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Running Head: CULTURE AND RAPPORT PROMOTION

Culture and Rapport promotion in Service Encounters: Protecting the Ties that Bind

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating possible cultural effects on the perceived importance of interactional concerns in service encounters. Individual values were examined to establish an explanatory framework for any effects that might emerge. Hong Kong Chinese and Filipinos participated in the present study by rating the importance of 12 interactional concerns in five hypothetical scenarios involving service provision. "Rapport promotion" was the only consistent factor of interactional concerns to emerge from the five scenarios in each of the two cultural groups. The dimensions of individual values, labeled "Conservation" and "Self-Transcendence" by Schwartz (1992), significantly predicted a respondent's level of rapport promotion across all scenarios, with self-transcendence partially unpackaging the cultural difference that emerged in one of the service scenarios. We use these results to support a model of communication in service provision that predicts communication concerns as arising from cultural socialization for personal characteristics and situational features of the encounter, leading to the petitioner's being more dependent on the good will of the service provider.

Introduction

The relationship between culture and communication has long been an area of interest to researchers in various disciplines. However, in an attempt to use culture as a tool to explain similarities and differences in communication behavior across cultures, it is necessary to "unpackage" culture in order to link communication outcomes to the operative psychological constructs (Bond, Zegarac, & Spencer-Oatey, 2000). Dimensions of cultural variability that are psychologically comparable among cultures are therefore used as tools to explain the differences. Values, which are considered an important core of culture (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952), have often been used as a variable to differentiate persons from different cultural groupings (Schwartz, 1992). However, there are a number of

problems in using cultural-level values to explain differences in communicative behaviour across languages/cultural groups (Bond *et al.*, 2000).

Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim and Heyman's (1996) found that individual-level factors (*viz.,* self construals and individual values) were better predictors of low- and high-context communication styles across cultures than cultural individualism–collectivism. So Gudykunst (2000) suggests that cultural level variables, such as individualism and collectivism, alone are not sufficient to establish a framework to provide causal explanations of social behaviors. Although cultural level variables may affect social behaviors directly by influencing the cultural norms and rules in a specific culture, not all the members in a specific culture are socialized in the same way and adopt all the cultural rules to the same extent. So, individual socialization processes clearly mediate the influence of cultural level variables on social behaviors.

It is necessary, therefore, to isolate relevant individual-level constructs that can bridge the gap between cultural level values and social behaviors (Kagitcibasi, 1994). Bond *et al.* (2000) maintain that in relation to communication, pragmatic variables (*i.e.*, factors that influence how people both produce and interpret communicative behavior) could yield important individual-level dimensions of cultural variability, and they call for further research into two influential aspects of social (linguistic) pragmatics: interactional 'rules' or maxims, and contextual factors. Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003) have taken up this call and explored whether interactional principles may influence communicative behaviour. This paper takes this research one step further. It explores whether interactional principles underlie communicative behaviour, and whether these principles are themselves influenced by individual-level values.

Previous Research on Interactional Principles

According to pragmaticists (e.g., Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967; Brown & Yule, 1983), communicative interaction has two fundamental functions: the transactional (or information-transferring/task achievement) function, and the interactional (or maintenance of social relationships) function. So, in communicative interaction people's use of language is influenced not only by their concern for efficiency (*cf.,* Grice's Co-operative Principle, 1989), but also by their concern for smooth relations (*cf.,* Leech's Politeness Principle, 1983). Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) propose that *face* concerns are the fundamental motivating force underlying the management of social relations, whilst Spencer-Oatey (2002a) maintains that sociality rights also have an important impact.

Drawing upon this work in linguistics, Kim (1993) proposed that there are five fundamental interactional concerns (originally called conversational constraints): concern for avoiding hurting listener's feelings; concern for avoiding imposition on the listener; concern for avoiding being evaluated negatively; concern for clarity; and also concern for effectiveness. Although people from different cultural groups may share the same interactional concerns, the relative importance of these concerns in each cultural group will probably differ. So, Kim (1994) compared the perceived importance of these interactional concerns among people from different cultural groups, and found significant differences among them. She then used national averages of individualism and collectivism to explain

these differences. The results showed that persons from more collectivistic cultures like Korea, when compared with those from more individualistic cultures like the United States, assigned significantly greater importance to the interactional concerns of not hurting their hearer's feelings and of minimizing imposition, but attributed less importance to concerns for clarity.

