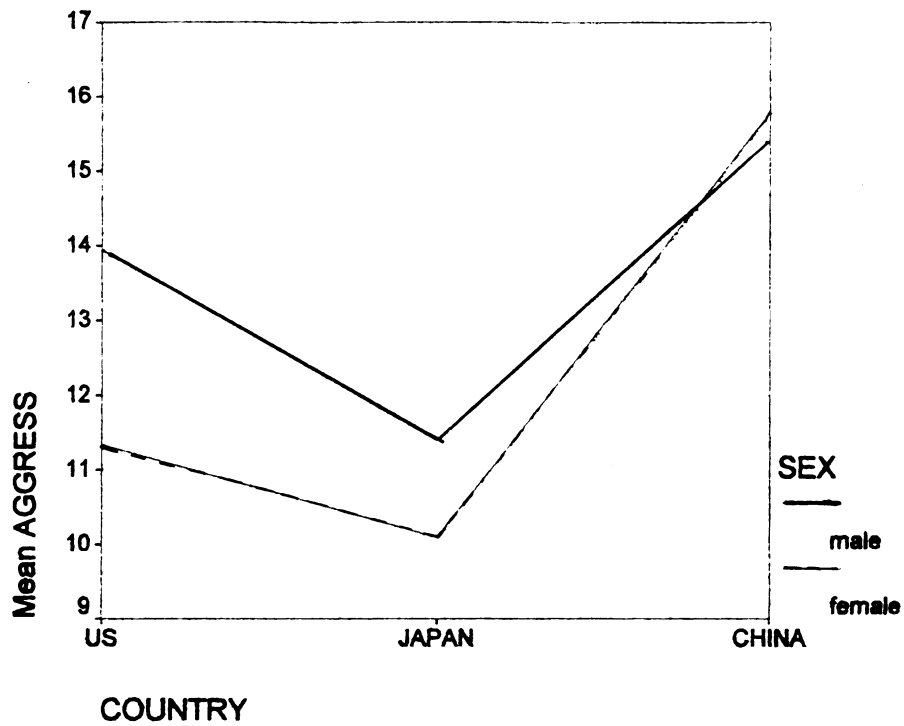**Figure1: Line graph of mean scores for the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale by country and sex**

