

2013

Media Selection and the Imposter Phenomenon: A Multinational Investigation

Christopher P. Furner
East Carolina University

William C. McDowell
East Carolina University

Robert Zinko
University of Newcastle

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/ciima>

Recommended Citation

Furner, Christopher P.; McDowell, William C.; and Zinko, Robert (2013) "Media Selection and the Imposter Phenomenon: A Multinational Investigation," *Communications of the IIMA*: Vol. 13 : Iss. 4 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/ciima/vol13/iss4/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communications of the IIMA by an authorized editor of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

Media Selection and the Imposter Phenomenon: A Multinational Investigation

Christopher P. Furner
East Carolina University, USA
chris.furner@gmail.com

William C. McDowell
East Carolina University, USA
mcdowellw@ecu.edu

Robert Zinko
University of Newcastle, Australia
robert.zinko@newcastle.edu.au

ABSTRACT

Imposterism, where individuals seek to create a false impression that they are more qualified than they actually are, is an emerging area of study, while media selection has been a subject of interest to IS researchers for over 25 years. This study seeks to determine if individuals who score highly on imposterism differ in their media preference, and if there is a cultural dimension to this relationship. Using a scenario-based experiment administered to 439 subjects in the U.S. and China, we demonstrate relationships between media choice and both imposterism and two dimensions of espoused national culture.

INTRODUCTION

Information systems researchers have long been interested in the motivations that drive individuals to choose particular media to send messages. A number of theories of media selection exist; many of which seek to identify a fit between characteristics of a task, characteristics of the sender and characteristics of the media. Both the popularization of the internet, as well as the more recent trend toward mobile computing, have led to substantial changes not only in the media options that communicators have, but also the characteristics of the communication tasks that individuals face (Furner & George, 2012). Not surprisingly, this has led to a renewed interest in media selection among information systems researchers.

We apply the imposter phenomenon, hereafter referred to as imposterism, in order to better understand the decisions one might make when choosing a media. Imposterism is an emerging area of study in organizational research that refers to, “an internal experience of intellectual phoniness in high achievers who are unable to internalize their successful experiences” (Bernard, Dollinger, & Ramaniah, 2002, p. 321). This phenomenon has been shown to have an influence on a variety of work related outcomes, such as stress associated with failure (Fried-Buchalter, 1992), fear of being discovered as an imposter (Clance & Imes, 1978) and a lack of self-confidence

about one's capabilities that leads to a hindrance of achievement (Clance & O'Toole, 1987). Although imposterism has been studied by psychology researchers for some time, its influence on work and communication behaviors has only recently garnered the attention of management researchers (Bernard et al., 2002). Oddly enough, although the imposter phenomenon promises to influence a variety of information systems usage outcomes, an exhaustive literature review conducted in 2013 turned up no studies linking imposterism to information systems, nor communication outcomes. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the effect of imposterism on media choice. Media choice is influenced by a variety of individual level personality factors (Giordano & Furner, 2009), and that this choice changes when an individual attempts to deceive (Furner & George, 2012). Since individuals who consider themselves to be imposters are motivated to portray themselves as qualified or experts (Clance & Imes, 1978), their communication seeks to create a false impression in their coworkers. This deception satisfies the contemporary definition of deception (Bond & Robinson, 1988). Similar to how media choice differs for those who engage in deception, we posit that media choice will differ for those who consider themselves to be imposters.

Similarly, espoused national culture has been shown to influence media choice when an individual wants to deceive (Furner & George, 2012); however, an exhaustive search did not identify any research that has investigated the influence of espoused national culture on media choice in other contexts. By exploring cultural determinants of media choice for imposterism, we extend media choice literature in a new and increasingly relevant context. This is particularly relevant, given the recent trend toward globalization and multicultural workforces (Grimm & Smith, 1997) and in light of literature, which suggests that expatriates experience the imposter phenomenon (Piedmont & Chae, 1995). Therefore, our research addresses the ways in which espoused national culture influence media choice for imposters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media Selection

Communication researchers have long sought to maximize the effectiveness of media for transmitting messages (Ochsman & Chapanis, 1974). Daft and Lengel (1986) proposed the first of the media selection "fit" theories, positing a media is most effective when the characteristics of that media suit the requirements of the message. They conceptualized media as varying on a scale from "rich," which facilitated a large amount of contextual information to be sent with the message, to "lean," in which media were able to send a message with very little ancillary information. Face-to-face media are richer because they provide fast feedback, allow for language variety and support many cues and foster personal focus. Conversely, text based media such as letters are leaner, as they offer slow feedback, do not support language variety, limit cue transmission and do not foster personal focus. Daft and Lengel called this framework Media Richness Theory.