However, as Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003) point out, Kim (1994) did not check whether the questionnaire items were indeed measuring the pre-defined dimensions of interactional concern that she assumed they were measuring. So, in a partial replication of Kim's (1994) study, Spencer-Oatey and Jiang asked British and Chinese participants to rate the perceived importance of a number of factors that might influence what they would say in each of a number of hypothetical situations. The researchers then used factor analysis to extract the dimensions of interactional concerns, and found that Kim's five conversational constraints loaded onto just three factors: concern for task, concern for clarity, and concern for face/rapport. With the British respondents, the last factor seemed to comprise two lower-level factors, according to the perceived rights and obligations of the interlocutors in the scenarios (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003).

The Current Study

The primary objective of this study is to identify dimensions of interactional concern and compare their relative importance across different situations and different cultural groups by adopting the research approach of Spencer-Oatey (2002b). In addition, the relationship between interactional concerns and individual values will be explored as a way to "unpackage" any cultural differences in interactional concerns found.

According to Bond *et al.* (2000), communicative activities themselves are considered to be situationally responsive. Therefore, the strength of an interlocutor's interactional concerns may vary as a function of both situational constraints and personal values. To evaluate this proposition, various situations involving service transactions are explored in this study, along with values, to assess their effects on the service requester's interactional concerns.

Method

Participants

Undergraduates aged 17-23 who were studying in Hong Kong and the Philippines majoring in various disciplines participated in the present study. Questionnaires with more than 15% of items not answered were discarded. In Hong Kong, questionnaires were distributed at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. One hundred questionnaires were completed by 50 females and 50 males. In the Philippines, questionnaires were distributed at De La Salle University, Manila. Ninety-one questionnaires were completed by 48 females and 43 males. All of these respondents used Ilocano, Filipino or Tagalog at home, and listed their nationality as Filipino.

The Questionnaires

"Deciding What to Say" questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire booklet was the "Deciding What to Say" questionnaire, originating from Spencer-Oatey, from which interactional concerns in communication could be investigated. Participants were presented with five hypothetical descriptive scenarios and twelve specific interactional goals that may be relevant in the situation. They were asked to rate the importance of each interactional goal for that situation on a seven-point Likert scale.

The scenarios were based on daily life experiences with service provision: library and librarian, computer room and technician, restaurant and waiter. They were examples of authentic problematic situations reported by university students to one of the authors, and it is probable that most survey participants had experienced or observed similar situations. Interlocutor relations were kept constant across the five scenarios (service provider–customer who were unfamiliar with each other), but the scenarios differed from each other as shown in Table 1. See Table 2 for the five scenario descriptions used in this study.

Table 1
Similarities and Differences among the Scenarios

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5
Service Failure/Mistake	x	✓	✓	✓	?
Service Provider aware of Service Failure/Mistake	N/A	✓	x	x	x
Service Provider Refuses to give service	N/A	✓	x	x	x
Service Provider Offers Service	N/A	x	x	✓	x
Service Provider perceives Customer to have breached the rules set by the Service Provider	✓	x	✓	x	x

Table 2
Scenario Descriptions of the "Deciding What to Say" Questionnaire.

Scenario	Description
1	One day you are studying in your university library, in an area where no talking is allowed. You are talking quietly with a friend about an important piece of work you are doing together, and using the books to help you. A member of the library staff comes over to you and says politely, 'Sorry, this is a silent area. If you want to chat, you will need to go out.' However, you don't think you're disturbing anyone. When deciding how to reply to the member of staff, it would be very important for me to …
2	You are studying in one of the computer rooms at your university. Your computer has crashed twice, and when it crashes a third time, you go to a technician to ask for help because it is wasting you a lot of time. He simply says, 'Sorry, this happens all the time. I can't do anything.' When deciding how to reply to the technician, it would be very important for me to …

