

# **Research on the Impact of Cultural Differences on the Spread of Values in International Communication from the Perspective of Linguistics**

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**Abstract:** Linguistics is the scientific exploration of human language and serves as a foundational discipline. Language serves as the cornerstone of human interaction, enabling communication across cultures. Our main objective is to investigate the impact of cultural differences on the spread of values in international communication from a linguistic perspective. Specifically, the study will examine how different cultures utilize language to express and encode their core values. Our study was conducted at the International Cultural Exchange School, Donghua University (Shanghai, China), offering a unique environment for exploring cultural differences in communication. The study involved a random recruitment of 140 participants. The group had 70 Chinese participants, 70 Western participants from countries. The findings showed that cultural differences were evident in time orientation and communication styles. Participants from Western backgrounds tended to score higher on a future-oriented time perspective compared to their Chinese counterparts. Also, there were differences in interpersonal relationships, and social hierarchy that influenced the spread of cultural values during communication. Our study demonstrates that cultural backgrounds significantly influence how individuals communicate values and by understanding these variations, we can improve cross-cultural communication and foster greater global cooperation on issues.

**Keywords:** Linguistics; Values; International Communication; Cultural Differences; West; China

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Linguistics is the scientific exploration of human language and serves as a foundational discipline (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2020). Its unique position bridges the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities. Its significance extends to other disciplines and contributes significantly to diverse areas of knowledge. Cultural differences play a significant role in shaping international communication. Shared beliefs, languages, and social practices create a group's cultural identity, which in turn influences communication styles, perceptions, and the transmission of values (Hofstede, 1980). This raises an interesting question: how do these cultural variations impact the spread of values in international contexts? Linguistics

offers valuable tools to explore this phenomenon by examining how language use itself reflects and transmits cultural values. The field of second and foreign language teaching (SFLT) has increasingly recognized the importance of integrating cultural knowledge into the curriculum (Gondo & Gondo, 2020; Nguyen, 2018).

Language serves as the cornerstone of human interaction, enabling communication across cultures. However, intercultural communication presents unique complexities. Language isn't just a collection of words; it embodies cultural values and shapes how people connect (Yule, 2022). Utilizing a person's preferred language can influence their communication style and foster stronger relationships; hence, by recognizing the deeper significance of language, extending beyond mere words, we acknowledge its emotional, cultural, and even spiritual dimensions. Communication in a person's preferred language offers distinct advantages even for fluent speakers of a second or third language. Utilizing a preferred language fosters stronger relationships, diminishes cultural barriers, and enhances receptiveness to shared messages. This highlights the inextricable link between culture and language. Indeed, language not only reflects culture, but also serves as its embodiment (Zhai & Wibowo, 2023).

The dynamic field of international relations (IR) delves into the interactions between nations, encompassing social, economic, and political spheres (Tsygankov, 2003). It analyses the intricate relationships between states, analysing how factors such as cultural differences, economic interests, geography, and political ideologies shape their interactions. IR plays a critical role in fostering international cooperation to address global challenges like climate change, public health, poverty, and terrorism (Tsygankov, 2003). Furthermore, it shapes the global economic system, regulates state behaviour, and ultimately defines the nature of the global order. In today's interconnected world, IR is more crucial than ever, promoting peace and preventing conflict through de-escalation, reducing misunderstandings, and fostering dialogue (Al-Rawashdeh & Al-Majali, 2017). International organizations like the United Nations and the International Court of Justice serve as vital instruments in promoting peace and stability within the international system.

Globalization and international trade have fostered increased interaction between people from diverse cultures. These encounters, however, can be fraught with challenges beyond language barriers. Cultural styles significantly impact communication. Individualistic cultures, like those in the U.S. and Western Europe, emphasize the autonomous self, separate from others and the environment (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018).

Conversely, interdependent cultures, prevalent in parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, prioritize an interconnected self, emphasizing relationships and social roles. These contrasting outlooks can create hurdles in cross-cultural communication, as people process information and perceive the world differently (Hofstede, 1980). Even with a shared language, misunderstandings can arise due to cultural variations in interpreting words. The potential for miscommunication is further amplified when relying on translation between entirely different languages. Cross-cultural communication studies delve into these complexities aiming to bridge cultural divides and foster effective communication in our interconnected world (Tian, 2022; Wentz et al., 2014).