Using media richness theory, Daft, Lengel and Treviño (1987) tied media characteristics (i.e., richness) to communication task requirements. It is tempting to conclude that the richest medium, face-to-face, is the most desirable in all situations, since it has the ability to transfer the most

contextual information. However, media use has associated expenditures, and rich media tend to be more costly (Reinsch & Beswick, 1990). Additionally, there are times when senders prefer less richness, such as when they are trying to deceive someone (Carlson & George, 2004). Daft et al. determined that managers preferred to use richer media when they were faced with an ambiguous decision, and leaner media when faced with a routine choice. Their rationale was that when a manager is faced with an ambiguous decision, contextual information is more important not just to making a better decision, but also to allow the manager to gauge the odds of success of their decision. This contention is consistent with channel expansion theory, which argues that as a communicator gains experience with a topic of communication, other parties, media and organizational context, they will be able to glean more contextual information from leaner media (Carlson & Zmud, 1999).

Following media richness theory, other media “fit” theories emerged, each conceptualizing media differently. In this context, two such theories are particularly relevant: media synchronicity theory and social presence theory. Media synchronicity theory posits that, in a communication event, there are two primary processes: conveyance and convergence (Dennis & Valacich, 1999). These processes have requirements, and as such, different media vary in how they meet those requirements. This theory highlights five media characteristics: transmission velocity, how fast does the message get from the sender to the receiver; symbol variety, the extent to which multiple symbol sets are supported; parallelism, how many senders can send a message at the same time; rehearsability, how well can the sender go over a message after they have composed it but before they send it; and reprocessability, how well can the receiver go over the message after they receive it. Media synchronicity theory has been used extensively by information systems and communication researchers to predict media choice based on a variety of individual and situational factors (Furner & George, 2012).

The second media fit theory we discuss is social presence theory, which refers to the degree of salience between the participants (Miller & Stiff, 1993); that is, the extent to which the participants feel psychologically close to each other (Williams, 1977). Media vary in their ability to foster social presence. Face to face communication facilitates social presence better than text-based communication (Straub & Karahanna, 1998), and individuals tend to prefer more social presence when the task that they are engaged in is interpersonal in nature, such as relationship building, conflict resolution and negotiation (King & Xia, 1997).

Similarly, to media richness, social presence is determined by characteristics of the media, such as its ability to transmit multiple cues. Specifically, individuals feel more isolated when using media that do not effectively transmit facial gestures and tone of voice (Lea & Spears, 1991). One may be tempted to predict that media, when ranked according to media richness, appear in the same order as they would if ranked in terms of social presence. However, this is not necessarily the case. Social presence as a media characteristic has been used as an outcome variable (Tu, 2002) and as a predictor of outcomes such as the establishment of virtual communities (Aragon, 2003), learning outcomes (Gunawardena, 1995), trust (Gefen & Straub, 2003) and satisfaction (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). In addition, social presence has been used as a predictor of media choice.

As computer-based communication channels became prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s, the dynamics of media selection changed, sparking renewed interest media characteristics (Furner & George, 2012), communication task requirements (Burgoon, Bonito, Ramirez, Dunbar, Kam, & Fischer, 2002) and individual behaviors (Giordano & Furner, 2009). As new communication media continue to emerge, many facilitated by a recent trend toward mobile computing, communication models and media choice models continue to become more and more complex.

The Imposter Phenomenon

The impostor phenomenon is defined as the, “internal experience of intellectual phoniness in high achievers who are unable to internalize their successful experiences” (Bernard et al., 2002; p. 321). Individuals who suffer from the impostor phenomenon have an internal feeling of incompetence even though they are deemed successful by most external standards (Clance & Imes, 1978). This internalized issue was first examined in high achieving women in the 1970s. Clance and Imes found that there were high achieving and highly credentialed women who regarded themselves as impostors in their workplace. Through continued study, these authors determined that these feelings of phoniness, or imposterism, played an important role in shaping their attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. These individuals had a fear of being “found out” that they were in fact phonies and would thus lose their jobs. This led to greater negative internal feelings on the part of the individual that included higher levels of anxiety, depression, lack of self-confidence, and an internal perception that they are unable to achieve high levels of performance.

The majority of previous research that has examined the impostor phenomenon has been in the personality literature, but more current literature is thrusting this construct into the business arena as it directly affects employee and manager performance, behaviors and attitudes (McDowell, Boyd, & Bowler, 2007). Previous research has already shown that the impostor phenomenon can affect the performance of an employee. The future achievements of both managers and employees can be affected by this negative trait due to a fear of failure on the part of the individual suffering from the impostor phenomenon (Fried-Buchalter, 1992). It is expected that those individuals who suffer from this issue are likely to do whatever it takes to not be “found out” by those around them. These impostors will try to work hard, which they feel brings success rather than ability, and work in ways that will limit their direct evaluation from those around them. They do not take pleasure in their own achievements, so they are not looking for the instant gratification from working with an individual face to face.