Figure2: Line graph of mean scores for the ARGap Scale by country and sex
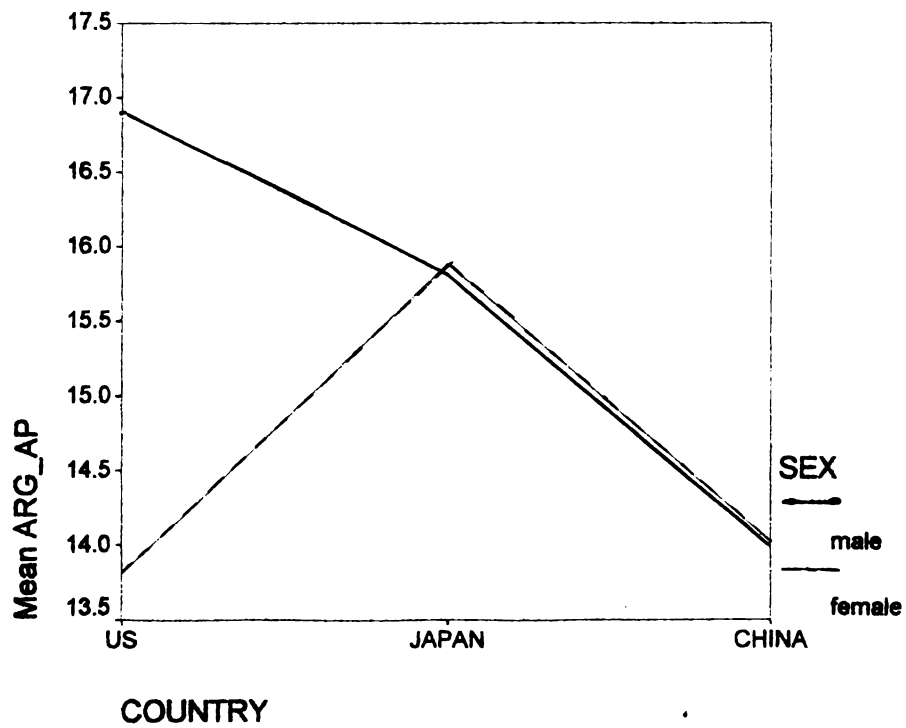
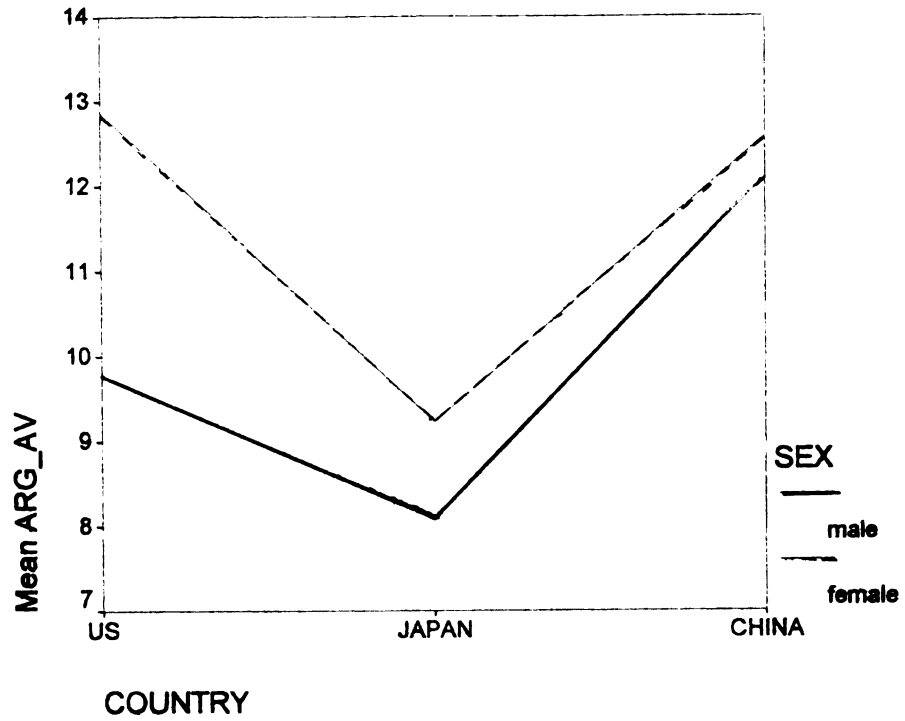**Figure 3: Line graph of mean scores for the ARGav Scale by country and sex**
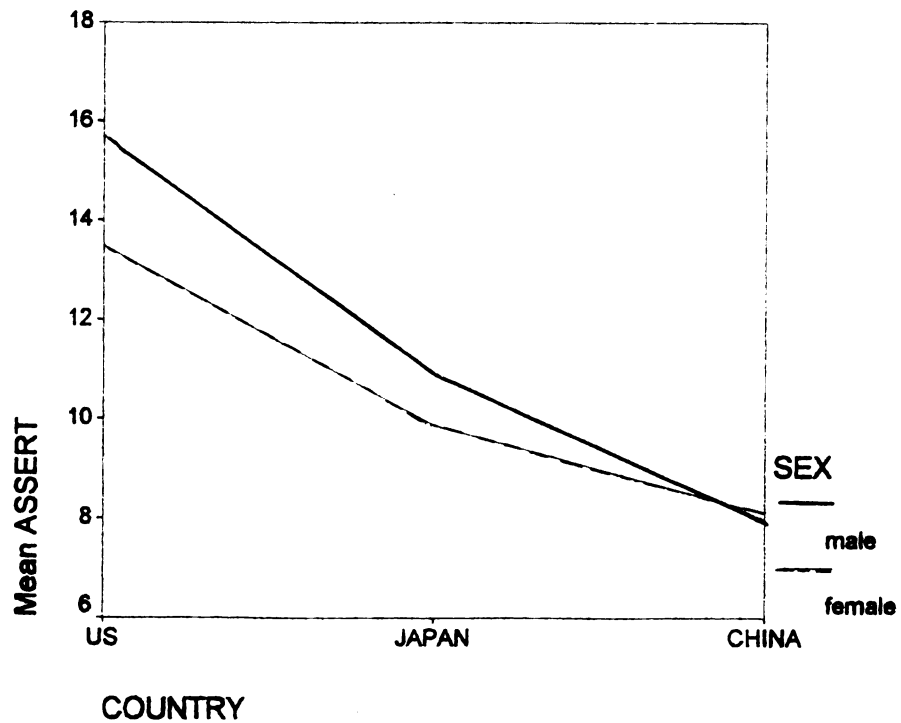

Figure 4: Line graph of mean scores for the Assertiveness Scale by country and sex

Appendix C

Questionnaires and Research Consent Form

Directions: The following questions are concerned with how we try to get people to comply with our wishes. Indicate how often each statement is true for you personally when you try to influence other people. Use the following scale.

1 = almost never true
2 = rarely true
3 = occasionally true
4 = often true
5 = almost always true

10. I am extremely careful to avoid attacking a person's intelligence when I attack their ideas.

11. When individuals are very stubborn I use insults to soften the stubbornness.

12. I try very hard to avoid having people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.

13. When people refuse to do a task I know is important, without good reason I tell them they are unreasonable.

14. When other do things I regard as stupid, I try to be extremely gentle with them.

15. If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it I attack their character.

16. When people behave in ways that are in poor taste, I insult them to shock them into proper behavior.

17. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.