3	You go to the library issue desk to borrow some books, but the librarian says that you need to pay a small fine for an overdue book. You know very clearly that this is wrong, because you returned the book on time the previous week. When deciding how to reply to the librarian, it would be very important for me to …
4	You and a friend go to a restaurant for dinner. It is extremely busy and when you eventually receive your food, it is not what you ordered. You are disappointed, although this dish looks quite appetizing. A moment later, the waiter asks you, 'Is everything all right?' When deciding how to reply to the waiter, it would be very important for me to …
5	You are looking for a book that you really need for your work, and according to the computer catalogue, nobody has borrowed it. However, you cannot find it on the shelf, so you go to the information desk to ask for help. When deciding how to ask the librarian for help, it would be very important for me to …

After each scenario, the participants were presented with twelve interactional goals (the same for each scenario) that might influence what they would say, and they were asked to rate each of them on a seven-point Likert scale. These interactional goals fell into three broad areas, as suggested by the literature:

- task achievement/problem resolution
- rapport management (preservation of face, maintenance of smooth relations)
- speech style characteristics (clarity, directness, friendliness, or light-heartedness of speech)

The original English questionnaire was used in the Philippines, where English is the language of university education. A Chinese version of the questionnaire was used in Hong Kong. The English version was translated into Chinese by a fluent speaker of English and Chinese, and then back-translated by a different Chinese-English bilingual to check for linguistic equivalence.

The following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: A small number of interactional concernss will underlie the goals people consider when deciding what to say.

Hypothesis 2: The relative importance of the interactional concerns will vary from scenario to scenario.

Hypothesis 3: For a given scenario, participants from different social (linguistic-cultural/gender) groups may attach differing importance to a given interactional concern.

Schwartz's Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ). The second part of the questionnaire booklet was Schwartz's Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) (Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris, & Owens, 2001). [1] This was included in order to explore the relationship between people's interactional concerns and the individual values that they hold. Forty descriptions of people were presented in this questionnaire. According to Schwartz *et al*. (2001), these descriptions all fall into one of the following dimensions of value: Power (control over people and resources), Achievement (demonstrated competence based on social standards), Hedonism (pleasure and sensation gratification), Stimulation (excitement, novelty and challenge), Self-direction (independent thought and action), Universalism

(tolerance and protection of human populations and nature), Benevolence (preservation and enhancement of the welfare of significant others), Tradition (commitment to cultural and religious customs and ideas), Conformity (restraint of socially disapproved impulses and actions), and Security (safety and stability of society, relationships, and self).

These ten dimensions of values can also be organized into four value types - Openness to change, Conservation, Self-Transcendence, and Self-Enhancement (Schwartz, 1992). Openness to change is calculated by summing the value items constituting the domains of self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism; conservation is calculated by summing the value items constituting the domains of conformity, tradition, and security; transcendence is calculated by summing the value items constituting the domains of benevolence and universalism; self-enhancement is calculated by summing the value items constituting the domains of achievement and power. These higher-order dimensions will be used for analysis in the present study.

Participants were asked to rate the degree of representativeness of these descriptions to themselves on a six-point Likert-type scale (very much like me – not at all like me). Following Schwartz's original design of the questionnaire, there were two version of the PVQ. For male participants, male version of questionnaire using pronouns "he" or "him" and the possessive noun "his" was presented, while for female participants the female version using "she" or "her" or "hers" was presented.

The following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Given its emphasis on social stability, Conservation will be related to concern for rapport management (Schwartz & Bilsky, 2000).

Hypothesis 5: Given its emphasis on accomplishment, Self-Enhancement will be related to concern for task achievement.

Procedure

Hard copies of the questionnaires were presented to the participants. The questionnaires started with a paragraph reminding the participants that all the information collected would be kept confidential and explaining that the present study was aiming at investigating factors influencing people's communication.

Results

Dimensions of Interactional Concern

Principal-components factor analyses with varimax rotation were carried out on the collected data in order to explore the factor structure of the interactional goals. Due to the inconsistent meaning of two of the interactional goals across the five conversational situations concerning the objectives of the problematic situation and the rights or obligations of the speakers, these two items were discarded. Therefore, the analyses were carried out in each of the five scenarios from each culture with the same 10 interactional goals, so as to extract whatever consistent factors were present across the sets of data derived from each of the five scenarios in the two cultural groupings. That is, we were

searching for metrically equivalent dimensions of interactional concerns that would be applicable across all situations and both cultural groups. Comparisons across situations and cultures could then be made with assurance that the resulting dimensions of interactional concern were similarly grouped and hence conceptually equivalent across these sources of potential variability.