Cross-cultural communication bridges the gap between seemingly disparate fields: cultural anthropology and established communication studies (Adler & Aycan, 2018). Its core objective lies in understanding the diverse ways people from different cultural backgrounds interact. Furthermore, it seeks to develop practical recommendations for enhancing intercultural communication (Adler & Aycan, 2018). This field necessitates a multidisciplinary approach, drawing from anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, and communication.

Group dynamics differ significantly between Chinese and Western cultures. China, emphasizing social roles, fosters a more collectivistic approach. This focus on group harmony may lead Chinese individuals to avoid public disagreements and prioritize aligning with the majority view within a group, compared to their Western counterparts who tend to be more individualistic and comfortable with open debate (Hofstede, 1980). Additionally, Chinese culture is more situation-oriented and emphasizes external forces like fate ("yuan") in shaping personal outcomes, while Western cultures often celebrate the self-made individual who achieves success through personal agency. These contrasting values influence communication styles during group interactions. Chinese individuals may exhibit more reservedness, patience, and self-control compared to Westerners who might be more impulsive, expressive, and spontaneous.

China's long history of feudal autocracy spanning over two millennia has deeply ingrained a hierarchical social structure within its culture. This emphasis on social order is further reinforced by Confucianism that emphasizes "Li" (rituals, traditions, and social norms). Li dictates following the established hierarchy both within and outside close social circles (in-groups and out-groups), to maintain social harmony (Li & Lambert, 2019). These traditional influences continue to shape Chinese social interactions to some extent, even in contemporary society. In contrast, Western

societies, particularly those influenced by England and America, have historically emphasized equality and democracy. This focus likely stems from the shorter Western history compared to China, leading to a cultural value system that aligns more readily with modern ideals of freedom and individual rights. Additionally, Western political philosophies, such as John Locke's concept of "natural rights" and the humanist ideals of the Renaissance, further emphasize the inherent dignity and freedom of individuals, contributing to a less hierarchical social structure.

Hofstede's framework of collectivism versus individualism sheds light on cultural differences in how Chinese and Western societies approach interpersonal relationships (Yousaf et al., 2022). Collectivistic cultures, like China, prioritize the needs of the group over the individual. This is reflected in how they build and maintain relationships, often emphasizing social harmony and interdependence. In contrast, individualistic cultures, prevalent in many Western countries, prioritize personal goals and independence. This can influence how individuals in these cultures navigate interpersonal relationships, potentially placing a greater emphasis on personal space and self-expression.

Linguistic analysis of Chinese language reveals a cultural emphasis on long-term planning, which extends to the relationship between humans and nature. Concepts like "Scientific Outlook on Development" prioritize sustainable practices, reflected in language that emphasizes harmony and responsible stewardship. The proverb "" (rén bù fù qīng shān, qīng shān bù fù rén) translates to "If people do not fail the green mountains, the green mountains will not fail people," highlighting the importance of reciprocity with nature (Erdem & Safi, 2018; Zhu & Li, 2019). This contrasts with Western rhetoric surrounding nature, often emphasizing conquest and dominance. The Industrial Revolution, a pivotal moment in Western history, is described using language of exploration and change, potentially reflecting a shorter-term cultural orientation. While the revolution undoubtedly spurred economic and technological progress, terms like "environmental disaster" reveal a growing awareness of the potential consequences.

Linguistic markers of short-term focus, such as "maximize surplus value," can be identified within capitalist economic models, potentially contributing to resource depletion. China's long history offers a different perspective. The construction of the Temple of Heaven during the Ming Dynasty serves as a physical manifestation of the cultural ideal of harmony with nature (Haiyang & Ming, 2018). Ritual practices associated with the temple, like the emperor's offerings, can be interpreted as attempts to

secure long-term prosperity through maintaining a balanced relationship with the natural world.

### 1.1 Rationale and Objective

The world is becoming increasingly interconnected, leading to a constant exchange of information and ideas. However, cultural differences can create barriers to effective communication and understanding. Language, as a fundamental tool for communication, reflects and shapes cultural values. The study aims to investigate the impact of cultural differences on the spread of values in international communication from a linguistic perspective. Specifically, the study will examine how different cultures utilize language to express and encode their core values.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Setting and Respondents

Our study was conducted at the International Cultural Exchange School, Donghua University (Shanghai, China), offering a unique environment for exploring cultural differences in communication. The study involved a random recruitment of 140 participants. The group had 70 Chinese participants, 70 Western participants from countries like the US, UK, etc.), with approximately half identifying as coming from a Chinese cultural background and the other half identifying as coming from a Western cultural background. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 35 years old and included a mix of genders.