Espoused National Culture

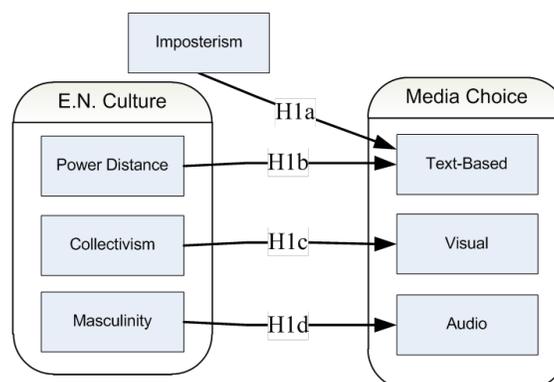
Culture is generally defined as a socially constructed force that is learned by participating in a social system, and that influences individual exhibition of norms, customs, beliefs and rituals (Furner, Mason, Mehta, Munyon, & Zinko, 2009). In business research, national culture is the dominant conceptualization. Hofstede (2001) provided a topology of national culture that includes four dimensions: 1) power distance, 2) collectivism, 3) uncertainty avoidance, and 4) masculinity. Since national culture is a socially derived construct, which represents a trend based on aggregation, it is not useful for predicting individual behavior (Srite & Karahanna, 2006). For example, according to Hofstede, the United States tends to be high in terms of individualism,

however researchers cannot assume that all subjects sampled from the United States will also be high in terms of individualism. To predict behavior, researchers need to assess the espoused national culture of their subjects without regard to their nationality (Srite & Karahanna). In the current study, we adopt Srite and Karahanna's conceptualization of espoused national culture, because it allows for the prediction of individual behavior by measuring the espoused power distance, espoused collectivism and espoused masculinity of subjects.

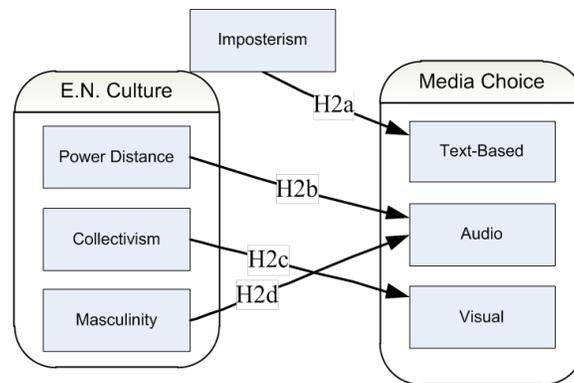
Espoused national culture has been used in a variety of management, marketing and information systems studies. It has been tied to technology acceptance (Bandyopadhyay & Fraccastoro, 2007), knowledge management system learning effectiveness (Furner et al., 2009) outsourcing success (Palvia, Palvia, Xia, & King, 2011) and computer supported group work (Furner, 2013). Relevant to our study: Furner and George (2012) used espoused national culture to predict media choice for deception in a scenario-based experiment. Using a total of 467 subjects from the United States and the People's Republic of China, Furner and George were able to demonstrate that individuals who scored high on espoused collectivism preferred to use text-based media for deception, those who scored high on power distance preferred audio media, and those who scored high on masculinity preferred visual media (i.e., face-to-face or video conferencing). Further, the authors found that for very severe lies (i.e., ones that involved the risk of death to customers), participants refused to lie. Furner and George used deceptive communication as the context of their study, while the focus of this study is on communication for the maintenance of imposterism.

MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

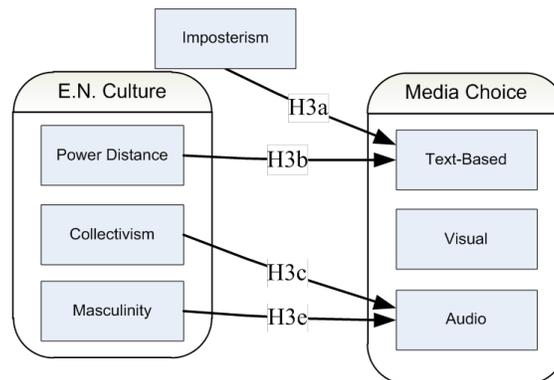
Our research question seeks to investigate the relationship between imposterism, espoused national culture and media choice. Since imposters are predicted to seek to disguise their perceived imperfections, we predict that they will seek to minimize the leakage of cues, which might raise suspicions about their qualifications. Further, they are predicted to experience differences in their communication dynamics based on the target of their communication, whether the targets are subordinates, top management or clients. For this reason, we develop three models, one where the target of communication is subordinates, one where the target is the top management team, and one where the target is the client. The three models are presented and discussed below.



Model 1 - Communicating with Subordinates.



Model 2 - Communicating with Top Management.



Model 3 - Communicating with the Client.

Figure 1: Communication Methods.