A consistent factor pattern consisting of eight goals emerged across the ten scenarios when a one-factor solution was used, *viz*., avoid embarrassing the interlocutor; avoid being embarrassed oneself; keep a smooth relationship with the interlocutor; minimize any trouble for the interlocutor; minimize any trouble for oneself; sound light-hearted and humorous; sound warm and friendly; sound restrained and unassuming. Based on content analysis of the items in the factor, we concluded that the factor was tapping "Rapport promotion", i.e., the general concern to maintain, protect and enhance the initiated relationship. The item-total correlations were always positive for each of these eight items in each of the ten scenario by culture combinations, and the Cronbach alpha for this factor of eight items was at least .70 in each scenario-by-culture combination. There were no negative item-whole correlations in any of the ten scenarios. Thus, there is a stable construct of rapport promotion characterizing each of the five situations for respondents in both Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The average of the eight items defining this factor was used as the dependent variable not only for comparison by using ANOVA tests, but also for correlations and regressions with values. In order to make cross-scenario comparison feasible, only the factor, "Rapport promotion", that was consistent defined by the same eight interactional goals across the five scenarios was considered. We did not analyze the two interactional goals that did not group consistently across the ten scenarios.

Cross-Gender and Cross-Scenario Comparisons of Rapport promotion

A 2 X 2 X 5 repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with gender (male and female) and culture (Hong Kongese and the Filipinos) as the between-subjects independent variables, and the five scenarios as the within-subjects independent variable, "Rapport promotion" was the dependent variable.

There was a significant main effect across the five scenarios, $F(4, 186) = 24.07$, $p < .001$]. There was no significant difference between males and females, $F(1, 189) < 1$, *ns*, nor was there a significant interaction effect between scenario and gender, $F(4, 186) < 1$, *ns*. There was no general difference between Hong Kongese and Filipino respondents, $F(1, 189) < 1$, *ns*, but there was a significant interaction effect between scenario and culture, $F(4, 186) = 5.29$, $p < .001$.

One-way ANOVA tests in each scenario showed that a significant difference in the perceived importance on "Rapport promotion" between Hong Kongese and the Filipino respondents was found only in the second scenario, $F(1, 189) = 8.98$, $p < .01$, where Filipinos evinced more concern for rapport promotion.

Post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed significant mean differences among the five scenarios: the first scenario was significantly different from the second and the third ones; the second one was significantly different from the other four; the third scenario was significantly different from the first and the second ones; the fourth scenario was significantly different from the second and the fifth ones; and the fifth scenario was significantly different from the second, the third and the fourth ones. The concern for "Rapport promotion" was highest in the fifth scenario (*M* = 5.07, *SD* = .07), followed by the first (*M* = 4.98, *SD* = .06), the fourth (*M* = 4.87, *SD* = .07), the third (*M* = 4.78, *SD* = .07) and the second (*M* = 4.51, *SD* = .07).

Individual Values

Gender (males and females) by culture (Hong Kongese and Filipinos) ANOVAs were run on the four, higher-order dimensions of value. Filipinos endorsed Self-transcendence more strongly than did the Hong Kongese (*M* = 4.80 versus 4.44), *F*(1, 187) = 14.34, *p* <. 001). There was no gender difference, nor was there an interaction between gender and culture.

Hong Kongese endorsed Openness to change more strongly than did the Filipinos (*M* = 4.60 versus 4.19), *F*(1, 187) = 8.49, *p* < .001. Again, there was no gender difference, nor was there an interaction between gender and culture.

There was a main effect for Conservation across cultural regions, F(1, 187) = 5.84, p < .025), but this effect was qualified by an interaction between gender and culture, *F*(1, 187) = 4.67, *p* < .025), such that the higher endorsement of Conservation by the Hong Kongese only held for the females, not for the males.

There were no effects for the value dimension of Self-enhancement.