### 2.2 Data Collection Techniques

We conducted a discourse analysis alongside comparative case studies to explore how cultural differences influence the communication of values in international campaigns. We examined communication materials used in international campaigns promoting specific values, such as environmental sustainability campaigns. These materials targeted both Chinese and Western audiences. Through this analysis, we identified linguistic features used to encode values within each campaign. These features included metaphors, framing strategies, and specific vocabulary choices.

After the discourse analysis, we also developed a survey instrument to gather participants' perspectives on intercultural communication and value transmission. The survey consisted of approximately 20-25 questions designed to be completed within 15-20 minutes. The response format

varied depending on the question type. Some questions employed Likert scales, where participants indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement related to the scenario. Other questions were open-ended, allowing participants to elaborate on their interpretations of the values communicated and the effectiveness of the language used in each scenario.

The survey consisted of situations that explored cultural differences in five key areas relevant to value communication. First, the scenarios probed participants' understanding of time-related concepts, such as past-orientation versus future-orientation, and how these might influence how values are communicated. Second, the scenarios explored participants' perceptions of the relationship between humans and nature, investigating potential cultural variations in how these values are communicated. Third, the scenarios examined cultural differences in communication styles and how they might affect the exchange and interpretation of values in interpersonal interactions. Fourth, the scenarios investigated how cultural norms around social hierarchy might influence the way values are communicated and received within different social settings. Finally, the survey also included questions to gauge participants' experiences and perspectives on foreign language learning, exploring how language proficiency might impact the understanding and appreciation of values from different cultures.

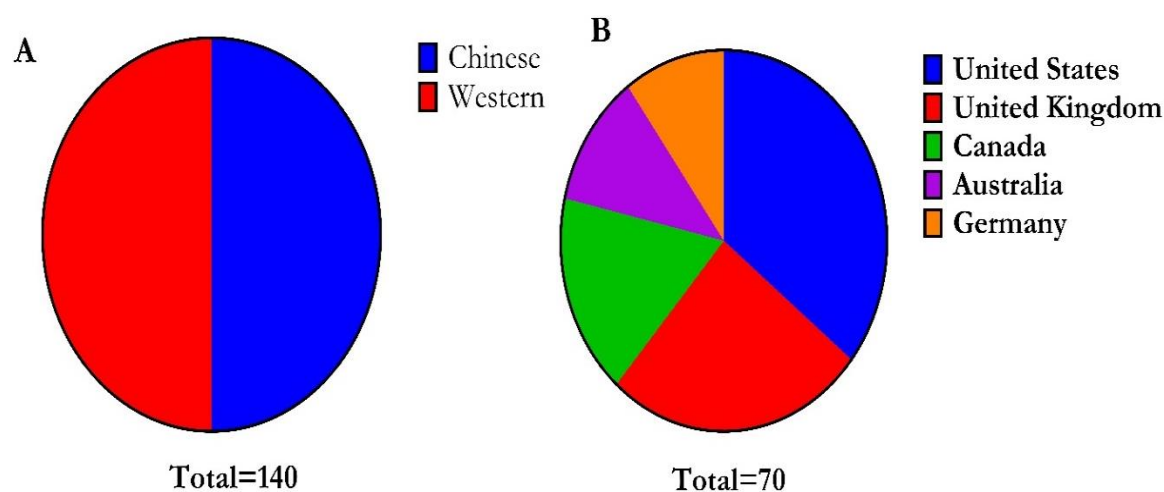
### 2.3 Data Analysis

All quantitative statistical analyses were performed in GraphPad Prism version 9.5.1 at significance level of  $p < .05$ . Through statistical analysis of the Likert scale responses, we explored potential correlations between cultural backgrounds and interpretations of value communication in the presented scenarios. The qualitative data from the discourse analysis was analysed thematically. We identified recurring patterns and themes in how Chinese and Western communication materials utilized language to encode values within international campaigns. The analysis revealed differences in the use of metaphors, framing strategies, and vocabulary choices.