The first model in Figure 1 addresses media choice for communicating with subordinates. Individuals who score highly on imposterism seek to hide their perceived inadequacies from everyone that they work with (McDowell et al., 2007), including their subordinates. Individuals who experience pressure to create a false impression run the risk of leaking cues that they are being deceitful via uncontrollable non-verbal behavior, and seek to control and mask these cues (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Indeed, consciously attempting to control these cues tends to make them worse (George & Carlson, 2010). In communicating with subordinates, individuals who score highly on imposterism are predicted to seek media that minimize the chance of cue leakage, that is, they will seek media that are limited in terms of transmission velocity, multiplicity of cues, personal focus and paralinguistic cues. Text based media are the most limited in all of these media characteristics.

H1a. The higher an individual's imposterism, the stronger their preference will be for the use of text-based media for communicating with a subordinate.

Individuals who score highly on espoused power distance tend to respect authority and stature more so than those who score low on espoused power distance (Srite & Karahanna, 2006). Maintaining that authority is of the utmost importance to these individuals, and as such, they will be particularly motivated to sustain their stature; both institutional and perceived, by perpetuating imposterism and holding themselves out to be very talented and highly qualified individuals. As

such, they will seek to minimize leakage of any cues that they might be under qualified. Furthermore, they will attempt to do so using media that are limited in terms of transmission velocity, multiplicity of cues, personal focus and paralinguistic cues. Text based media are the most limited in all of these media characteristics (Daft et al., 1987).

H1b. The higher an individual's espoused power distance, the stronger their preference will be for the use of text-based media for communicating with a subordinate.

Individuals who score highly on espoused collectivism tend to experience social norms that encourage team-building and cooperation (Srite & Karahana, 2006). This is particularly important when interacting with subordinates, as the collectivist leader tends to value and reward team-based outcomes rather than individual outcomes (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca 1988). Although imposters may be motivated to attempt to conceal inadequacies with lean media, we predict that when the leader is a collectivist, the desire to build effective teams will outweigh the desire to conceal cues to imposterism. These individuals will seek media that are high in personal focus and social presence, which are more effective for team forming (Straub & Karahanna, 1998), such as face to face or, if necessary, video conferencing.

H1c. The higher an individual's espoused collectivism, the stronger their preference will be for the use of visual media for communicating with a subordinate.

Those who score highly on espoused masculinity tend to focus on accomplishments and setting themselves apart (Hofstede, 2001). As managers, these individuals are both motivated to have successful team outcomes, as well as to create the impression that they are a competent leader in their subordinates. Because team building requires personal focus, social presence (Tu & McIsaac, 2002) and immediate feedback, and minimizing leakage is best done in the absence of paralinguistic cues, neither text-based nor visual media are ideal. Audio-based media on the other hand are moderate in terms of facilitating personal focus and social presence, providing immediate feedback and minimize paralinguistic cues. Therefore, we predict this will make audio media the medium of choice for individuals who score highly in terms of espoused masculinity.

H1d. The higher an individual's espoused masculinity, the stronger their preference will be for the use of audio-based media for communicating with a subordinate.

Our second model in Figure 1 addresses media choice for communicating with the top management team. Since top management has the potential to influence one's career outcomes drastically, individuals who score highly on imposterism are most concerned about managing the impression that the top management team has about their abilities and qualifications (Bernard et al., 2002). While the imposter seeks to present themselves in the brightest possible light to all of those around them (Clance, 1985) this is particularly important when interacting with the top management team. As such, we expect that such individuals will be particularly motivated to mitigate cue leakage, and will seek media that are limited in terms of transmission velocity, multiplicity of cues, personal focus and paralinguistic cues. Text based media are the most limited in all of these media characteristics.

H2a. The higher an individual's imposterism, the stronger their preference will be for the use of text-based media for communicating with top management.

Individuals who score highly in terms of espoused power distance tend to show deference and respect to those who occupy higher levels in the organizational authority structure (Hofstede, 2001). These individuals seek to accommodate and satisfy the expectations of their superiors, and individuals in such societies tend to perceive norms discouraging limiting the ability of superiors to ask questions and follow up (Furner & George, 2012). For subjects who score highly on power distance, communicating with the top management team via e-mail or instant message is likely to be viewed as an uncomfortable option in most circumstances. Although text-based media may not be a viable for high power distance individuals seeking to maintain imposterism, they will still be motivated to minimize cue leakage by selecting a media that is weaker in terms of paralinguistic cues and personal focus. Audio based media are predicted to be preferred by individuals in this position while communicating with top management because they mask paralinguistic cues and are limited in terms of personal focus.

H2b. The higher an individual's espoused power distance, the stronger their preference will be for the use of audio-based media for communicating with top management.

Individuals who score highly on espoused collectivism enjoy interaction with others, and seek positions within the organization's social structure where they can part of an in-group (Triandis et al., 1988). By establishing a face to face relationship with top management, we predict that individuals who score highly on collectivism will seek to build their in-group status. Establishing a personal relationship is best accomplished with media that facilitate personal focus and social presence (Straub & Karahanna, 1998), both of which are best fostered by visual media.

