

Cultural Differences between the USA and China, Their Influence on Interaction

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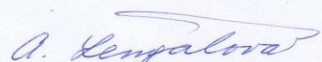
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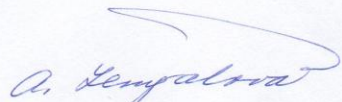
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá kulturními rozdíly mezi USA a Čínou a jejich vlivem na interakci. V teoretické části práce je charakterizován pojem komunikace, neverbální komunikace, kultura a Hofstedeho kulturní dimenze. Následně jsou rozebírány obecné charakteristiky obou zemí a srovnání kulturních rozdílů mezi nimi.

Praktická část je zaměřena na porovnání poznatků z prostudovaných zdrojů o zvolených zemích. Využitím dotazníků distribuovaných respondentům vybraných kultur, jsou zjištěny poznatky umožňující srovnání kulturních rozdílů v neverbální komunikaci, na základě získaných informací z dotazníkového průzkumu a použité literatury.

Klíčová slova:

Komunikace, kultura, kulturní rozdíly, Čína, USA, neverbální komunikace, respondenti.

ABSTRACT

The basis of this bachelor thesis is to define cultural differences in non-verbal communication between the USA and China and their influence on interaction between these two countries.

The first (theoretical) part of this paper defines communication, culture, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Furthermore, the basic characteristics of each country are discussed and an evaluation of their cultural differences was made.

The second (practical) part of this paper focuses on a review and a summary of numerous written publications in regards to cultural differences between the USA and China with the main focus on differences in non-verbal communication. A questionnaire was formulated and forwarded to a group of citizens of both countries with the intent to compare data obtained from written publications and data from this questionnaire

Keywords:

Communication, culture, cultural differences, China, the USA, non-verbal communication, respondents.

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of this bachelor thesis is to examine the American and Chinese cultures with an attempt to illustrate the existence of cultural differences in non-verbal communication between the two countries and their influence on overall communication and relations. It is aimed to explain the different aspects and factors of both cultures that are then used to provide the theoretical base to point out the differences in non-verbal communication between the two given countries.

In today's world with proceeding globalization there is an increase in the number of multinational companies. These companies are interested in expanding their scope of business to new countries and their markets. However, each country has its own culture, and in order to own a successful business one has to be aware of the other country's culture as well. Every country's culture has its own set of norms and values that directly influence human/social interaction. Non-verbal signals play a significant role in most of these interactions. A person uses non-verbal cues to either support, clarify reinforce, or to disapprove, disagree. Gestures, mimics, an eye contact or a posture could influence conversations or negotiations. Despite their importance, they are often ignored and underestimated. This might have an ominous impact on a person's life and relationships – in a home environment or in a workplace. It is essential to be aware and pay attention to non-verbal cues as much as to listen to the conversation to fully understand the entirety of the context.

The world with its current policies and politics is increasingly expanding global connections and international relations. It is important for every nation to acknowledge each country's cultural differences. The United States and China are major global economic powers. China belongs to the world's largest developing and the USA to the world's most developed country. They are both important business partners for each other as well as for the rest of the world. Both countries have their own culture, and each culture has its own traditions, values and specific customs of non-verbal communication. Understanding the basic cultural differences and each country's respective non-verbal communication cues enhances positive and successful interaction between the people of China and the USA.

The theoretical part of this paper defines communication, culture, and dimension of national culture, following with examples of four dimensions of culture. Basic information about each country's culture is presented. Subsequently, the Chinese and American cultural

differences and factors that contribute to differentiation of one country from another are given. The most significant cultural factors are explained on examples of the two given countries.

The practical part of this paper is then directly focused on non-verbal communication. The different forms of non-verbal communication and their brief descriptions are discussed. The main emphasis is given to all the gathered information from printed/book sources specifically focusing on differences in non-verbal communication between the USA and China.

There are different books and written articles on the market that provide a reader with some basic information about cultural differences and their role in non-verbal communication between the American and Chinese people. Most of the above mentioned materials were written more than five years ago. It was very difficult to find any up to date resources that would either support or contradict the information cited in those older books and materials. The lack of more recent information has led to this research thesis. Multiple printed written sources were used. Based on the information obtained from these sources, a basic questionnaire was formulated. This questionnaire was then distributed to persons who were born and living in China and persons born and living in the USA. These newly gained answers from this survey were then used to compare with the previously gained information from written sources.

I. THEORY

1 COMMUNICATION

Communication is defined as a mutual exchange of opinions among a group of people and is carried out by common shared symbols. It is characterized by its social nature and it is the most common form and the core of interpersonal communication.¹ Communication is a connection, understanding and can be understood as a human or technical signal.² According to sociologist Niklas Luhmann, communication is a basic process of social systems producing elements by which the system is created. Luhmann pointed out that communication and negotiation cannot be separated because they create a mutual relationship.³

Communication takes place everywhere where people meet, talk, get an advice, and share their knowledge. In each of the above mentioned interactions it is necessary to communicate in a specific way with a respect to a given situation, time, place and to consider the purpose and all the other participants involved in the communication. Iveta Bednaříková pointed out that every person, even without realization, uses all the basic types of communication. Each of us uses these basic types together, but sometimes also separately. The basic types of communication are verbal, para-lingual (para-lingual communication is a formal version of a spoken form of verbal communication) and non-verbal communication.⁴

According to Křivohlavý verbal communication is used to point out the logical contexts and factors, while non-verbal communication enables people to express their relationship to surroundings.⁵ Verbal communication is the most advanced recognizable form of a social interaction conveyed by the help of sounds. It contains both audible as well as written forms. Speech is the most versatile form of communication - while conveying information by speech the least that is lost is the meaning of the message.⁶

¹ Krech, D., Crutchfield, R., S., Ballachey, E, L. *Individual in Society: A Textbook of Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962.

² Bednaříková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2008.

³ Luhmann, Niklas. *Social Systems*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

⁴ Bednaříková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*.

⁵ Křivohlavý, Jaro. *Neverbální komunikace, řeč pohledů, úsměvu a gest*. Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelstvo, 1988.

⁶ Bednaříková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*.

1.1 Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication has an important place in an interpersonal contact. Not only it is the oldest way of communication but also accompanies a human being in all stages of his or her life. From early childhood to old age, in extreme life situations and moments, people resort to this way of communication. People use non-verbal communication to particularly convey their emotions, attitudes and evaluations. Oftentimes people use this type of communication subconsciously because it is more difficult to be monitored and controlled by will. From observation of non-verbal cues one creates a picture about a person, oftentimes more accurate than on the basis of a verbal conversation.⁷ “Broadly speaking, there are two basic categories of non-verbal language. They are firstly, the nonverbal messages produced by the body and secondly, the nonverbal messages produced by the board setting (time, space, silence). In other words, nonverbal communication may also be defined as the non-linguistic behavior (or attributes) that are consciously or unconsciously encoded and decoded via multiple communication channels. These multiple channels refer to how the meaning of nonverbal messages can be simultaneously signaled and interpreted by various nonverbal mediums such as facial expressions, bodily gestures, spatial relationships and finally the environment (physical and psychological) in which people are communicating.”⁸

Non-verbal communication as a way of providing information takes place in community of people and from generation to generation is passed through as a learning process.⁹ Without using verbal codes or words people send messages intentionally and unintentionally. It is an aspect of communication which is used when repeating and completing a verbal message. Features such as an eye contact, body movement, touch, gestures, face expressions, clothing, smell, proximity and haptics are included in non-verbal communication.¹⁰ Human’s non-verbal behavior is significantly communicative, social and takes part in the expression of emotions. Every culture has its own concept of non-verbal communication. This concept as well as other aspects of culture is learned; however, unlike the others it is learned subconsciously. Only people closely accustomed to

⁷ Bednaříková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2008.

⁸ Chagla, S., M. *Cross-Cultural Communication*. (Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2005), 45.

⁹ Nakonečný, M. *Sociální psychologie*. Praha: Academia, 1999.