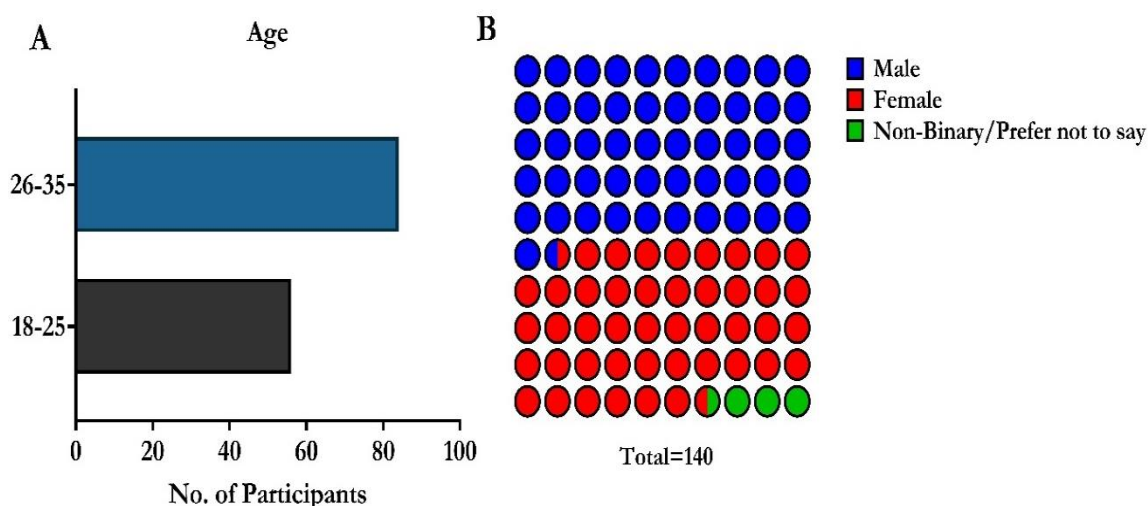
## 3. RESULTS

The study recruited a culturally diverse group of 140 participants from the International Cultural Exchange School, Donghua University (Shanghai, China). Half (70 participants, 50%) identified as coming from a

Chinese cultural background, while the other half (70 participants, 50%) identified as Western. Among the Western participants, the breakdown by country included: United States (25 participants, 17.90%), United Kingdom (18 participants, 12.90%), Canada (12 participants, 8.60%), Australia (8 participants, 5.70%), and Germany (7 participants, 5.00%) (See Figure 1). In terms of age, 40% (56 participants) were between 18-25 years old, and 60% (84 participants) were between 26-35 years old. The gender composition was relatively balanced, with 51.4% (72 participants) identifying as male, 45% (63 participants) as female, and 3.6% (5 participants) as non-binary or preferring not to say (see Figure 2).



**Figure 1:** Pie Chart Distribution of Participants Based on Cultural Background of Chinese and the Western based Countries US, UK, Canada, Australia and Germany).



**Figure 2:** Column Charts Showing the Distribution of Participants based on Age (A) and a dot plot of the gender distribution (B).

The discourse analysis of international communication materials targeting Chinese and Western audiences revealed distinct patterns in how

values were encoded through language. In Table 1, the discourse analysis revealed distinct metaphors used in environmental campaigns. Chinese campaigns emphasized harmony with nature ("*We all share the same sky...*") and respecting past practices ("*Learning from our ancestors...*"), while Western campaigns focused on future consequences ("*Climate change: the future is at stake*") and technological solutions ("*Invest in renewable energy...*").

Table 1: Use of Language Metaphor in Environmental Sustainability Campaigns

Metaphor	Description	Example (Chinese Campaign)	Example (Western Campaign)
Harmony with Nature	Nature is presented as a balanced system that humans should live in harmony with.	"We all share the same sky, let's protect it together."	N/A
Respecting Past Practices	Traditional practices and wisdom are highlighted as offering valuable guidance for sustainable living.	"Learning from our ancestors, living in harmony with the land."	N/A
Future Consequences	The focus is on the negative consequences of environmental degradation for future generations.	"Our actions today will impact the world our children inherit."	"Climate change: the future is at stake."
Technological Solutions	Technological advancements are presented as key to solving environmental challenges.	"Green technology: innovating for a sustainable future."	"Invest in renewable energy, power a brighter tomorrow."

In Table 2, the discourse analysis identified vocabulary choices reflecting cultural values. Chinese campaigns emphasized collectivism ("*Let's work together...*") and Confucian values ("*Respecting our teachers...*"), while Western campaigns highlighted individualism ("*Unlock your potential...*") and critical thinking ("*Think for yourself...*").