H2c. The higher an individual's espoused collectivism, the stronger their preference will be for the use of visual media for communicating with top management.

Since individuals who score high on espoused masculinity seek to move to the top of organizational authority structures (Hofstede, 2001), they are expected to be particularly cautious with regard to their communication with the top management team. Generally, they will seek to make themselves known to the top management team, and will be particularly motivated to create a good impression among top managers. High masculinity individuals will be simultaneously motivated to hide any perceived inadequacies or under-qualifications, while building a rapport with top management. As such, we predict that they will seek a media type that both masks paralinguistic cues that might serve as indicators that the individual is an imposter, while maximizing social presence and personal focus. Audio-based media are predicted to be the preferred media for individuals in this position.

H2d. The higher an individual's espoused masculinity, the stronger their preference will be for the use of audio-based media for communicating with top management.

Figure 1 shows our third model, which addresses media choice for communicating with the clients. These interactions differ from interactions with subordinates or the top management team, which are both internal interactions. External communication exchanges differ from

internal exchanges in a number of ways. Most notably, the individual communicating externally becomes a “gatekeeper” (Tushman & Katz, 1980) who serves as a representative of the organization as a whole. These gatekeepers need to not only present themselves in the brightest possible light, but also manage the external entity’s impression of the organization. We predict that individuals who score high in imposterism and serve as gate keepers for their organization will experience a compounded sense of imposterism, where they feel like they need to mask inadequacies in their own qualifications as well as inadequacies of the organization. As noted above, individuals who experience pressure to create a false impression run the risk of leaking cues that they are being deceitful, and seek to control and mask these cues. Leakage is best masked by media that are limited in terms of transmission velocity, multiplicity of cues, personal focus and paralinguistic cues. Text based media are the most limited in all of these media characteristics.

H3a. The higher an individual’s imposterism, the stronger their preference will be for the use of text-based media for communicating with the client.

Individuals who score highly in espoused power distance tend to be highly conscious of their work performance (Hofstede, 2001); and when communicating with a client, they run the risk of losing revenue for their organization. As such, they will be strongly motivated to minimize any leakage of cues that either the individual or the organization has shortcomings. However, since they are communicating externally rather than internally, these individuals are not predicted to experience pressure to break into the in-group with the client with whom they are interacting because the client is not their supervisor. As such, we argue that the motivation to minimize leakage will be the dominant force influencing media choice, and that such individual will opt for the media that minimizes cue transmittal, has slower feedback and does not foster personal focus. Text-based media are predicted to be the medium of choice for these individuals.

H3b. The higher an individual’s espoused power distance, the stronger their preference will be for the use of text-based media for communicating with the client.

Individuals who score highly on espoused collectivism seek to build relationships, and tend to be more likely to repeat business with those with whom they have a relationship (Triandis et al., 1988). To ensure future business, such individuals are likely to choose a media that fosters personal focus and social presence (Tu & McIsaac, 2002) when dealing with a client. However, the desire to minimize cue leakage may cause these individuals to avoid the media that fosters strongest personal focus and social presence (visual), and opt for audio-based media, which foster personal focus and social presence while minimizing transmittal of paralinguistic cues.

H3c. The higher an individual’s espoused collectivism, the stronger their preference will be for the use of audio media for communicating with the client.

Since individuals who score high on espoused masculinity seek to impress others (Hofstede, 2001), they are expected to view client interactions as an opportunity to close deals and move the organization to a stronger financial position, thereby making themselves seem to be a valuable asset. Further, these individuals are likely to recognize the value of establishing long term relationships with clients and will, therefore, seek media that foster personal focus and social

presence. This is because face to face interactions are often costly in terms of time and effort, and not always feasible. A motivated individual who scores highly in terms of masculinity will be conscious of these costs, and because of this will avoid face to face interactions with clients unless absolutely necessary (i.e., in order to maximize their ability to satisfy multiple clients). As such, we predict that they will seek a media that both allows for fast interactions, while also maximizing social presence and personal focus. Therefore, audio-based media are predicted to be the preferred media for individuals in this position.

H3d. The higher an individual's espoused masculinity, the stronger their preference will be for the use of audio-based media for communicating with the client.

METHODOLOGY

Our research question seeks to explain the relationship between imposterism, culture and media choice. A cross-sectional survey with a media choice scenario was employed. This approach is consistent with a number of previous media choice studies (e.g., Furner & George, 2012; Straub & Karahanna, 1998).