¹⁰ Chagla, S., M. *Cross-Cultural Communication*.

a given culture, such as long-term residents, are able to truly conform to non-verbal cues of a given culture. Occasional visitors should have a basic knowledge of these cues. Trying to imitate a culture's non-verbal cues could have rather negative than positive effect.¹¹

1.1.1 Personal space

“Anthropologists tell us that each of us walks around inside “bubbles of personal space.” The size of the bubble represents our personal territory, territorial imperative, or “personal buffer zones.” We neither like nor tolerate it when someone invades our bubble. We become distinctly uncomfortable.”¹² Keeping appropriate distance is equal to the respect, which we have toward an unknown territory. This territory represents a certain space around us and its disruption could bring about unpleasant feelings. Individuals that invade our territory, where they literally breathe into our ears or move their hands in front of our faces, are perceived as rude and aggressive and we instinctively move away from them. A respect for another person's territory can be demonstrated in many different ways. Even if we sit or stand at an appropriate distance we have to be conscientious not to disturb the other person's space with overstretched legs or excessive gesticulation.¹³

Within one culture people usually do not have a problem keeping an appropriate distance. The principles relevant to one region become so deeply rooted in all of us that we apply these principles almost subconsciously. A disregard of appropriate distance is used as a method of manipulating other people. Intentional reduction of an acceptable distance could suggest an attempt to control a partner by making him/her take a step back. On the other hand, if we completely ignore a person that appeared in our proximity we could interpret this as “he or she does not exist”. That is why it is better to confirm someone's presence simply by nodding even if we do not want to interfere our reading or a conversation.¹⁴

¹¹Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

¹²Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. (New York: Wiley, 1997), 41.

¹³Pernal, Ewa. *Taktně, profesionálně, elegantně: pravidla jednání a vystupování v obchodním a společenském styku*. Praha: Ekopress, 2001.

¹⁴Schneider, C. S., Barsoux, J., L. *Managing Across Cultures*. Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2003.

1.1.2 Touch

Touch is an important and significant part of communication. It includes different types of behavior ranging from handshake and clapping on back to hugging and kissing. People should avoid such forms of touch that can be unpleasant to others. Even though innocent, spontaneous gestures such as holding one's sleeve or shaking dirt off clothes could win a person a reputation of a problem maker. Touching can be perceived as inappropriate or even suggest hostility. The most appropriate time for touching is during a greeting when people hug, kiss or shake hands. The appropriate touch should also be used - for example an excessive squeeze testifies an effort to show power and dominance. The meaning of touch changes in accordance with who and how we touch someone, in which situation and on which part of human body.¹⁵

1.1.3 Facial expression

“According to Birdwhistell, the face is capable of producing some 250, 000 expressions. If language is the key to the core of culture, then nonverbal communication is indeed the heart of each culture. According to a neuroculture theory, nonverbal communication is one full of facial expressions and emotions. It states that while human beings are predisposed to make the connection between certain emotional states and facial muscles, it is through the continuous socialization, reward-sanction process within their culture that human beings acquire nonverbal display rules.”¹⁶ A human face is the most important mean of conveying an emotional state, an attitude of people and their reactions. Happiness, delight, fear, sadness and surprise are the easiest expressions that can be depicted from someone's face. From all the different types of non-verbal communication facial expressions are the most simulated. Pretended feelings come with words or after them. The actual feelings are noticeable in the face much earlier and also take a moment before ceasing altogether. A smile could also not be genuine. An insightful observer would be able to uncover the truth. A smile could also be perceived as hesitant, especially if one person does not understand

¹⁵ Bednaříková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2008.

¹⁶ Chagla, S., M. *Cross-Cultural Communication*. (Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2005), 48.

what the other person talks about. Smile is as important as eye contact in achieving a successful communication.¹⁷

Nonverbal communication through eye contact exists in almost every social situation and is its significant component. Eye contact expresses an interest in a person one tries to contact with. On the other hand, avoiding eye contact or its interruption usually reveals the fact that a person is not interested in communication with the other person. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this general rule. A person looks directly at another person more often when listening than speaking. The main reason why a person looks at others is to find out what is the reaction to his or her words. In certain cases the more appropriate approach would be not to look directly when speaking about things that are too personal. An ordinary look takes usually from one to seven seconds. People look somewhere else when speaking and listening the rest of the time.¹⁸

1.1.4 Gesticulation

Gesticulation includes movements of hands, conscious and unconscious gestures. It is a type of non-verbal communication that is demonstrated by gestures – symbols representing words, phrases or emphasizing people's claim. They are used for the same conveyance as words are. Gesticulation is mainly represented by hand movements, which often accompany and complete a person's verbal speech.¹⁹

There are four major types of gestures:

1. "Illustrators are intentional gestures that are meant to help clarify or support a verbal point or message, such as pointing to an object that is being discussed."²⁰ Illustrators accompany speech and are mostly performed by hands, eyelids or eyebrows. People use smaller amount of illustrators when they are bored, unconcerned, nervous or do not know what to say.²¹

¹⁷ Bednařiková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*.

¹⁸ Hall, J., Bradford. *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication*. CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.

¹⁹ Bednařiková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*.

²⁰ Hall, J., Bradford. *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication*, 170.

²¹ Bednařiková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*.

2. Affect displays are used to complete, enhance or fully substitute a verbal communication. “Generally, affect displays that contradict the verbal message are viewed as more truly reflecting person’s feelings.”²²
3. Regulators are signals which monitor, coordinate, control or keep speech. They play an important part in initiating and finishing a communication. The most typical regulators are handshake, head nodding or look.²³
4. Adaptors are characterized as gestures, movements or other activities used to satisfy personal needs, e.g. scratching oneself. They can be also focused on other person (sweeping one’s hair) or things (playing with a pen).²⁴“These types of nonverbal actions are thought to help one adjust to a situation, rather than communicate a message purposefully.”²⁵

²² Hall, J., Bradford. *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication*, (CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005), 170.

²³ Bednaříková, Iveta. *Sociální komunikace*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2008.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Hall, J., Bradford. *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication*. *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication*, 171.

2 CULTURE

When speaking about culture it is necessary to distinguish cultures in narrowed and broaden concepts. Culture in a narrowed concept is exercised especially in the humanities' disciplines, which explore the works of mankind. Culture in a broaden concept is, according to Hofstede, collective programming of the mind that differs members of one group of people from different group of people.²⁶

Culture is everything what people have, what they think, what they do and what they deal with as members of a certain society. It means if they have something they have to have all the needed material; if they think they create new thoughts, values and attitudes; if they do something they operate within certain norms. All the above takes place within a group, a society, which suggests that at least two persons or more usually share a culture. The main characteristic of a culture is learned behavior that is transmitted from generation to generation and is shared by all members of society. Culture formulates the actions of its members and their visions about the world. The world, according to Geert Hofstede, is full of confrontation among people, groups and nations, which think, feel and negotiate differently. At the same time people, groups and nations face the same problems and their solving requires cooperation of all.²⁷ Hofstede's opinion is based on an idea that "Every person carries within him or herself patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting that were learned throughout the person's lifetime. As soon as certain patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting have established themselves within a person's mind, he or she must unlearn these patterns before being able to learn something different and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time. Using the analogy of the way computers are programmed, this book will call such patterns of thinking, feeling and acting mental programs."²⁸ According to Hofstede culture is a collective phenomenon because it is at least partially shared by people who live or lived in the same social environment where they met. Culture is learned, not inherited. It is not derived from genes but from a social environment. It is necessary to differentiate between a person's character and a nature of

²⁶ Hofstede, G., Hofstede J.G., Minkov, M. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 4.

²⁷ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

²⁸ Hofstede, G., Hofstede J.G., Minkov, M. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*, 4.

an individual.²⁹ A societal culture expresses interaction of attitudes, values, traditions, beliefs and other values, which are then shared by people belonging to this given culture. Culture cannot be considered as a single piece but as a set of values. This set of values represents principles that are accepted by members of a certain group and to which every member adapts.³⁰ People start perceiving their culture when they compare it to another, especially when they are in contact with that particular culture.³¹

2.1 Cultural Differences

Many people in the past assumed that interaction was limited due cultural differences. Cultural differences were considered as barriers to communication between people from different parts of the world. But nowadays, these differences are viewed as resources by many global leaders who are seeking business relationships by travelling the world.³² Most of individuals grow up in a certain limited environment (their own natural environment, their family, their town, their country). When a person reacts to her or his specific natural environment, he or she forms specific daily habits, stereotypes, and ways to satisfy his or her needs. This helps people to adapt to their natural environment, nature and society around them. When a person is raised from a childhood in an environment of one culture, he or she learns how to live in this local natural setting, is raised by his or her family and school and is familiar with a local culture. However, what a person learns under specific conditions might not work under the conditions of another culture. We can observe some signs of cultural differences at a first sight (traditional clothes, unique jewels). Some of them we recognize when a man begins speaking in a different language or when we finally learn his or her expressions, opinions, values and customs. Most people comprehend cultural differences only when they suddenly find themselves in an environment of another culture. When we are willing and capable to look at our own culture as something that is

²⁹ Hofstede, G., Hofstede J.G., Minkov, M. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*.

³⁰ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*.

³¹ Schneider, C. S., Barsoux, J.,L. *Managing Across Cultures*. Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2003.