Individual Values and Rapport promotion

To examine which dimension of individual values predicted "Rapport promotion", correlations between respondent's individual value dimensions and "Rapport promotion" averaged across the five scenarios were run. Only the dimensions of "Conservation", *r*(191) = .29, *p* < .01, and "Self-transcendence", *r*(191) = .22, *p* < .01, were significantly correlated with "Rapport promotion". Multiple regression using the enter method with these two value dimensions showed that only "Conservation" (β = .278, *p* < .05) significantly predicted "Rapport promotion" and accounted for 8.6%, *F*(2, 188) = 8.86, *p* < .01, of the variance in "Rapport promotion"; "Self-transcendence" could not significantly add to the prediction of "Rapport promotion" once "Conservation" had already entered the equation, β = .07, *ns*).

There was a culture main effect only for scenario 2, with Filipinos emphasizing "Rapport promotion" more than Hong Kongese. "Rapport promotion" was in fact correlated with the value dimensions of both "Conservation" and "Self-transcendence" for scenario 2, as it was across all scenarios. As shown just above, there was a main cultural difference in the endorsement of self-transcendence values with the Filipinos endorsing self-transcendence more strongly. Thus, it is possible that cultural differences in self-

transcendence values can account for or "unpackage" the difference in rapport promotion found for scenario 2.

To test this possibility, a blocked, multiple regression was run, with "Self-transcendence" entered in the first block and culture entered in the second block to predict "Rapport promotion" in scenario 2. The logic of this procedure is that if culture is no longer significant *after* self-transcendence has been entered, then "Self-transcendence" is able to unpackage the initial cultural difference in "Rapport promotion". As it turned out, culture remained significant in the second block, $F(2, 188) = 4.96$, $p < .005$, indicating that its effects on rapport promotion were not fully explained by cultural differences on the value dimension of self-transcendence. However, after extracting self-transcendence first, the percentage of variance explained by culture dropped from 4.5% to 3.2%. So, self-transcendence values account for *part* of the culture effect, but additional factors must still be responsible for the cultural difference in rapport promotion observed in scenario 2.

Discussion

These results suggest that as people encounter service providers in different situations, a consistent dimension of interactional concern, "Rapport promotion", is engaged. This finding is consistent with previous research on interactional concerns that underscore the important issue of nurturing, rather than damaging a relationship (*cf*. work on politeness/rapport management theory, *e.g.,* Brown and Levinson, 1978/1987; Leech, 1983; Spencer-Oatey, 2002a). In order to meet the interactional goal of obtaining the services they desire from the interaction, people have to be concerned about acting in an inoffensive way and promoting a positive exchange with the service provider, since the service provider channels these desired resources and has some discretion in the speed and manner of their delivery, indeed on whether they are delivered at all.

In addition, whenever an interaction takes place, there is a possibility of future extension. Therefore, every moment in each interaction is an investment in a potential future, so that promoting a positive interacting atmosphere in a specific encounter with the interlocutor may also enable benefits to be forthcoming in future encounters with that service provider. This issue is salient in service encounters, but may be generalized to other situations involving dyadic role relationships, as every such encounter involves resource exchanges of some sort and holds the possibility of future exchanges (Foa, 1971).

Nevertheless, there are clear differences in the level of concern for rapport promotion across situations. The mean level seems to vary according to the perceived right and/or importance for the customer of pursuing his/her task goal. The mean was lowest for Scenario 2, where the service provider refused a service he was obliged to provide; it was next lowest for Scenario 3, where the service provider made a mistake which had financial consequences for the customer; it was third lowest for Scenario 4, where the service provider made a mistake which the customer was not very disadvantaged by; it was second highest for Scenario 1, where the customer had broken the rules, but possibly justifiably; and it was highest for Scenario 5, which was a 'routine' service situation, where neither customer nor service provider were obviously at fault. So, when the petitioner of service has a justifiable claim to that service, there

is less concern about rapport promotion, since alternative forms of social pressure can be brought to bear on the service provider to render that service.

In general, participants from Hong Kong and Philippines were equally concerned about promoting their relationship with the service provider. There was, however, a significant interaction between scenario and culture in predicting the degree of "Rapport promotion". For the second scenario, but not for the other four, there was a significant difference between the two regions in the perceived importance of rapport promotion, with the Filipinos emphasizing it more. Some part of that difference is explained by cultural differences in the level of self-transcendence as a value. However, as shown by the results from the blocked regression, there was still a cultural difference in rapport promotion for scenario 2, even after differences in self-transcendence values had been partialled out.