Table 2: (a) Vocabulary Choices in Educational Campaigns

Vocabulary Choice	Description	Example (Chinese Campaign)	Example (Western Campaign)
Collectivism	Focuses on the importance of the group and achieving goals together.	"Let's work together to build a brighter future for all."	N/A



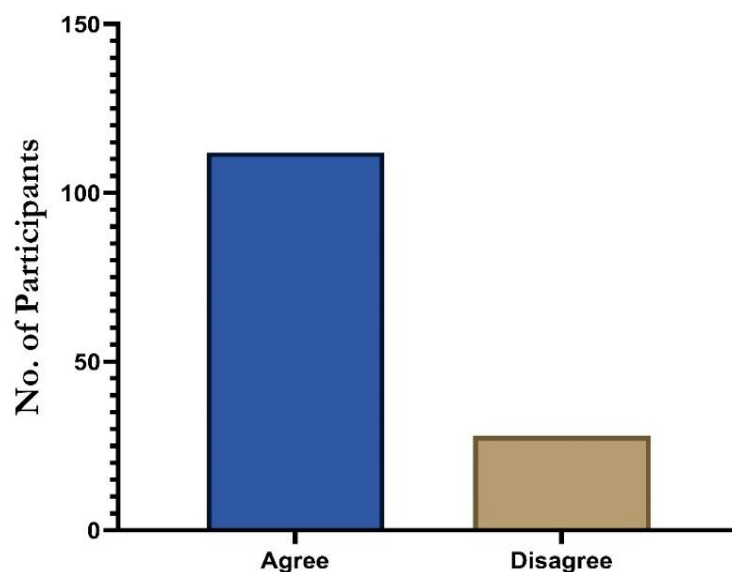
Table 2: (b) Vocabulary Choices in Educational Campaigns

Confucian Values	References traditional Confucian values like respect for elders and education.	"Respecting our teachers is the foundation for lifelong learning."	N/A
Individualism	Emphasizes the importance of individual achievement and personal growth.	"Unlock your potential, explore your dreams."	"Education is the key to a successful future."
Critical Thinking	Encourages questioning and independent thought.	"Develop critical thinking skills to become a well-informed citizen."	"Think for yourself, question the world around you."

In Table 3, the discourse analysis revealed cultural variations in public health campaign framing. Chinese campaigns emphasized social harmony ("*A healthy you lead...*") and filial piety ("*Taking care of your health...*"), whereas Western campaigns focused on personal responsibility ("*Make healthy choices...*") and emotional appeals ("*Don't let preventable diseases...*").

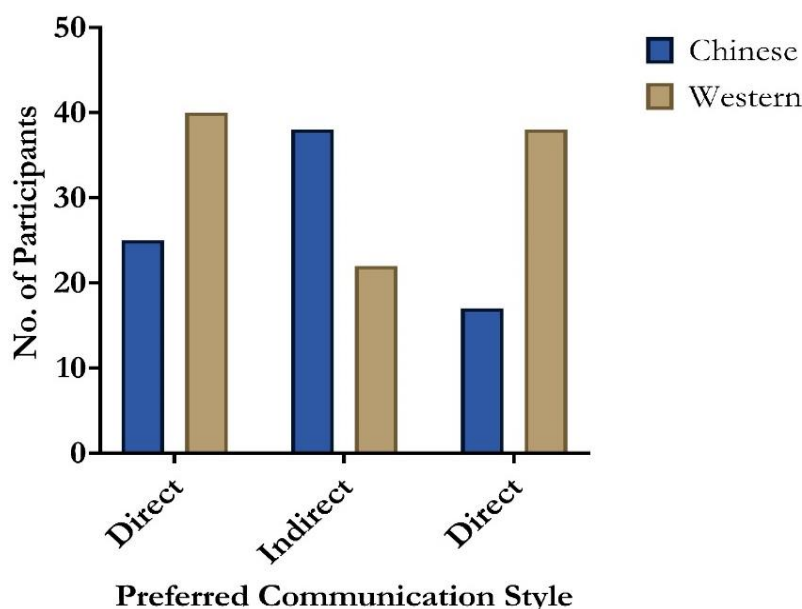
Table 3: Framing Strategies in Public Health Campaigns

Framing Strategy	Description	Example (Chinese Campaign)	Example (Western Campaign)
Social Harmony	Emphasizes the importance of individual actions for the collective good.	"A healthy you lead to a healthy family, a healthy family leads to a healthy society."	N/A
Filial Piety	Leverages the Confucian value of filial piety to encourage healthy behaviours to benefit parents and family.	"Taking care of your health is honouring your parents."	N/A
Personal Responsibility	Focuses on individual accountability for maintaining one's health.	"Make healthy choices, take control of your well-being."	"You are what you eat! Choose healthy foods for a better you."
Emotional Appeal	Uses emotional language to evoke fear or positive emotions related to health outcomes.	"Don't let preventable diseases threaten your loved ones."	"Live life to the fullest, invest in your health."