³² Harris, R., P., Moran, T., R., Moran, V., S. *Managing Cultural Differences. Global Leadership Strategies for the 21st. Century*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004.

not perfect, only then are we able of better understanding other cultures that have entirely different values and customs based on the conditions under which they developed.³³

2.2 Dimension of National Culture

Nowadays people live in global world. With the advances in technology the world and the international community are getting closer and closer together. People from different parts of the world have an opportunity to work and communicate with people from other parts of the world more often than ever before. To be able to communicate with anyone from another culture, a person must be aware of cultural differences between his/her and the other culture. To better understand these differences Hofstede identified a model of cultural dimensions that serves as a tool to differentiate one culture from another. Hofstede derived cultural dimensions from research, which he accomplished in different national branches of IBM. From his point of view, each dimension reflects a certain aspect of a culture that can be measured and compared with other cultures. These aspects consist of different trends and phenomena, which are found in given society.³⁴

2.3 The Four Dimension of culture

2.3.1 Power distance

Range of power can be defined as a span in which less powerful members of institutions and organizations of a given country expect and acknowledge the fact that the power is unequally divided. Institutions such as family, school are the basic unit of a society; organizations are places where people work.

In cultures with high range of power its members consider great tendency to power in institutions and organizations as unproblematic and they do not have a problem to except it. On the other hand in cultures with low range of power it is for its members problematic

³³ Kocourek, Jiří. "Kultura a kulturní rozdíly," Czechkid, <http://www.czechkid.cz/si1140.html> (accessed January 26, 2012).

³⁴ Hofstede, G., Hofstede J.G., Minkov, M. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.

and they are against it. The higher the distance is in a culture, the more inequalities are accepted.³⁵

2.3.2 Collectivism versus individualism

This dimension demonstrates to what extent distinct members of certain culture are considered a part of a social community and how much they feel indebted to it. Members of collectivist cultures perceive themselves as members of a social group and try to create personal goals in accordance with this group. “People from birth are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.”³⁶ On the contrary, members of individual cultures perceive themselves as autonomous individuals and make every effort to attain their personal goals separately from the interests of his/her social group.³⁷ “Individualism is characteristic of societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his/her immediate family.”³⁸

2.3.3 Uncertainty avoidance

“Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules.”³⁹ This dimension describes the extent of uncertainty and fear in a specific culture caused by unclear and ambiguous situations. For members of cultures with high extent of uncertainty avoidance directional/management rules of a private and a public life are highly constrained. Members respond to uncertain situations with disorientation or even aggression. The members of a culture with low extent of uncertainty and their

³⁵ Hofstede, G., Hofstede J.G., Minkov, M. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.

³⁶ Bočánková, M., Quigley, I., Gussis, S., Tomek, J. *Intercultural Communication*. (Praha: Vysoká škola ekonomická, 2006), 10.

³⁷ Hofstede, G., Hofstede J.G., Minkov, M. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*.

³⁸ Bočánková, M., Quigley, I., Gussis, S., Tomek, J. *Intercultural Communication*, 10.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

directional/management rules of private and public life are minimally constrained and they react to unclear or chaotic situations relatively calmly.⁴⁰

2.3.4 Femininity versus masculinity

This dimension explains to what extent are, in specific cultures, male and female roles separated from each other or how fixed they are. In masculine cultures social roles of a male and a female are separated. Male roles are characterized by an effort to achieve performance, domination and material motives, while female roles are determined by protectiveness, modesty, solidarity and sympathy. In feminine cultures almost every social role can be performed by both males and females because in this type of culture female and male roles are not defined.⁴¹”Feminine cultures are more typical in colder climates, suggesting that equal partnership between men and women improves the chances of survival and population growth in these climates.”⁴²

2.4 The USA and Chinese culture

With increasing international mobility of managers and employees in today’s world, cultural differences need to be taken into consideration due to the fact that everyone comes from a different part of the world. To be able to cooperate with persons from different cultures, to understand a lifestyle of foreign partners, neighbors or to respect different approaches becomes an important part of work and home environment. Understanding cultural differences and being aware of fundamental characteristics of given cultures improves cross-cultural interaction and helps people to avoid embarrassing situation. With the ability to understand these differences people are able to convey their thoughts and opinions. The method of studying different cultures is remarkable and significant for interaction with them. The USA and China are two fascinating cultures that have different cultural norms, values, social structures and ways of forming relations. In today’s world

⁴⁰ Hofstede, G., Hofstede J.G., Minkov, M. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: International Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bočánková, M., Quigley, I., Gussis, S., Tomek, J. *Intercultural Communication*. (Praha: Vysoká škola ekonomická, 2006), 15.

they belong to leading global super powers and both countries are popular tourist destinations with different cultural characteristics.⁴³

2.4.1 China

Chinese see the world from their point of view and most of them cannot help themselves but not to trust people who deviate from accepted norms. On the contrary, they are impressed and flattered if foreigners do things the right way – Chinese way. To understand what Chinese people expect and why they do things certain way is important for all who want to make business or visit this country. To achieve successful business relations with Chinese one needs to learn the basic Chinese cultural customs and norms. For successful formation of relationships one has to respect and acknowledge Chinese values and beliefs. If there is a country with characteristics that are difficult to depict - then it is China. It is due to the country's size, diversity, development and changes over the past 50 years.⁴⁴

2.4.2 The USA

In the USA, it is possible to find many comparable and many diverse things based on a region, social groups and belonging. Nevertheless, there are characteristics typical for Americans, especially for those who have certain economic relations with foreign countries. Those mainly are: national pride, identification with fundamental ideals and political principles of the Constitution, respect for external symbols such as the anthem and the flag -all regardless of political opinions. Very sensitive issues are discrimination against minorities, religious groups, women, etc. At first, people from the USA appear to be very friendly and open, but a closer look suggests otherwise. Forming a friendship in the USA is not easy. Outwardly forthcoming people defend their privacy and allow only people who they truly know and trust to enter their private lives. Americans are considered

⁴³Bennett, Rachel. "Difference between American and Chinese Culture". *eHow.com*, http://www.ehow.com/about_6453596_difference-between-american-chinese-culture.html (accessed February 14, 2012)

⁴⁴Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

hard-working people who work hard to achieve their goals. They are taught to have self-esteem and confidence in their skills, abilities and qualities.⁴⁵

2.5 Differences between the USA and Chinese Culture

2.5.1 Collectivism versus individualism

One of the most important and basic differences between China and The USA is indisputably the role of an individual in a society. In America, the emphasis is put on personal achievements, creativity and initiatives. People are proud of their individual differences; they see and respect these as the main attribute that makes them unique. Uniqueness is the achievement itself; it is important not to be completely the same as others.⁴⁶ Americans are taught to be and to take care of themselves, since no one else is going to do it for them. They want to solve their own problems and be as much free and independent in decision making as possible. A freedom means to have happiness in one's own hands, to take care of themselves and set their goals.⁴⁷ People in the West do not appreciate conformity but distinctive expressions, determination and independence.⁴⁸ American culture is an individualistic culture where freedom, development of individual personality, freedom of expression and personal success of individual are considered as the highest values.⁴⁹

On the contrary, Chinese people place a high importance on completely different values. People think about ideas in a collective sense and value group cooperation. Issues are discussed for a long time until an agreement is reached. Once a decision is made, it is expected that individual group members will respect this decision without questioning it, at least not openly. Chinese basically make an agreement within their group. In exchange for obedience and loyalty its members can expect protection and support. Chinese are expected to be careful and diligent in fulfilling their responsibilities toward other members of the

⁴⁵ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

⁴⁶ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁴⁷ Nový, I., Machl-Schroll, S. *Spolupráce přes hranice kultur*. Praha: Management press, 2005.

⁴⁸ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*.

⁴⁹ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

group. It is important to point out that they usually do not feel the same responsibilities toward strangers/outside people (with the exception of guests). Chinese put a great emphasis on how the team is affected by their individual actions and they give up their personal benefits for the greater good.⁵⁰ The basis of their culture is a group success.⁵¹

2.5.2 Time

“Time is considered to be a fundamental one in our day-to-day schema of things. Whether the humans like it or not, they are all invariably guided by the concept of time which has internalized in their life through biological cycles like life and death, hunger, days, months, annual cycles, sleep, growth, metabolism of our body etc. Like context, time is variable across all levels of culture – social, professional, and functional.”⁵² Different cultures have a significantly different approach to time, for example short-term (seconds, minutes) long-term (decade). Regardless of the approach, time affects our work and private environment. Two separate approaches to time can be characterized in regards to time management. According to the first approach people use their time in the most effective way and would like to a certain extent regulate it. According to second approach, time is not “the boss of a person” there are more important things than just “watching the clock”.⁵³

In today’s world there are several time systems where the most important concepts defined by Edward T. Hall focus on different approaches of various cultures known as the monochronic and the polychronic time. The USA belongs to the first group characterized by punctuality and obsession with time. Americans work under the presumption that the time period during which nothing happens is a waste of time. Each unit of time matters based on the renowned principal “time is money”.⁵⁴

On the other hand, In China, people put less emphasis on punctuality and are more flexible with arranged plans and deadlines. They consider time as a mere suggestion.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People’s Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁵¹ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

⁵² Chagla, S., M. *Cross-Cultural Communication*. (Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2005), 16.