Because our research objective is to understand the influence of imposterism in the workplace and espoused national culture on media choice, our population of interest is working adults who have experience communicating using a variety of media and who vary in terms of espoused national culture and imposterism. Because China and the United States tend to vary along the three espoused cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001), our sampling pools consists of working professionals from the People's Republic of China and the United States. It is important to note that Srite and Karahanna's (2006) espoused national culture differs from Hofstede's (2001) conceptualization of culture in that espoused national culture refers to a self-reported individual level variable that can be used to predict individual level behaviors; while Hofstede's culture refers to a national level variable that cannot be used to predict individual level behavior. As such, we are using Srite and Karahanna's individual level espoused national culture and are not analyzing the country of the subjects.

Data was collected using a cross-sectional survey, which was administered online. Subjects were first asked basic demographic questions including their education level and income. Subjects were then asked 20 questions related to imposterism and 18 questions related to espoused national culture (these questions were all 7-point Likert-style). Participants were then given a hypothetical scenario in which they were "asked to assume a leadership role on an important new project." Subjects were asked which media they prefer to use to communicate with 1) subordinates 2) top management and 3) clients. For each communication target, subjects were given eight media choices (phone, e-mail, face-to-face, memo, text message, voice mail, letter and instant message). The three dimensions of espoused national culture were measured using Srite and Karahanna's (2006) 23-item scale. Imposterism was measured using Clance's (1985) scale translators.

A total of 439 subjects took the survey—240 from the United States and 199 from China. Before computing values for our independent variables, a reliability analysis (using SPSS 15) was

conducted on the items provided in the survey, resulting in strong alphas. Based on the reliability analysis, we calculated our independent variables by averaging the responses to twenty items for imposterism, six items for espoused collectivism, six items for espoused power distance and five items for espoused masculinity. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between independent variables are presented in Table 1.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Imposterism	2.85	0.73	0.924			
Power Distance	2.7	0.72	0.325*	0.832		
Collectivism	3.17	0.58	0.149*	0.085	0.814	
Masculinity	2.24	0.91	0.369*	0.515*	0.114*	0.877

* $p < .05$; Reliabilities on the diagonal

Table 1: Correlations among Independent Variables.

RESULTS

Using SPSS 15, we conducted a Fishers Discriminant Classification Analysis with imposterism, power distance, collectivism and masculinity as the independent variables on all models. In the first model, media choice for communicating with subordinates serves as the dependent variable. Our Wilks' alpha of 0.896 ($\chi^2=54.88$, $df=8$, $p < 0.001$) indicated that the discriminate function predicted media choice at a rate significantly better than chance. Our findings showed that H1a was supported ($F=9.65$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p < .001$), H1b was supported ($F=12.53$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p < .001$), H1c was not supported ($F=0.11$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p=.893$), and H1d was supported ($F=20.30$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p < .001$).

In the second model, media choice for communicating with top management served as the dependent variable. Our Wilks' alpha of 0.922 ($\chi^2=5.93$, $df=8$, $p=0.0434$) indicated that the discriminate function predicted media choice at a rate significantly better than chance. Our findings showed that H2a was supported ($F=7.35$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p < .001$), H2b was supported ($F=12.89$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p < .001$), H2c was not supported ($F=0.16$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p=.854$) and H2d was supported ($F=3.75$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p=0.024$).

In the third model, media choice for communicating with a client serves as the dependent variable. Our Wilks' alpha of 0.901 ($\chi^2=18.79$, $df=8$, $p=0.016$) indicated that the discriminate function predicted media choice at a rate significantly better than chance. Our findings showed that H3a was supported ($F=5.164$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=394$, $p=0.006$), H3b was supported ($F=9.78$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=394$, $p < .001$), H3c was not supported ($F=0.34$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=394$, $p=.702$), and H3d was supported ($F=8.26$, $df_1=2$, $df_2=393$, $p < .001$). The results for all three models are summarized in Table 2.

	Subordinates	Top Management	Client
Imposterism	Text	Text	Text
Power Distance	Text	Audio	Text
Collectivism	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Masculinity	Audio	Audio	Audio

Table 2: Media Choice.

DISCUSSION

Overall, this study found evidence an individual's tendency toward imposterism and culture do influence how they prefer to communicate. Three of our twelve hypotheses, all associated with collectivism were not significant (H1c, H2c and H3c). The remaining nine hypotheses were significant.

Our failure to identify a relationship between collectivism and media choice in any of the three models is surprising. Further analysis indicates that while the reliability for collectivism is strong (Cronbach alpha = .814), the actual variation along this factor was low (s.d. = 0.058 on a 7.0 point scale, with a mean of 3.17). It is possible that our sample, although composed of individuals from China (a high collectivism country) and the United States (a low collectivism country) tended to be neutral to low in terms of collectivism. To verify this, we split the sample based on country of the subject, and found that means for collectivism were similar for subjects from both countries (Chinese mean = 3.179, s.d. = 0.471; U.S. mean = 3.165, s.d. = 0.654). This lack of variation may be the cause of the non-significant result.

We had posited that individuals who score highly on collectivism will seek to build relationships with their subordinates, top management and clients, and will thus seek out media that transmit more cues, foster personal focus and better facilitate relationship building. It is possible that we overestimated the influence of these objectives for collectivists in our sample.