**Figure 3:** Importance of Learning Foreign Languages: Learning a foreign language helps me appreciate the values of other cultures.

In Figure 3, the survey found overwhelming support for the value of foreign language learning in appreciating other cultures. A strong majority of participants (112) agreed with the statement "Learning a foreign language helps me appreciate the values of other cultures," while only a small minority (28) disagreed.



**Figure 4:** Communication Style Preferences between Chinese and Western Cultures in Different Scenarios.

In Figure 4, participant preferences for communication style varied by scenario. In negotiating a business deal, Western participants showed a stronger preference for direct communication (40 participants) compared to Chinese participants (25 participants). When discussing environmental

concerns with a neighbour, Chinese participants favoured indirect communication (38 participants) more than Western participants (22 participants). Similarly, for providing feedback to a colleague, direct communication was preferred by more Western participants (38 participants) than Chinese participants (17 participants).

Table 4: Correlations between Cultural Factors and Value Communication

Cultural Factor	Value Communication Variable	Correlation Coefficient (p-value)
Time Orientation (Future Focus)	Importance of Environmental Sustainability	0.42 ( $p < 0.01$ )
Respect for Social Hierarchy	Preference for Indirect Communication	0.38 ( $p < 0.05$ )

In Table 4, the survey analysis revealed potential correlations between cultural values and communication. Participants with a stronger Time Orientation towards the Future (higher score) tended to place greater importance on Environmental Sustainability ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, a positive correlation ( $r = 0.38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) emerged between Respect for Social Hierarchy and a preference for Indirect Communication, suggesting that those emphasizing social hierarchy might favour more nuanced communication styles.

Table 5: Paired Samples T-test showing Differences between value aspects of communication and the cultural background of participants.

Aspect of Value Communication	Cultural Background	t (df)	p-value
Sense of Time Orientation	Chinese vs. Western	-2.87 (138)	0.004
Importance of Human-Nature Relationships	Chinese vs. Western	4.12 (138)	0.0001
Preference for Indirect Communication	Chinese vs. Western	5.89 (138)	0.00001
Awareness of Social Hierarchy	Chinese vs. Western	2.17 (138)	0.031

In Table 5, the paired t-tests revealed significant cultural differences in value communication. Chinese participants scored lower on a future-oriented time perspective ( $t = -2.87$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) compared to Western participants.

However, they placed greater emphasis on human-nature relationships ( $t = 4.12$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ ). Furthermore, Chinese participants showed a stronger preference for indirect communication ( $t = 5.89$ ,  $p = 0.00001$ ), while also exhibiting a slightly higher awareness of social hierarchy ( $t = 2.17$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ) compared to their Western counterparts.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Discourse analysis revealed distinct vocabularies used in campaigns promoting similar values. For instance, Chinese campaigns promoting environmentalism emphasized "harmony with nature" and "respecting past practices," while Western campaigns used terms like "future consequences" and "technological solutions." This suggests that culturally specific vocabulary choices shape how values are framed and resonate with audiences. Several studies have observed that the increasing interconnectedness of our world necessitates effective communication across cultures. However, significant disparities in communication styles can lead to misunderstandings (Bonvillain, 2019; Jackson, 2019; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). One prominent framework for understanding these differences is the individualism-collectivism dimension. Collectivistic societies, like mainland China and Taiwan, prioritize group harmony and ingroup goals over individual needs (Chang & Holt, 1991). This is often associated with an indirect communication style that relies heavily on context. Conversely, individualistic societies tend towards a more explicit and direct approach (Chang & Holt, 1991). Parallels can be drawn with Bernstein's (1971) concept of restricted vs. elaborated codes and Hall's (1976) distinction between high-context and low-context cultures (Ivinson, 2018).

Family structures in China and the West differ significantly. Traditionally, China emphasizes extended families, where multiple generations live together under a single roof (Shen et al., 2021). This fosters a strong sense of "we" within the family unit, with adult children expected to support their parents. Confucian ideals, emphasizing filial piety (respect for one's parents) as a core virtue, further solidify this collectivistic family dynamic. Children raised in this environment view themselves as part of a larger whole, responsible for caring for their elders. In contrast, Western societies often embrace nuclear family structures, with parents and their children living independently. This focus on individualism encourages children to develop a strong sense of "I," fostering independence and self-reliance. As adults, they are expected to strike out on their own, with parents respecting their choices and fostering personal freedom.