⁵³ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*.

⁵⁴ Hall, E., T. *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.

⁵⁵ Bennett, Rachel. “Difference between American and Chinese Culture”. eHow, http://www.ehow.com/about_6453596_difference-between-american-chinese-culture.html (accessed February 14, 2012)

China does not directly belong to the monochronic or polychronic group but its manners and characteristics tend to be more polychronic.⁵⁶ Chinese are more inclined to arrange things at the last minute, which can create frustration and anxiety in people from other cultures. However, each task is issued its own operational procedure so most of the appointments, tasks and deadlines are eventually accomplished. The Chinese do not put the importance on time and schedule but on completion of tasks and negotiations.⁵⁷

2.5.3 Social structure

To achieve desired relations with foreign countries, particularly within interpersonal relations, one has to be aware of social structure within a given society and between societies as a whole. Differences within a social structure are directly related to social status, hierarchical power, and given respect. Within a structure of an individual society there are two distinct tendencies. The first categorizes each individual based on the family or group they were born in, became members by marriage, or secondary relations. The second proposes that a social status is not acquired by lineage but by one's own efforts.⁵⁸

It is also possible to differentiate formal and informal societies. China belongs to the first group that is organized strictly hierarchically. In a Chinese society egalitarianism was not really promoted - even during time of Communism. The way people interact with others and what their expected behavior should be were always influenced by their social status within a hierarchy of their society. In China it matters very little whether a person likes or dislikes their old relatives. Personal feelings are disregarded – everything is restricted to how conscientiously people fulfill their obligations. This system applies that the rich and powerful deserve a special respect which is often demonstrated by considerable subservience using means such as flattering words, bestowing kindness or presents.⁵⁹ Every Chinese person is a member of a family, a school, a working group or a

⁵⁶ Hall, E., T. *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.

⁵⁷ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁵⁸ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

⁵⁹ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*.

community. If one carries out his or her duties it leads to a social cohesiveness and a permanent harmony results in economic success.⁶⁰

On the contrary, the USA belongs to less formal group forming an egalitarian society with relatively small differences in social status. People are equal (some of them are more equal than others) and social status is generally gained not inherited.¹⁹ Family relations grow weak or strong on the basis of emotional incentives. If Americans take care of family members they do it more for love than duty. Behavior of Chinese is also motivated by emotions but sense of duty prevails. The Chinese often criticize the West that they do not sacrifice enough for their relatives and that they approach strangers with exceedingly exaggerated courtesy. The West often thinks the opposite about Chinese. In their opinion, Chinese would do anything for their relatives. Because of this obligation they do find themselves in unpleasant or even morally problematic situations. In contrast, they behave to strangers as if they did not even exist. In the West, if someone falls down in a public place or has an accident, someone usually stops and helps. Of course it does not happen always, but the willingness to help others in need is a quality that Americans like to pride themselves on.⁶¹

2.5.4 Privacy

According to Scott D. Seligman, privacy is a basic cultural differentiation between China and the USA. The expression “privacy” is difficult to translate directly into Chinese since this term for most Chinese simply does not exist. This is probably caused by an attitude that even an idea of being alone and unwatched is considered trivial in an overpopulated and overcrowded country. Chinese children usually do not have their own rooms, all interior doors are kept open and all family members have a free access to all rooms regardless of who sleeps where. Within a family the term of privacy almost does not exist. In the contrast, American parents try to provide their children with their own bedrooms where they can be alone. People from China generally keep very little secrets from their colleagues. Even neighbors know enough as to what is happening in their neighborhood. Due to the lack of privacy most of Chinese go out for walk when they want to be alone.

⁶⁰ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*.

Bigger cities offer enough anonymity especially after dark. Last but not least is a completely different fundamental aspect of privacy and that is a privacy of their personal feelings and thoughts. Hiding emotions is not just a Chinese custom but also highly desirable aim. Emotionless or also called “unpredictable” facial expressions that are oftentimes depicted by people from the West in the faces of their Chinese friends are in reality taught to Chinese children from their birth.⁶²

2.5.5 Harmony versus truth

The key to understanding Chinese courtesy is to recognize the importance of outer harmony to which everything in China adheres. Regardless of true feelings or of what is happening under the surface, a Chinese person is always expected to behave and never cause any distasteful or embarrassing situation. Only a few Chinese would consider it useful to reprimand a colleague for having done something that disappointed or irritated them. Americans would have approached this situation differently. They would have asked for a clarification of the issue because according to them it could prevent a recurrence of a similar situation in the future. During negotiations, the Chinese have a tendency to be silent, which requires a number of compromises from all participants. They do not always consider it necessary to speak up if someone expresses an opinion they do not agree with. If they did, then they would disturb this outer harmony. The Chinese of course do not lack the means of transferring criticism, disregard, disgust or anger. They can also sabotage, disrupt or hate. They are just doing it in a more clever way than their Western colleagues. Expressing such negative feelings would be considered a serious faux pas. Passive resistance can be as effective as active and it has a further advantage of being difficult to identify and does not disturb outer harmony.⁶³ On the other hand, Americans tend to have a need to express their thoughts. They are able to face problems and tell their opinions. From childhood they are taught to express personal opinions about what they consider as a truth

⁶¹ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*.

⁶² Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁶³ Ibid.

and what not. Discussion about a controversial topic or an open expression of criticism is not considered a barrier to negotiations.⁶⁴

2.5.6 Using mediators

As mentioned above Americans are not encouraged to hide their emotions. Open communication, direct interaction and positive feedback play a significant role in American communication. The Chinese people could consider this directness and assertiveness as impolite because in their culture one tries to avoid situations where they could get themselves into a direct confrontation with others. An inevitable need of Chinese to constantly maintain the outer harmony is largely the main reason why Chinese use mediators to convey unpleasant messages. They also use mediators to raise questions in cases when it is not appropriate to ask directly. To save a boyfriend from inevitable humiliation, a girl would arrange a meeting with a third person who would then convey a gloomy message of a breakup. According to American customs the boyfriend should have received this information straight from his girlfriend. This would be considered as an act of weakness in America, but Chinese consider it as a token of kindness. From Chinese point of view she prevented a possible confrontation that could have been embarrassing and unpleasant. Why cause a scene when one can convey the same message in a more humane way using “a remote control”? In the USA this indirect method of communication avoids mutual conversation, which most Americans need to solve a given situation. Americans would appreciate a certain amount of openness and responsibility, whereas Chinese put focus on maintenance of harmony.⁶⁵

2.5.7 Business sphere

The main features of American business sphere are: orientation to achieving goals, success, determination, and pragmatism. One outstanding characteristic that was already mentioned is individualism, which leads to the fact that an individual asserts him or herself in a society, school, work, and economic world or in politics. Therefore Americans prefer to

⁶⁴ Collective of authors, “Culture Matters,” China-nafsa, <http://china-nafsa.aief-usa.org/chapter3.pdf> (accessed February 13, 2012).

⁶⁵ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

work alone or with a small circle of colleagues. Americans are generally considered to be hard working and efficient. They are highly determined to achieve their goals. The proverb “Time is money” best describes the approach of American business partners. They arrive at their appointments on time avoiding excessive formalities, polite phrases and useless extensions. During meetings, company leaders attempt to achieve the primary goal and leave the fine points to their employees. If they are not able to reach determined goals or think that a negotiation does not shape up to their expectations they become impatient and show their negative attitude. They approach the process of concluding a contract with great respect, emphasizing, in accordance with the law, the exact formulation of laws and obligations of both parties. Generally they approach accepted liabilities with a very serious manner and they expect the same stance from their opposition.⁶⁶

When negotiating with Chinese partners it is essential to take into consideration some specific and substantial circumstances. It is mainly the ethnocentric idea that China is a centre of the world with the oldest civilization and lifestyle. People from China commonly attribute foreigners with worse rather than better characteristics. Even though Chinese appreciate partial positives of others, such in art or technology, they hold the idea that their moral and spiritual level is superior to others. During business negotiations Chinese are in general more patient than Americans. They rather react to others’ suggestions than have a responsibility for defining contents of particular negotiations. The importance of knowing “who speaks when” is also significant since the interruption of a speaker is considered as impolite. Chinese participants often complement proposals of other speakers by nodding their heads or humming - even after one or two sentences. These expressions mean “I heard you” or “I understand what you are saying”, not necessarily that “I agree with you” or “I give you my permission”. Misleading interpretations of these signals as a permission cause countless serious misunderstanding.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

⁶⁷ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

II. ANALYSIS

3 THE COMPARISON OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION GAINED FROM LITERATURE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE USA

In the first part of analysis I would like to point out a few cultural differences in particular situation and analyze them.