This could be the result of our scenario indicating that subjects would be assuming a "leadership role on an important new project." It could be that this statement caused some subjects to feel insecure, and chose more text-based media than we anticipated. This would consistent with Furner and George's (2012) finding that collectivists, when asked to lie, prefer text-based media to minimize the transmittal of cues that deception is taking place, with the objective minimizing damage to relationships with both the target of the deceptive message and members of the target's communication network.

We were also interested in determining if the target of the communication influenced media choice. Although the strength of the preference for a given media did change based on the target, the change was not strong enough to lead the participant to choose a different media, except when the individual scored highly in espoused power distance. Individuals who scored highly in espoused power distance preferred to use text-based media when communicating with subordinates and clients, but preferred audio media when communicating with top management. This finding is consistent with other studies (Furner & George, 2012) in suggesting that individuals who score highly on espoused power distance behave differently when interacting

with their superiors than they do with others. While text-based media are best for masking cues and mitigating stress associated with feedback time pressure, these benefits seem to take a back seat to perceived expectations of availability and undivided attention to one's superiors. This finding raises another question: does the influence of other individual level factors media choice also depend on the target of the message?

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the current study are insightful to both researchers and practitioners. Imposterism is a relatively new construct whose importance in work life is becoming better understood. This study provides evidence that imposterism has a major influence on a well-established communication and information systems outcome: media choice. Specifically, the finding that individuals who score high on imposterism prefer text-based media regardless of communication target indicates that people who score high on imposterism are cognizant of the risks of being exposed, and actively attempt to mask the leakage of cues that they may not be as expert as they let others believe. If true, this is likely to influence other workplace related behaviors other than communication. Imposterism is a well-documented component of work life (Leonard & Harvey, 2008). Successful imposterism can lead to actions being taken based on inaccurate information, so mitigating imposterism can be important to organizations. The findings of this study suggest that when one is suspicious of imposterism, forcing the suspected individual to use media, which they are less comfortable with (visual media rather than text-based media), may make uncovering imposterism easier. In addition, a person who scores high in imposterism may abandon attempts to reinforce false perceptions of their expertise when communicating with a medium that requires instant feedback (visual or voice rather than text-based), reducing the exposure to risk associated with inaccurate information being used in decision making.

Finally, this study also contributes to researchers' understanding of media choice by demonstrating a relationship between media choice and espoused national culture. As international trade and relations become more relevant to our society, the importance of the communication factors of these relationships cannot be dismissed. Consideration of the cultural aspects of media choice is an emerging and increasing important research construct. An interesting extension would be to test these relationships in different task scenarios.

REFERENCES

- Aragon, S. R. (2003). Creating social presence in online environments. In S. R. Argon (Ed.), *Facilitating learning in online environments: New directions for adult and continuing education* (No. 100, pp. 57-68). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bandyopadhyay, K., & Fraccastoro, K. A. (2007). The effect of culture on user acceptance of information technology. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 19*, (Article 23).

- Bernard, N. S., Dollinger, S. J., & Ramaniah, N. V. (2002). Applying the big five personality factors to the imposter phenomenon. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 78(2), 321-333.
- Bond, C. F., Jr., & Robinson, M. (1988). The evolution of deception. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 12(4), 295-307. doi: 10.1007/BF00987597
- Burgoon, J. K., Bonito, J. A., Ramirez, A., Jr., Dunbar, N. E., Kam, K., & Fischer, J. (2002). Testing the interactivity principle: Effects of mediation, propinquity, and verbal and nonverbal modalities in interpersonal interaction. *Journal of Communication*, 52, 657-677. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2002.tb02567.x
- Carlson, J. R., & George, J. F. (2004). Media appropriateness in the conduct and discovery of deceptive communication: The relative influence of richness and Synchronicity. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 13(2), 191-210. doi: 10.1023/B:GRUP.0000021841.01346.35
- Carlson, J. R., & Zmud, R. W. (1999). Channel expansion theory and the experiential nature of media richness perceptions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 42(2), 153-170.
- Clance, P. R. (1985). *The impostor phenomenon: Overcoming the fear that haunts your success*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.
- Clance, P. R., & Imes, S. A. (1978). The imposter phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 15(3), 241-247. doi: 10.1037/h0086006
- Clance, P. R., & O'Toole, M. A. (1987). The imposter phenomenon: An internal barrier to empowerment and achievement. *Women and Therapy*, 6(3), 51-64.
- Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design. *Management Science*, 32(5), 554-571.
- Daft, R. L., Lengel, R. H., & Treviño, L. K. (1987). Message equivocality, media selection and manager performance: Implications for information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 11, 355-366. doi.org/10.2307/248682
- Dennis, A. R., & Valacich, J. S. (1999). Rethinking media richness: Towards a theory of media synchronicity. In *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. Paper presented at the 32nd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Systems Sciences, Maui, HI, January 5-8. doi: 10.1109/HICSS.1999.772701
- Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1969). Nonverbal leakage and clues to deception. *Psychiatry*, 32(1), 88-106.
- Fried-Buchalter, S. (1992). Fear of success, fear of failure, and the imposter phenomenon: A factor analytic approach to convergent and discriminant validity. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 58(2), 368-379.