Hofstede's concept of power distance sheds light on cultural differences in social hierarchy between China and Western societies. China scores high on this dimension, indicating a greater acceptance of unequal power distribution. People in such cultures, like China, are comfortable with hierarchical structures where superiors hold more authority. This is evident

in Chinese families, where children are expected to be obedient and parents hold decision-making power. Similarly, traditional Chinese classrooms emphasize teacher control, with students expected to follow established rules. In contrast, Western societies tend to score lower on power distance, valuing equality and democracy. This is reflected in family dynamics, where parents and children often collaborate on decisions, emphasizing a more egalitarian dynamic. Additionally, adult children are less likely to live with their parents, and Western classrooms may utilize round tables to symbolize the equal footing of teachers and students, who are encouraged to participate actively.

The concept of social hierarchy is also reflected in how people address each other in China and the West. High power-distance cultures, like China and Japan, emphasize respect for authority figures due to deeply ingrained patriarchal traditions. This respect extends to language, where people use honorific titles to acknowledge superiors. For example, in China, (lǎoshī, teacher) and (lǎobǎn, boss) are prefixed with (lǎo, meaning old) to show deference. Directly addressing someone by name is uncommon, with titles like (Wáng lǎoshī) or (Wáng lǎobǎn) preferred. In contrast, Western cultures tend towards lower power distance, with people comfortable using names regardless of social status. This reflects a cultural value of equality and informality. While China still retains some aspects of hierarchical language use, social changes driven by education and modernization are gradually leading to a more egalitarian approach to communication.

Our study investigated communication styles between Westerners and Easterners. We observed a tendency for Westerners to adopt a more direct and assertive communication approach, with minimal adjustments throughout the interaction. In contrast, Easterners exhibited a gentler communication style and demonstrated a willingness to adapt their communication based on the local context. These findings suggest a significant influence of Confucianism and the concept of "manners of different orders" on cross-cultural communication strategies and effectiveness. Confucian philosophy, as reflected in language such as "Heavenly way" (Tian Dao), positions the natural world as the source of life. This concept is further elaborated by Mencius, whose teachings emphasized the importance of aligning one's actions with core values. Here, language around "loving family" expands to encompass "all living things," suggesting a harmonious relationship between humans and nature. In contrast, Western philosophical traditions often express a dualistic view, linguistically separating humans from the natural world. This perspective,

evident in phrases like "conquering nature," can contribute to an exploitative approach to resource management. Western focus on short-term benefits, reflected in economic terms like "endless exploitation," may prioritize immediate gain over ecological sustainability, potentially leading to environmental degradation.

Our study also explored cultural variations in communication styles. For example, Chinese participants generally favoured indirect communication, which might involve metaphors or allusions. Western participants, on the other hand, leaned towards more direct communication styles. These differences can create challenges in transmitting values effectively across cultures. Misunderstandings can arise if the intended meaning behind a message is not conveyed clearly due to contrasting communication styles. The applicability of the individualism–collectivism paradigm to the study of Chinese or Taiwanese individuals has been questioned by scholars (Chang & Holt, 1991; Hsieh, 2011). While Confucian philosophy's significant influence on Chinese society emphasizes maintaining stability and harmony, this does not necessarily equate to a pervasive collectivistic mindset, as commonly assumed (Hofstede, 1980). Despite the impression that Chinese people prioritize societal welfare over personal interests, the concept of collectivism may not accurately capture their cultural dynamics. Consequently, when applied to investigate communication patterns among Chinese individuals, this paradigm may lack validity. Empirical research by (Chang & Holt, 1991) in Taiwan suggests that interpersonal relations and communication patterns are shaped more by etiquette and hierarchical structures (*guanxi*) than by collectivist tendencies.

According to the theory of "*manners of different orders*" presents a unique perspective on interpersonal relationships. It compares social interactions to ripples emanating from a central point, with the innermost circles representing the closest relationships and the strongest obligations. This concept contrasts with the individualism–collectivism dichotomy (Chang & Holt, 1991). According to Fei, a clear distinction exists between in-group and out-group members. In-group members prioritize mutual care and support, while out-group interactions emphasize reciprocity and formality. However, these categories are not rigid; relationships can evolve, influencing the communication style. Research by (Chang & Holt, 1991) suggests that communication effectiveness hinges on in-group/out-group membership, with deeper and freer conversation permitted within in-groups. Similarly, Barbalet highlights the importance of *guanxi* (relationships) in Chinese communication (Barbalet, 2021). Decisions about honesty, support, and assistance are often influenced by the nature

of the *guanxi* between individuals.