When meeting people from different countries, it is important to have basic knowledge of each culture to ensure effective, proper communication and interpretation. For many people, a business relationship with foreign partners or a friendship with a person from a different country is natural. Even though globalization unifies communication to a certain extent, it is still necessary to realize that there are deeply rooted cultural differences and specific behaviors in nonverbal communication which can influence communication. Every person needs to take these differences into account to avoid misinterpretation.

Non-verbal messages are an essential part of any kind of communication. When a person interacts with others, he or she uses non-verbal cues such as touch, gestures, eye contact, etc. Information gained by non-verbal communication is as important and valuable as information provided by verbal communication. A person is able to recognize feelings and attitudes of a person to whom they speak. Understanding a culture's non-verbal signs helps direct a conversation to the desired end result. Non-verbal signs not only show what a person wants, but also show what a person does not want to discuss or share. Based on the Albert Mehrabian's research people transfer 55% of information by using non-verbal communication. About 45% of information people convey by using verbal communication where about 7% of information is provided by words and the rest by tone of voice.⁶⁸

A comparison of Chinese and American ways of using non-verbal communication illustrates the existence of cultural distinctions in non-verbal communication. In today's world, the art of non-verbal communication among these leading super powers could have an important impact on how business partners, co-workers, or friends communicate with each other. The ability to comprehend non-verbal signs makes communication easier, which will, in turn, improve their relations.

3.1 Spatial Relationship

Personal space is an invisible space around each person during personal contact, bound by a person's comfort level with close interaction. It becomes bigger or smaller depending on the relationship of one person to another, the cultural environment, or the emotional state of the people involved.⁶⁹

There is a noted difference in the Chinese and American interpretation of personal space. In a Chinese culture, a socially acceptable distance among people in a room or in an elevator is rather smaller than in most of western cultures, including the USA. This is apparently due to a high population density in China, where being alone is almost impossible. In a Chinese culture a person would show his or her friendliness or make a conversation with another person by standing very close to them. Sometimes, it is also acceptable to gently touch the other person or face them directly during a conversation. This would be interpreted as an invasion of personal space by most American people and would make them feel uncomfortable. In an American culture it is typical to keep people at a distance. This is especially true when meeting someone for the first time, talking to a stranger, or to a person of the same gender. As mentioned above, the overpopulation in China had a big influence on their personal space. Most of Chinese people live in small houses that are crowded. Most times it is difficult to be alone or find a place where one could have privacy for a few minutes. As stated in 2.5.4, in China it is typical to grow up without privacy. In small flats all family members have free access to all rooms. In everyday negotiations, a Chinese person tends to stand closer to another person because they are used to being in close contact with other people, whether relatives or strangers.⁷⁰ By contrast, Americans are taught from childhood to respect the personal distance of people who are around them. They consider personal space as very important and its disruption could cause many conflicts in the USA. It is suggested to keep just about one arm's length (24 to 30 inches apart) distance when communicating with an American person.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Mehrabian, Albert. *Nonverbal Communication*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972.

⁶⁹ Hall, Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1966.

⁷⁰ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁷¹ Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

3.2 Touch

Touch is another integral type of nonverbal communication. There are considerable differences among different countries. A simple act of touch can be interpreted in many different ways depending on a person's cultural background. To avoid misunderstanding in these situations, it is important to follow each culture's etiquette as much as possible. In some countries, it is unacceptable to touch another person, whereas in others, it is an important part of communication.⁷² According to Axtell, the USA belongs to the first group where people do not touch. Americans are aware of the fact that if a person touches someone's arm or hand it could be considered a sexual offence. Employees, especially supervisors and managers, are educated and instructed to avoid touching their co-workers and subordinates to prevent a possible sexual charge and a lawsuit.⁷³

Although Americans fall into the "don't touch" group, their non-verbal communication differs when interacting with friends or acquaintances. For most Americans it is acceptable to hug their friends, pat their back, or give a friendly punch while in public. This type of close physical contact is not acceptable in the Chinese culture. On the other hand, it is surprising that even though in Chinese culture they do not show their emotions and rarely touch the opposite sex in a public, they do tolerate physical contact among people of the same sex. In China it is ordinary to see two men or women who are friends to hold hands, link arms, or have arms around each other's shoulders. In Chinese society, this is a friendly practice among people. It is perceived as a sign of friendship, not as a taboo. It is important to point out that this form of touch is not interpreted as sexual relationship. In the USA this type of physical contact may suggest a homosexual relationship.⁷⁴

⁷² Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

⁷³ Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

⁷⁴ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

3.3 Gestures

Gestures are the use of body movements to create symbols that are used intentionally to convey the same message as words. Gestures are an essential part of non-verbal communication, and at the same time, the most controversial, because the meaning of the same gesture can significantly differ in each culture and can cause entirely different reactions.⁷⁵ The first mentioned gesture used in the USA is “come here.” The common gesture for beckoning someone is to repeatedly curl the index finger toward the body. This would be not be correctly understood by a Chinese person.⁷⁶ In China the gesture for beckoning is performed by holding a hand out with palm out and wrist stiff. In the American culture this gesture would be understood as saying “good-bye”.⁷⁷

Misunderstanding could also occur when getting someone’s attention in a restaurant. In China, one of the common ways to get a waiter’s attention to get another cup of tea is to turn an empty cup upside down. This gesture has no meaning in the USA. An American person would try to get a waiter’s attention by raising hand with the index finger up at a head level or above. Axtell suggests that Americans use gesture based on their school experience where students have to raise their hands to get a teacher’s attention.⁷⁸

Another example is how Chinese and American people greet others and wish them good luck. When meeting people in China the common greeting gestures are shaking hands and/or nodding heads. This is similar in both cultures. However, in the US, another way of greeting someone in the public is kissing or hugging. In China this way of greeting is regarded as an awkward gesture particularly between the opposite sexes. Crossing fingers is also understood differently in both cultures. In an American culture crossing the index finger with the middle finger is interpreted as an expression of luck. In a Chinese culture this gesture actually has nothing to do with wishing “good luck.” In China this hand gesture signifies the numerical value of ten.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Šroněk, Ivan. *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání*. Praha: Grada Pub., 2001.

⁷⁶ Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do’s and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

⁷⁷ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People’s Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁷⁸ Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do’s and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

⁷⁹ Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do’s and Taboos of Body Language around the World*

On the other hand, some gestures have the same meaning in both countries. An example is nodding the head up and down to convey “yes” and shaking it side to side to convey “no.” In both cultures these movements are used to express agreement or disagreement.²³Sometimes a Chinese person can express his or her “no” by an energetic movement of a hand from side to side in front of their face. Another example of a gesture with similar meaning in both cultures is applause. Americans and Chinese use applause to express their appreciation for something or someone. In addition, in China the persons who receive the applause always put their hands together for their supporters as well – as token of mutual recognition.⁸⁰

3.4 Eye contact

Eye contact is another important communication tool. The main function of the eye is to provide a person with vision to see the world around them. Eye contact can express or fill in what a person is not able to capture with words and also reinforces or enhances what a person is trying to say. In both American and Chinese cultures, direct and/or indirect eye contact is essential in any daily communication. In American culture, direct eye contact signifies confidence and truthfulness. Direct eye contact is also considered a measure of respect for another person. If a person is found to have difficulty maintaining eye contact it might suggest he or she is trying to lie about something or mask certain emotions. On the contrary, in Chinese culture, it is not a sign of disrespect if one looks away and does not maintain direct eye contact. It is actually considered disrespectful to stare directly into someone’s eyes. Many times a Chinese person will just look away and gaze to give themselves some privacy from their close surroundings. In Chinese culture, it is normal and accepted to share admiration and excitement about new things that surround people through visual gaze. They express their interest by standing close to and gazing at the object or individual of interest with great intent. They like to share these new and curious things with their relatives and friends as well. In the American culture, it is a sign of

⁸⁰ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People’s Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

improper behavior to stare or point at someone. However, one must keep in mind that in a Chinese culture this is an absolutely acceptable behavior.⁸¹