- Furner, C. P. (2013). Cultural determinants of information processing shortcuts in computer supported groups: A review, research agenda and instrument validation. *International Journal of Information Systems and Social Change*, 4(3), 17-32. doi: 10.4018/jissc.2013070102
- Furner, C. P., & George, J. F. (2012). Cultural determinants of media choice for deception. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, 1427-1438. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.03.005
- Furner, C. P., Mason, R. M., Mehta, N., Munyon, T. P., & Zinko, R. (2009). Cultural determinants of learning effectiveness from knowledge management systems: A multinational investigation. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 12(1), 30-51.
- Gefen, D., & Straub, D. (2003). Managing user trust in B2C e-services. *eService Journal*, 2(2), 7-24. doi: 10.1353/esj.2003.0011
- George, J. F., & Carlson, J. R. (2010). Lying at work: A deceiver's view of media characteristics. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 27, 819-830.
- Giordano, G., & Furner, C. P. (2009). Individual determinants of media choice for deception. *Journal of Information Technology Management*, 20(2), 1-10. Retrieved from <http://jitm.ubalt.edu/XX-2/article1.pdf>
- Grimm, C. M., & Smith, K. G. (1997). *Strategy as action: Industry rivalry and coordination*. Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western.
- Gunawardena, C. N. (1995). Social presence theory and implications for interaction and collaborative learning in computer conferences. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications*, 1(2/3), 147-166.
- Gunawardena, C. N., & Zittle, F. J. (1997). Social presence as a predictor of satisfaction within a computer-mediated conferencing environment. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 11(3), 8-26.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- King, R. C., & Xia, W. (1997). Media appropriateness: Effects of experience on communication media choice. *Decision Sciences*, 28, 877-910. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5915.1997.tb01335.x
- Lea, M., & Spears, R. (1991). Computer-mediated communication, de-individuation, and group decision making. *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies*, 34, 283-301. doi: 10.1016/0020-7373(91)90045-9

- Leonard, N. H., & Harvey, M. (2008). Negative perfectionism: Examining negative excessive behavior in the workplace. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 38*(3), 585-610. doi: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2007.00318.x
- McDowell, W. C., Boyd, N. G., & Bowler, W. M. (2007). Overreward and the impostor phenomenon. *Journal of Managerial Issues, 19*(1), 95-110.
- Miller, G. R., & Stiff, J. B. (1993). *Deceptive communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ochsman, R. B., & Chapanis, A. (1974). The effects of 10 communication modes on the behavior of teams during co-operative problem-solving. *International Journal of Man- Machine Studies, 6*(5), 579-619.
- Palvia, S. C., Palvia, P., Xia, W., & King, R. C. (2011). Critical issues of IT outsourcing vendors in India. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 29*(Article 11).
- Piedmont, R. L., & Chae, J. -H. (1995). Cross-cultural generalizability of the five-factor model of personality development and validation of the NEO PI-R for Koreans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 28*(2), 131-155. doi: 10.1177/0022022197282001
- Reinsch, N. L., Jr., & Beswick, R. W. (1990). Voice mail vs. conventional channels: A cost minimization analysis of individuals' preferences. *The Academy of Management Journal, 33*(4), 801-816.
- Srite, M., & Karahanna, E. (2006). The role of espoused national culture values in technology acceptance. *MIS Quarterly, 30*(3), 679-704.
- Straub, D., & Karahanna, E. (1998). Knowledge worker communications and recipient availability: Toward a task closure explanation of media choice. *Organization Science, 9*(2), 160-175. doi: 10.1287/orsc.9.2.160
- Triandis, H. C., Bontempo, R., Villareal, M. J., & Asai, M., Lucca, N. (1988). Individualism and collectivism: Cross-cultural perspectives on self-ingroup relationships. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 54*, 323-338. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.54.2.323
- Tu, C. -H. (2002). The measurement of social presence in an online learning environment. *International Journal on E-Learning, 1*(2), 34-45.
- Tu, C. -H., & McIsaac, M. (2002). The relationship of social presence and interaction in online classes. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 16*(3), 131-150. doi: 10.1207/S15389286AJDE1603_2
- Tushman, M. L., & Katz, R. (1980). External communication and project performance: An investigation into the role of gatekeepers. *Management Science, 26*, 1071-1085.

Williams, E. (1977). Experimental comparisons of face-to-face and mediated communications: A review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 84, 963-976.

This Page Was Left Blank Intentionally.