18. When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.

19. When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.

20. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.

21. When I dislike individuals greatly, I try not to show it in what I day or how I say it.

22. I like poking fun at people who do things which are very in order to stimulate their intelligence.

23. When I attack people's ideas I try not to damage their self-concepts.

24. When I try to influence others, I make a great effort not to offend them.

25. When people do things which are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.

26. I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.

27. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to try and get some movement from them.

28. When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.

29. When an argument shifts to personal attacks I try hard to change the subject.

Directions: The following scale asks you to evaluate how you feel about a number of issues. After reading each statement, indicate how much you agree or disagree using the following scale.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

30. I should be judged on my own merit.

31. I voice my opinions in group discussions.

32. I feel uncomfortable disagreeing with my group.

33. I conceal my negative emotions so I won't cause unhappiness in my group.

34. My personal identity, independent of others is very important to me.

35. I prefer to be self-reliant rather than dependent upon others.

36. I act as a unique person, separate from others.

37. I don't like depending upon others.

38. My relationships with others in my group are more important than my personal accomplishments.

39.My happiness depends on the happiness of those in my group

40. I often consider how I can be helpful to specific others in my group.

41. I take responsibility for my own actions.

42. It is very important for me to act as an independent person.

43. I have an opinion about most things; I know what I like, and I know what I don't like.

44. I enjoy being unique and different from others.

45. I don't change my opinions in conformity with those of the majority.

46. Speaking up in a work/task group is not a problem for me.

47. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

48. Understanding myself is a major goal in my life.

49. I enjoy being admired for my unique qualities.

50. I am careful to maintain harmony in my group.

51. When I'm with my group, I watch my words so I won't offend anyone.

52. I would sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.

53. I try to meet demands of my group, even if it means controlling my own desires.

54. It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making decisions.

55. I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education and career plans.

56. I act as fellow group members would prefer me to.

57. The security of being an accepted member of a group is very important to me.

58. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.

Directions: The following questions ask you for your opinion about arguing about controversial issues. Indicate how often each statement is true for you personally using the following scale.

1 = statement is almost never true for you
2 = statement is rarely true for you
3 = statement is occasionally true for you
4 = statement is often true for you
5 = statement is always true for you

59. While in an argument, I worry that the person I am arguing with will form a negative impression of me.

60. Arguing over controversial issues improves my intelligence.

61. I enjoy avoiding arguments.

62. Once I finish an argument I promise myself that I will not get into another one.

63. Arguing with a person creates more problems for me than it solves.

64. I have a pleasant, good feeling when I win a point in an argument.

65. When I finish arguing with someone I feel nervous and upset.

66. I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue.

67. I get an unpleasant feeling when I realize I am about to get into an argument.

68. I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue.

69. I am happy when I keep an argument from happening.

70. I do not like to miss the opportunity to argue a controversial issue.

71. I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me.

72. I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge.

73. I find myself refreshed and satisfied after an argument on a controversial issue.

74. I have the ability to do well in an argument.

75. I try to avoid getting into arguments.

76. I feel excitement when I expect that a conversation I am in is leading to an argument.

Directions: Please indicate the degree to which you believe each of these characteristics applies to you by marking
    1 = it doesn't apply to you at all
    2 = it only minimally applies to you
    3 = you are undecided whether it applies to you
    4 = you agree that it applies to you
    5 = strongly agree that it applies to you

77. defends own beliefs

78. independent

79. forceful

80. has a strong personality

81. you say what you think

82. dominant

83. willing to take a stand

84. acts as a leader

85. aggressive

86. competitive

87. My gender is   1. male   2. female

88. My age is
    1. 17 - 18
    2. 19 - 20
    3. 21-22
    4. 23 or older

Research Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to assess how you would react to a complaint about your behavior made by a neighbor. It will take approximately 40 minutes to complete this study. When you are done we ask that you remain quietly in your seat until everyone has completed the study.

1. Apart from your participation in this study, your actual performance in this study will in no way affect your evaluation in this course or in any other course.

2. Any credit you may earn via participating in this study is not transferable to any other course or any other semester.

3. Your participation in this study does nor guarantee any beneficial results to you.

4. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Another assignment will be given to you if you wish to earn the extra credit points.

5. You have the right to have this study explained to you to your satisfaction.

6. The results of this study will be treated with strict confidence with regard to the data of any participant. With this restriction, the results will be made available to you at your request.

7. The data you provide to the researcher may be used by other scientists for secondary analysis. Again data will be treated with strict confidence.

8. Should you have any questions, problems, complaints, or if you desire further information, you have the right to contact the following person.

<div align="center">
Mary Bresnahan
Department of Communication
Michigan State University
</div>

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Given these understandings, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research as described.

Print your name _____

     ID # _____