3.5 Silence

The act of silence provides a person with a time to think, to formulate a thought, and to arrange and organize thoughts into words. The length of a silence or pause can also indicate to a listener the possible seriousness of a situation (that something is about to happen) or increase his or her alertness and excitement. Some cultures view silence uncomfortable and awkward. In Chinese culture silence plays an important part of a person's interaction with the rest of the world.⁸² Most of American business managers tend to have long speeches without any interruptions or pauses. Oftentimes, prolonged silence is interpreted as a sign of lack of confidence and knowledge.⁸³ On the other hand, in Chinese culture, silence during business negotiation is seen as appropriate to enhance positive results. For Chinese the act of silence is also seen as a sign of politeness. This does not mean that long pauses in conversations and business meetings are required or even regular. Sometimes silence is equally embarrassing in both cultures, especially when two people feel uncomfortable with each other and find it difficult to express or communicate their thoughts.⁸⁴

3.6 Smiling and laughter

Smiling is one of the common signs of non-verbal communication used all around the world. In most cultures, including that of the USA, a smile signifies positive feelings such as happiness, satisfaction, friendliness or a positive reaction to amusing situations. However, smile can also be easily misinterpreted. Often, in Chinese culture a smile can often signal that a person is embarrassed or uncomfortable with their surroundings. It is one of the ways a Chinese person deals with unpleasant situations in which they find themselves at a loss.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

⁸⁴ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

3.7 Antipathy gestures

There are some gestures that are perceived as acceptable in American culture, but are seen as offensive in Chinese culture, and vice versa. For example, in China, while eating, it is widely acceptable to make sounds such as belching, loud sipping, or loud chewing. Even making sounds such as sneezing, blowing the nose, or clearing the throat in a public are often regarded as a manifestation of a proper functioning of the human organism. In America, burping or passing gas in a front of other people is seen as very improper behavior.⁸⁶

Another example is a person's way of manoeuvring in and out of a crowd. In America, a person usually uses both hands to move people out of his or her way to create a passageway.⁸⁷ This manoeuvre still leaves some personal body distance between a person trying to get through and the rest of the crowd. To the contrary, in Chinese culture a person would use his or her entire body to move through a crowd while keeping the arms close to the body. In their culture it is considered unacceptable to touch someone else's body with hands without a valid reason.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.

⁸⁷ Axtell, Roger E. *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

⁸⁸ Seligman, Scott D. *Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners, and Cultures in the People's Republic of China*.

4 EVALUATION OF DATA OBTAINED FROM FORMULATED QUESTIONNAIRE FOLLOWED BY COMPARISON OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS AND INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM RESEARCHED LITERATURE

For the purpose of obtaining information pertinent to US and Chinese non-verbal communication, a questionnaire was formulated and then distributed to 30 persons born and living in the USA and 30 persons born and living in China. To gather the most accurate information, every age category was represented by 10 individuals from each respective country. Furthermore, 11 American and 13 Chinese participants were men, and 19 American and 17 Chinese were women. These participants had different occupations.

Both the English and Chinese versions of the questionnaire contained the same questions and answers to select. 14 questions in this questionnaire were focused to collect more recent information in regards to cultural differences between the two countries and their influence on interaction. The basic content of each paragraph of section 3 is represented by at least one question in this survey. Two questions asked the participants' age and gender to compare possible differences between different age and gender groups.

The purpose of this section is to summarize and evaluate answers gathered from American and Chinese respondents through completed questionnaires. At the same time the above mentioned questionnaire answers will be used to define cultural differences in non-verbal communication and these differences will be further compared with information obtained from researched literature. To provide a reader with an easier orientation within the text, this section has been divided into eight subsections according to the different forms of non-verbal cues described in section 3 (Spatial Relationship, Touch, Gestures, Eye Contact, Silence, Smile and Laughter, Antipathy Gestures). The full questionnaire is then included in the appendix.

4.1 Awareness of non-verbal communication

Survey question: **Are you aware of your non-verbal cues when communicating with someone?**

Non-verbal signs are an important part of any kind of communication. Non-verbal signs complement a person's speech. One cannot be interpreted and understood correctly without the other. To ensure proper communication and interpretation, it is necessary to be aware of

our own basic non-verbal cues and behaviors. In this questionnaire, 60% of Chinese participants responded that they try to pay attention to their non-verbal behavior when negotiating or communicating with someone. On the other hand, only 20% of American participants tried to pay attention their non-verbal cues. 80% were not really aware of “what they do and how they look” when negotiating or communicating with someone. See Table 1 below:

Table 1: *Are you aware of your non-verbal communication when negotiating or communicating with someone?*

	number	%
Americans	6	20%
Chinese	19	60%

4.2 Spatial relationship

Survey question: **When speaking with a friend, what is the average distance between the two of you?**

A personal space can be described as an invisible boundary where a person feels comfortable and secure. Stepping out of this boundary may have positive and negative effects on each individual. Depending on a relationship of one person to another or a cultural environment, our comfort zone might expand or shrink. As in Table 2, almost one half of American respondents selected 60-76cm (24-30 inches) as their average distance while speaking with a friend. The other half of American respondents keeps their average distance at about 55-60cm (20-24 inches). 23% of Chinese participants stand very close to and more than 70% prefer standing closer rather than further to a person they communicate with.

Table 2: *When speaking with a friend, what is the average distance between you two?*

American Response

inch	number	%
1. 16-20 inches	1	3%
2. 20-24 inches	15	50%
3. 24-30 inches	14	47%
4. 30-34 inches	0	0%

Table 3: *When speaking with a friend, what is the average distance between you two?*

Chinese Response

cm	number	%
1. 40-55 cm	7	23%
2. 55-60 cm	22	73%
3. 60-76 cm	1	3%
4. 76-86 cm	0	0%

Survey question: **When speaking with someone who you do not know well, what is the average distance you keep between the two of you?**

The participants' answers to this question should clarify whether a person living in the USA keeps the same distance when communicating with friends or strangers. It should also pinpoint whether the Chinese prefer to keep closer distance - even to a stranger. As illustrated in Table 4, 77% of American respondents prefer keeping a stranger at a distance of about 60-76cm (24-30 inches).

Table 4: *When speaking with someone who you do not know well, what is the average distance you keep between the two of you?*

American Response

inch	number	%
1. 16-20 inches	0	0%
2. 20-24 inches	3	10%
3. 24-30 inches	23	77%
4. 30-34 inches	4	13%

The data gained from Chinese respondents points out that 67% keep a distance of about 55-60cm when communicating with a person they do not know. However, the results also show that about 30% of respondents prefer greater distance of about 60-76cm (Table 5).

Table 5: *When speaking with someone who you do not know well, what is the average distance you keep between the two of you?*

Chinese Response

cm	number	%
1. 40-55 cm	1	3%
2. 55-60 cm	20	67%
3. 60-76 cm	9	30%
4. 76-86 cm	0	0%

Summary: According to the researched literature, the average distance among people in the American culture is about 60-76 cm (24-30 inches). This finding closely correlates with answers received through the formulated questionnaire. As seen in Tables 2 through 5, about 50% of American participants keep a shorter distance (20-24 inches) when communicating with their friends compared when they meet or are approached by a stranger (60-76cm). However, about 47% of respondents stated that they keep the same distance when dealing with a friend or a stranger (60-76cm).

As data shows in Table 3, most Chinese respondents (73%) selected 55-60cm as their comfortable average distance while speaking to a friend. As seen in Table 5, 67% of Chinese participants selected again 55-60cm as a comfortable average distance, at this time, while speaking to someone he or she does not know. It appears and correlates with information found in the researched literature that Chinese people are more comfortable keeping a short distance between themselves and other people, no matter if they are friends or strangers. As explained in section 3 of this paper, overpopulation of China significantly influenced a personal space of its people. However, it is very interesting that 30% of Chinese respondents actually selected 60-76cm distance as an acceptable comfort zone while speaking to someone they do not know very well. Six of the participants belonged to the age group 30-45 and 4 to the 18-30 age group. It appears that with expanding business overseas and opening to new markets, such as the USA, not only the Americans but also the Chinese younger generations adopt each other's acceptable cultural norms and attitudes.

4.3 Touch

Survey question: **In your country, is it common to see people in public places touching each other?**

Touch can significantly influence people's emotions and attitudes toward each other. Touching signifies a close physical contact with another person or their body part such as fingertips, hands, or arms. As seen in Table 6, all of American respondents considered touching an appropriate form of affection in public, however, mostly in relation to a heterosexual relationship. In regards to Chinese respondents, 10% labeled affectionate touching in public as unacceptable while 70% acceptable between people of the same sex (see Table 7).