We suspect that the availability of computers in the two regions could have been responsible for the difference. In the second scenario, the respondents were required to consider a service request refusal from a computer technician. Given their high level of computer availability and support services, Hong Kong people are less dependent on any given computer technician. Therefore, the computer users in the Philippines are needier than those in Hong Kong during the interaction with computer technicians. As a result of their greater dependence on any given technician, Filipinos have to be concerned more about rapport promotion in order to ingratiate themselves to the service provider and attain their interactional goals. We believe that the strength of rapport promotion is responsive to such concrete, local circumstances, and that variation in such circumstances would thus be responsible for many observed differences across cultural groups.

The results did demonstrate that the value dimensions of conservation and of self-transcendence were significant predictors of the concern to promote the relationship with the service provider, consistent with the prediction of Gudykunst (2000) and Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003). According to Gabrenya and Hwang (1996), Chinese social interaction is characterized by an emphasis on *mianzi* (face), *renqing* (favor) and *guanxi* (relationship), and these interactional emphases are related to a cultural endorsement of conservative and self-transcendent values. Similarly, Filipinos are taught to be respectful to others, to be good neighbors, and to reciprocate any favors received (Ventura, 1991). Their emphasis on smooth interpersonal relationships, social acceptance and group identity are likewise compatible with high levels of both conservation and self-transcendence. Although the Filipinos in this study endorsed self-transcendence values somewhat more highly than the Hong Kongese, both groups were relatively high on this basic motivational complex, as they were on conservation.

We expect that, in countries whose citizens are lower in conservation and self-transcendence, such as Switzerland for example, we would observe less concern for rapport promotion, and more contention around receiving responsive and adequate service. This lesser need to be concerned about promoting the relationship with the service provider could well be functional, given the probable institutional supports in such countries for "customer rights" and the local provision of complaint channels. In such institutional environments, redress for inadequate service provision is possible outside the service relationship itself, so less effort needs to be invested in promoting that social bond.

Despite the statistical significance of the relationships between these two dimensions of value and rapport promotion, it should be pointed out that variation in these value dimensions in each case accounted for only about eight percent of the variance in rapport promotion. There must be other factors, both personal and social, that would account for the differences across persons and across cultural groups in their concern for rapport promotion. Beliefs in a just world (Lerner, 1980) or in reward for application (Leung & Bond, in press) could be one such personal factor; degree of institutional support for customer rights and the presence of witnesses to the service provision could be such social factors.

Future Studies

According to Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003), the perceived importance of interactional principles is context-related, so that for different communication activities, the strength of interactional concerns may vary. We have suggested that considerations of resource dependency and appeal opportunities may be situational factors driving the concern for rapport promotion. These factors need to be explored in future studies of service provision.

Additionally, there are interactional concerns other than rapport promotion related to task accomplishment, such as the concern for clarity, redundancy, relevance and so forth, which we also expect to be involved in service provision. However, we were unable to isolate a consistent factor of task-related concerns across the scenarios used in the present study. We expect, however, that a wider sampling of situations to include those where information transmission cannot be taken for granted would reveal such a comparable group of concerns. The concern for efficiency of transmission would then probably be relatable to situational considerations, like interference with the communication exchange (Greene & Lindsey, 1989), the characteristics of the role relationship between the interlocutors (McAuley, Bond, & Kashima, 2002), their gender composition (Mulac, Wiemann, Widenmann, & Gibson, 1988), and the task versus social nature of the interaction (Forgas & Bond, 1985). Such studies of contextual factors should ideally be combined with theoretically revealing personality variables, since we expect that both contextual and personal factors contribute to the strength of various types of interactional concern.

Finally, it is important to remember that the function of interactional concerns is to guide people's interactional strategies. In the present study, the interactional concern of people when dealing with service providers was explored, but not their communicative acts during the encounter. Future studies must move towards linking interactional concerns with interactional tactics actually employed, as for example Cai and Wilson (2000) have argued for and demonstrated cross-culturally. Cultural differences could well arise with respect to which tactics are used to meet which concerns. So, even though the same interactional concern might be present at the same strength in the two cultural groups, the behavioral enactments for that concern would differ across the groups.

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Footnotes

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