The notion that collectivistic cultures solely utilize "restricted codes," often perceived as cognitively limiting, is challenged by recent research (Chang & Holt, 1991). These studies suggest that social hierarchies and message elaboration can coexist. From a communication perspective, Chinese and Taiwanese individuals strategically employ seemingly simple yet effective vocabulary to navigate interactions with people of varying social positions, all while maintaining positive *guanxi* (relationships). Social harmony concerns guide message formulation, and social status doesn't necessarily hinder the ability to construct messages effectively. In contrast to the common perception of restricted content, this approach can be viewed as an elaborated code. Chinese and Taiwanese individuals demonstrate the ability to adapt their communication style based on the social position of the listener, requiring a level of cognitive effort that goes beyond simply using a limited vocabulary.

We found that cultural differences were evident in time orientation and communication styles. Participants from Western backgrounds tended to score higher on a future-oriented time perspective compared to their Chinese counterparts. This aligns with the emphasis on long-term consequences often seen in Western environmental campaigns. Communication style preferences also varied. Chinese participants generally favoured indirect communication, particularly when discussing sensitive topics with neighbours, while Western participants leaned more towards directness in various scenarios.

Collectivism is a central tenet of Chinese society (Zhang & Han, 2023). This emphasis on the group's well-being over individual needs is deeply rooted in China's history. Throughout centuries of facing external threats, a sense of national unity emerged, fostering a collective consciousness that prioritizes the common good. Similarly, China's modernization efforts rely heavily on collective action, encouraging employees to prioritize the success of their organizations. This focus on the group translates to valuing opportunities for advancement, positive working conditions, and skill development within an organization. In contrast, Western societies tend to value individualism more. Influenced by historical movements like the American Revolution, Western cultures emphasize independence and personal freedom. These values permeate various aspects of life, including the workplace. Employees in Western countries often prioritize self-reliance, autonomy, and the ability to take on challenging tasks.

Our findings propose that Chinese culture often uses cyclical language to describe time, with seasons changing from spring to winter in a

continuous loop. This reflects a past-oriented perspective, evident in the respect for traditions and historical figures who serve as guides for behaviour. Confucian teachings, emphasizing historical lessons, and Buddhist philosophies focused on past experiences further reinforce this orientation (Zhang, 2022). In contrast, Western cultures tend to use linear metaphors for time, like a thread connecting past, present, and future. This future-oriented approach is reflected in a focus on controlling one's destiny through concrete actions. Chinese culture, with its emphasis on learning from the past, often advocates for restraint and cherishing what one has. Western cultures, particularly individualistic societies like the United States, may prioritize present happiness and personal freedoms, reflected in their pursuit of the "American Dream." The shorter history of the US contributes to a lessened emphasis on the past compared to China.

Previous studies have postulated that the rise of cultural diversity in the workplace has significantly altered workplace dynamics, particularly for managers who now regularly interact with international suppliers and customers, while effective cross-cultural management navigates various subtle and complex challenges, communication difficulties remain a prominent hurdle. This is further amplified by the growing trend of cross-cultural alliances, where companies from diverse backgrounds collaborate, necessitating specialized communication strategies.

The individualism-collectivism paradigm offers a valuable framework for understanding cultural differences in communication, however, its limitations become apparent in certain contexts (Chang & Holt, 1991; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). For instance, Chang and Holt argue that Chinese communication styles are more accurately explained by the concept of "manners of different orders" which emphasizes social hierarchy and respect for authority. Furthermore, existing research often overlooks the unique dynamics of communication processes between Eastern and Western cultures, posing a challenge for international marketers who require a nuanced understanding of these interactions.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Our study explored the linguistic challenges that arise when spreading values across cultures in international communication. We found that cultural differences significantly impact vocabulary choices, metaphors, and communication styles. For instance, messages framed around "individual responsibility" in the West might require reframing for a



Chinese audience to emphasize "social harmony." Similarly, metaphors and preferred communication styles (direct vs. indirect) can lead to misunderstandings if not carefully considered.

Overall, the study demonstrates that cultural backgrounds significantly influence how individuals communicate values. By understanding these variations, we can improve cross-cultural communication and foster greater global cooperation on issues like environmental sustainability. Our study emphasizes the importance of language as a mediator in the spread of values across cultures. By understanding these linguistic variations, we can improve cross-cultural communication and bridge the gap between different value systems in the international arena.

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