Table 6: *In your country, is it common to see people in public places touching each other?*

American Response

	number	%
1. Yes, but mostly couples	30	100%
2. Yes, but mostly people of the same sex	0	0%
3. No	0	0%

Table 7: *In your country, is it common to see people in public places touching each other?*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. Yes, but mostly couples	6	20%
2. Yes, but mostly people of the same sex	21	70%
3. No	3	10%

Survey questions: **You see two men on the street holding hands or having arms around each other's shoulders. What would you say it suggests?**

The previous survey question concentrated on obtaining answers addressing the open display of public affection between two persons overall. This survey question particularly addresses opinions about physical contact between persons of the same sex. From this questionnaire, 67% of Chinese participants see this behavior as an evidence of friendship and 33% as a proof of homosexual behavior (see Table 8). On the contrary, all 30 American respondents – 100% - considered 2 men holding hands or having arms around each other's shoulders as an attestation of homosexual behavior (see Table 9).

Table 8: *You see two men on the street holding hands or having arms around each other's shoulders. What would you say it suggests?*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. An indication of friendliness	20	67%
2. An indication of homosexual behavior	10	33%
3. An indication of a socially unacceptable behavior	0	0%

Table 9: *You see two men on the street holding hands or having arms around each other's shoulders. What would you say it suggests?*

American Response

	number	%
1. An indication of friendliness	0	0%
2. An indication of homosexual behavior	30	100%
3. An indication of a socially unacceptable behavior	0	0%

Summary: Touch as another means of non-verbal communication can be very easily misunderstood if a person does not pay a close attention to local regional cultural norms. The lack of understanding and deficient knowledge can have a detrimental influence on overall communication and its end result. As seen in Tables 6 and 9, a public display of affection between opposite sex in the USA seems to be a culturally acceptable norm of behavior. For most Chinese, a public display of affection is socially acceptable between persons of the same sex and indicates friendship rather than a close interpersonal relationship (Table 7 and 8).

In regards to touch, most of the questionnaire results closely correlated with the results from researched literature. However, as seen in Table 8, about 33% of Chinese respondents perceived 2 men holding hands as a sign of homosexual behavior. The participants that selected this answer ranged between 18-30 years of age. It appears that with increased proliferation of foreign markets, not only one country's business but also its cultural norms and behaviors have an influence on cultural norms and behaviors of another.

4.4 Gestures

Survey question: **How would you signal to someone to “come here”?**

Gestures usually involve a movement of a body or a particular body part as a mean of communicating certain thoughts, attitudes or feelings. Gestures are seen as an essential part of non-verbal communication, and at the same time, the most controversial, because the meaning of the same gesture can significantly differ in each culture and can cause entirely different reactions. As stated in researched literature, in the Chinese culture, a typical gesture for signaling “come here” is to hold a hand out with palm out and wrist stiff. As seen in Table 10, 100% of Chinese participants are in agreement with this statement. On the other hand, literature suggests that the typical American gesture for “come here” is curling the index finger toward one’s body. In this instance 47% of American respondents were in agreement with this statement. Another 50% of participants indicated that instead of the index finger they curl all the fingers of their hand (Table 11).

Table 10: *How would you signal to someone to “come here”?*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. With the palm up repeatedly curling the index finger and wagging it toward your body.	0	0%
2. Holding a hand out with palm out and wrist stiff.	30	100%
3. With the palm up repeatedly curling all fingers and wagging them toward your body.	0	0%

Table 11: *How would you signal to someone to “come here”?*

American Response

	number	%
1. With the palm up repeatedly curling the index finger and wagging it toward your body.	14	47%
2. Holding a hand out with palm out and wrist stiff.	0	0%
3. With the palm up repeatedly curling all fingers and wagging them toward your body.	16	50%

Survey question: **What would you do to get a waiter’s attention to bring you another cup of tea?**

As seen in Table 12, all of the 30 American respondents would raise their hand to the head level or above with their index finger pointing up. On the other hand, the majority of

Chinese participants would turn an empty cup upside down (Table 13). The above selected responses suggest that one culture’s gesture might have no meaning in another.

Table 12: *What would you do to get a waiter’s attention to bring you another cup of tea?*

American Response

	number	%
1. To raise a hand with the finger index up at a head level or above	30	100%
2. To turn an empty cup upside down	0	0%
3. To wistle	0	0%

Table 13: *What would you do to get a waiter’s attention to bring you another cup of tea?*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. To raise a hand with the finger index up at a head level or above	0	0%
2. To turn an empty cup upside down	30	100%
3. To wistle	0	0%

Survey question: What would you do to express your disagreement with someone or something?

As implied from written sources, the most common way to express disagreement in the American culture is to shake one’s head from side to side. Survey results show 77% of American participants express disagreement in the same way. 23% of American respondents added that not only do they shake their head side to side but also move their hand from side to side in front of their face at the same time (Table 14). On the other hand, according to Seligman, to express a disagreement in a Chinese culture, a person would move a hand from side to side in front of his or her face. As seen in Table 15, 70% of Chinese participants selected that answer from a given questionnaire.

Table 14: *What would you do to express your disagreement with someone or something?*

American Response

	number	%
1. Shake the head site to site.	23	77%
2. Move a hand from site to site in front of my face.	0	0%
3. Shake the head from site to site and move a hand site to site in front of my face in the same time.	7	23%

Table 15: *What would you do to express your disagreement with someone or something?*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. Shake the head site to site.	0	0%
2. Move a hand from site to site in front of my face.	21	70%
3. Shake the head from site to site and move a hand site to site in front of my face in the same time.	9	30%

Summary: As seen in the examples above, gestures are used in both American and Chinese cultures to emphasize an idea, express a feeling, or attain a desired reaction/response. The majority of respondents agreed with Seligman and Axtell’s written work. In addition, American and Chinese participants seem to combine both hand and head movements to suggest the importance and emphasize the meaning of expressed message. Gestures play a significant role in the communication process, and can be very culture specific, as proven from the examples above. A person communicating with either Americans or Chinese must be aware of each culture’s specific gestures to prevent misinterpretation.

4.5 Eye contact

Survey question: **In your country eye contact is considered...**

Eye contact can express or further enhance person’s intentions or attitudes. Specifically direct eye contact has a different importance in American and Chinese culture. Researched literature suggests that in Chinese culture, most people consider direct eye contact disrespectful. As seen in Table 16, 73% of Chinese participants viewed direct eye contact as insignificant. 27% of respondents elected to answer that direct eye contact is important if they speak to a superior. On the contrary, as mentioned in previous sections, direct eye contact in American culture signifies respect, attentiveness and truthfulness. 100% of American respondents agreed that eye contact is an extremely essential communication tool

Table 16: *In your country eye contact is considered...*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. Important; through eye contact I show respect and attention to a person who I speak with	0	0%
2. Important; when I speak with my friend	0	0%
3. Important; when I speak with my superior	8	27%
4. Not important; I try to avoid direct eye contact	22	73%

Table 17: *In your country eye contact is considered...*

American Response

	number	%
1. Important; through eye contact I show respect and attention to a person who I speak with	30	100%
2. Important; when I speak with my friend	0	0%
3. Important; when I speak with my superior	0	0%
4. Not important; I try to avoid direct eye contact	0	0%

Summary: It appears that the importance of eye contact is very culture-specific in regards to the USA and China. A Chinese or American person has to be well aware of, and respect, these cultural differences. For example, during a business transaction, an American businessperson expects direct eye contact while dealing with Chinese clients, while a Chinese client may not.

4.6 Silence

Survey question: **Do you prefer doing longer pauses in a conversation or during business meetings?**

Silence implies no exchange. However, even with words, pause in a conversation can positively or negatively influence open communication. American and Chinese cultures perceive silence as either positive or negative depending on the length of a given silence. Table 18 clearly points out that more than a half of Chinese respondents prefer longer pauses in a conversation compared with 57% of American participants who prefer long pauses only from time to time. (Table 19)

Table 18: *Do you prefer doing longer pauses in a conversation or during business meetings?*

American Response

	number	%
1. Yes	0	0%
2. No	13	43%
3. Sometimes	17	57%

Table 19: *Do you prefer doing longer pauses in a conversation or during business meetings?*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. Yes	20	67%
2. No	0	0%
3. Sometimes	10	33%

Summary: Available researched written sources suggest that the act of silence in a Chinese culture is an important part of interaction. Longer pauses in a conversation signify full engagement, politeness, and respect to the listener and the presenter. On the other hand, in American culture prolonged pauses in a conversation are often viewed as awkward. As stated previously, prolonged silence is often interpreted as a sign of a lack of confidence and knowledge. Presented questionnaire response results closely correlate with researched written sources. What differed in the questionnaire results compared with literature is that almost 57% of American respondents have chosen the answer that they sometimes prefer long pauses in a conversation. It appears it has become a part of American culture to have long periods of silence while speaking to allow for reorganization and reevaluation of thoughts.

4.7 Smile and Laughter

Survey question: **How would you react if someone falls down in public?**

The goal of this question was to find out how American and Chinese people deal with and conduct themselves in an uncomfortable situation. As in Table 20, 90% of Chinese respondents would try to smile “apologetically” in order to get over an uncomfortable situation. Most American participants suggested they would do something what could save this uncomfortable situation. (See Table 21)

Table 20: *How would you react if someone falls down in public?*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. I would laugh.	3	10%
2. I would help.	0	0%
3. I would smile to get over this uncomfortable situation.	27	90%
4. I would not care.	0	0%

Table 21: *How would you react if someone falls down in public?*

American Response

	number	%
1. I would laugh.	0	0%
2. I would help.	30	100%
3. I would smile to get over this uncomfortable situation.	0	0%
4. I would not care.	0	0%

Summary: Smile and laughter in American and Chinese cultures represent feelings of happiness or pleasure. Written sources and questionnaire results both suggest that an “apologetic” smile or even laugh is a common response to an uncomfortable situation among Chinese people. This behavior is considered ill-mannered in the American culture.

4.8 Antipathy gestures

Survey question: **Do you consider making sounds such as belching or loud chewing while eating as ...**

Antipathy gestures are gestures that are perceived as unacceptable, offensive, or rude. Different cultures have different views as to what is and is not acceptable. As per survey results in Tables 22 and 23 making sounds, such as belching or chewing loudly while eating, seem to be interpreted differently in both American and Chinese culture. 70% of Chinese respondents consider this behavior as a manifestation of a proper functioning of the human organism and 30% consider making these sounds as an impolite unacceptable behavior. Compared to Chinese, all 30 American respondents perceive this behavior as impolite and unacceptable (see Table 22).

Table 22: *Do you consider making sounds such as belching or loud chewing while eating as ...*

Chinese Response

	number	%
1. Impolite	9	30%
2. A manifestation of a proper functioning of the human organism	21	70%
3. Not impolite; when you are with friends	0	0%

Table 23: *Do you consider making sounds such as belching or loud chewing while eating as ...*

American Response

	number	%
1. Impolite	30	100%
2. A manifestation of a proper functioning of the human organism	0	0%
3. Not impolite; when you are with friends	0	0%

Summary: Both the American and Chinese cultures have different views as to what constitutes acceptable and what constitutes inappropriate behavior. This questionnaire specifically addresses behavior such as belching or chewing loudly while eating. All American respondents considered this behavior impolite. On the other hand, the majority of Chinese participants perceived it as appropriate. Researched written literature results compare with questionnaire results. It is interested to point out that 30% of Chinese questionnaire respondents chosen the option "impolite" as their answer. One can again appreciate the integration of different cultures and their norms. In the recent years there have been increased opportunities to do business abroad, to travel, or to access a computer, which further enhances communication between people from different parts of the world.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to compare previously gained information about cultural differences and their roles in non-verbal communication between the American and Chinese people. This information was obtained from written sources and compared with newly gained answers from a survey that was distributed to a certain number of selected persons of the given countries.

The results suggest that many cultural norms and non-verbal cues still remain the same for each culture. However, as it appears from a presented survey, in particular a younger population perceives some of the mentioned non-verbal cues differently in today's world.

The final results show that the average distance between people in the American culture is shorter when speaking with a friend than what was mentioned in the researched literature. Both literature and survey results state that the Chinese prefer to keep a closer distance - even to a stranger. However, compared with information obtained from literature, 30% of Chinese respondents selected further distance 60-76cm as an acceptable comfort zone. Those participants' ages ranged between 18 and 45.

Touch - as another non-verbal cue – and its appropriateness varies based on cultural norms of a given country. In the USA, only a public display of affection between people of opposite sex appears to be a culturally acceptable behavior. On the other hand, a public display of affection in China is also socially acceptable between persons of the same sex, and indicates a friendship rather than a close interpersonal relationship. In regards to touch, most of the questionnaire results closely correlated with the results from researched literature. However, about 33% of Chinese respondents perceived two men holding hands as a sign of homosexual behavior, and these respondents belonged to 18-30 year age group.

As both literature and survey data show, gestures are used in both American and Chinese cultures to emphasize an idea, express a feeling, or attain a desired reaction or response. The majority of respondents' answers correlated with gained information from written sources. In addition, both American and Chinese participants seem to combine hand and head movements to further intensify the importance and emphasize the meaning of an expressed message.

The importance of eye contact is very culture specific in regards to the USA and China. Newly gained answers from questionnaire correlated with information from researched sources. For Americans, eye contact is important because it signifies respect and

attention, while Chinese usually try to avoid direct eye contact. In this survey, however, 27% of Chinese respondents considered eye contact important if they speak with a superior. It appears that with increased proliferation of foreign markets social norms adapt and depend on with whom we communicate.

Researched written sources suggest that the act of silence in a Chinese culture is an important part of interaction. On the other hand, in American culture prolonged pauses in a conversation are often viewed as uncomfortable. Presented questionnaire response results closely correlated with researched written sources. However, almost 57% of American respondents have chosen the answer that they sometimes prefer doing long pauses in a conversation. It appears it has become a part of American culture to have long periods of silence while speaking to allow for reorganization and re-evaluation of thoughts.

Smile and laughter in American and Chinese cultures represent feelings of happiness or pleasure. Written sources and questionnaire results both suggest that an “apologetic” smile or even laugh is a common response to an uncomfortable situation among Chinese people. This behavior is considered ill-mannered in the American culture.

Both the American and Chinese culture has different views as to what constitutes acceptable versus inappropriate behavior. Researched written literature results compared with questionnaire results. 30% of Chinese questionnaire respondents chose the option “impolite” as their answer when asked how they feel about a person making sounds such as belching or loud chewing in public. Traditionally, these behaviors are seen as acceptable in the Chinese culture. Once again one can see the influence of one nation’s culture on the opinions of another culture.

In the recent years there has been an increase in opportunities to do business abroad, to travel, or to access a computer, which further enhances communication between people from different parts of the world. It appears that with expanding business overseas and opening to new markets, both the American and the Chinese younger generations adapt each other’s acceptable cultural norms and attitudes. This is true globalization of human social behavior.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AMERICAN AND CHINESE PEOPLE

1. Gender
 - Male
 - Female

2. Age
 - 18-30
 - 30-45
 - 45-60

3. Are you aware of your non-verbal cues when communicating with someone?
 - Rather yes
 - Rather no
 - Yes
 - No

4. When speaking with a friend, what is the average distance between the two of you?
 - 40-55 cm
 - 55-60 cm
 - 60-76 cm
 - 76-86 cm

5. When speaking with someone who you do not know well, what is the average distance you keep between the two of you?
 - 40-55 cm
 - 55-60 cm
 - 60-76 cm
 - 76-86 cm

6. In your country, is it common to see people in public places touching each other?
 - Yes, but mostly people of opposite sex
 - Yes, but mostly people of the same sex
 - No

7. You see two men on the street holding hands or having arms around each other's shoulders. What would you say it suggests.
 - An indication of friendliness
 - An indication of homosexual behavior
 - An indication of a socially unacceptable behavior

8. How would you signal to someone to “come here”?
 - With the palm up repeatedly curling the index finger and wagging it toward your body.
 - Holding a hand out with palm out and wrist stiff.
 - With the palm up repeatedly curling all fingers and wagging them toward your body.

9. What would you do to get a waiter’s attention to bring you another cup of tea?
 - To raise a hand with the finger index up at the head level or above
 - To turn an empty cup upside down
 - To whistle

10. What would you do to express your disagreement with someone or something?
 - Shake the head side to side.
 - Move a hand from side to side in front of my face.
 - Shake the head from side to side and move a hand side to side in front of my face in the same time.

11. In your country direct eye contact is considered...
 - Important; through eye contact I show respect and attention to a person with whom I speak.
 - Important; when I speak with my friend.
 - Important; when I speak with my superior.
 - Not important; I try to avoid direct eye contact.

12. Do you prefer doing longer pauses in a conversation or during business meetings?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes

13. How would you react if someone falls down in public?
 - I would laugh.
 - I would help.
 - I would smile to get over this uncomfortable situation.
 - I would not care.

14. Do you consider making sounds such as belching or loud chewing while eating as...
 - Impolite
 - A manifestation of a proper functioning of the human organism
 - Polite; when I am with friends.