

COMMUNICATION FACTORS THAT AFFECT
CHINESE APPAREL MANUFACTURERS'
EXPORT PERFORMANCE TO
THE UNITED STATES

By

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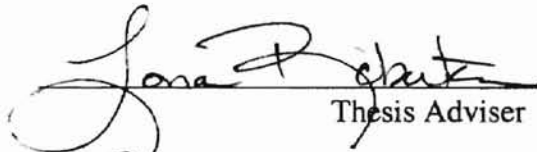
Wuhan, China

1993

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
July, 2000

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Thesis Approved:



Thesis Adviser







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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my major advisor, Dr. Lona Robertson, for her guidance, encouragement, and patience. I would also like to express my present appreciation to Dr. Cheryl Farr and Dr. Nancy Stanforth, for their suggestions and encouragement. I would also like to extend sincere appreciation to Dr. Kevin Voss for his assistance and willingness to step in at the last minute to serve on my committee. All of them were great supporters of this project.

I would also like to give a special thanks to my family. Thanks to my husband, Binbin Chen, for all his love and help. My heartfelt appreciation is extended to my parents, Kechang Xuan and Shengmei Liu, and my beloved brother for their endless support, sincere love, encouragement, and understanding. I never would have been able to accomplish my work and pursue my goals without their support.

Special appreciation is also extended to all my friends and other people for their tremendous cooperation during collection of the data.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important trends in recent years is the growing interdependence of the global economy. The world market is becoming closer due to technological advances in transportation, communication, and production. These advances fuel the worldwide search for newer and more lucrative markets (Moore, 1996). International investors, manufacturers, retailers and entrepreneurs have capitalized on technological developments to utilize a wider variety of sourcing from around the world.

Today's apparel industry plays a major role in the global economy. The scope of global apparel trade has expanded dramatically since the 1950s. During the 1950s, the apparel trade represented 15% of the world's total trade in textiles and finished garments. Global trade in textiles and clothing reached a total of \$310 billion in 1995, more than triple the amount in 1980. In 1997 (Verret, 1997) textiles and apparel represented more than 51% of trade. Verret estimates that global trading of textiles and apparel will continue to grow.

In order to understand the continued growth in the global trade of apparel, it may be necessary to study the apparel industry in selected countries. In industrialized countries, such as the United States, the apparel industry has been rapidly losing its labor force to higher wage jobs in industries such as computer and automobile production. Workers have readily abandoned \$7-13 per hour jobs in apparel production for jobs that pay eight to twenty five dollars per hour in other industries. Driven by labor

shortages and increasing labor cost, the United States apparel industry has been forced to seek other countries with adequate labor supplies, appropriate technological development, and labor costs that are low enough to off-set increased costs from shipping and insurance (Dickenson, 1999). In regions throughout the world, the countries with relatively low wage rates are maintaining their economic strength by supplying apparel items to higher wage paying countries with labor shortages (Verret, 1997). In determining the price of a garment, labor is usually the most costly ingredient. Because apparel production is a labor-intensive industry, the cost of labor is a very important element in a product's final price. When labor costs are cut, the price of goods comes down. Despite the need to supervise foreign production and despite extra shipping costs, American importers discovered that most imported goods were still much lower in cost than those made in the United States (Mueller, 1997). In underdeveloped countries, apparel producers continue to retain a labor supply and cost advantage. China is one country that has maintained such an advantage.

In 1996, China exported approximately \$6.5 million of textile and apparel items to the United States, around 1,000 times greater than the amount that the United States sold to China in the same category (Faison, 1997). With the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, China accounted for around 18% of imported apparel in the United States, while Mexico accounted for approximately 13 percent. All other countries accounted for less than 10 percent of the market (Niemira, 1999). An ample labor source, low labor costs and adequate technology keep Chinese production cost at a low level which makes China one of the attractive apparel suppliers to the United States.

Although there are obvious benefits of sourcing from China, there are still some

disadvantages that may offset the labor advantage. Among the disadvantages faced by importers are longer lead times because of transportation, quality control difficulties, delivery complications, expensive insurance and shipping fees, as well as tariff and quota restrictions. In addition, in order to conduct business in a global market, importers must overcome barriers such as differences in language, work ethic, geography and culture (Stone, 1993). These differences are often blamed for both quality and delivery schedules that do not meet United States importer expectations.

Purpose

American apparel importers need to improve their ability to reduce risks during their importing activities with China. To Chinese manufacturers, realizing which variables may influence their interpretation of the information from American buyers and understanding the buyers' expectations may help them to satisfy American buyers and retain their business.

The purpose of this study were three fold. The first purpose was to identify to what extent culture, the interpreters' English ability, experience with American culture, and manufacturers' experience in exporting to the United States influenced Chinese manufacturers' understanding of the information coming from American buyers. The second purpose was to identify how feedback from American buyers, during the business transaction, influenced Chinese manufacturers' understanding of American buyers' information. The third purpose of this study was to identify the impact of Chinese manufacturers' relationship with their American buyers' on Chinese manufacturers' performance in two aspects: quality and delivery time.

This study may result in recommendations for American apparel importers to identify the importance of understanding Chinese culture and having feedback during communication with Chinese apparel export manufacturers. At the same time, Chinese manufacturers may realize how important it is to correctly understand their American buyers' information and their culture. Chinese manufacturers may also pay more attention to choosing a qualified interpreter during their export business.

Objectives

To achieve this overall purpose the follow objects have been established:

1. To identify the impact of Chinese culture on Chinese apparel manufacturers' interpretation of American buyers' information.
2. To identify the impact of Chinese interpreters' language skills on Chinese apparel manufacturers' understanding of American buyers' information.
3. To identify the impact of the Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience on Chinese apparel manufacturers' understanding of American buyers' information.
4. To identify the impact of Chinese apparel export manufacturers' previous experience in exporting business to the United States on their understanding of American buyers' information.
5. To identify the impact of feedback from American buyers on Chinese export manufacturer' understanding of American buyers' information.
6. To identify the impact of Chinese manufacturers' relationship with their American buyer on Chinese manufacturers' performance in quality control.

7. To identify the impact of Chinese manufacturers' relationship with their American buyers on Chinese manufacturers' performance in delivery time.

Theoretical Basis and Model

Based on Schuler's organization communication models and another symbolic interaction model, Sziagyi and Wallace (1990) proposed an integrative model of communication in organizations. From this integrative model of communication, three factors in communication will influence the interpretation of information during communication: communication barrier, role perceptions, and motives, personality and learning. This model has also shown a direct relationship between interpretation and performance. Sziagyi and Wallace's model also implied that behavior and performance have consequences for both the message sender and the receiver. For the message sender, the behavior and performance of the receiver that result from a particular communication will be compared with the message sender's original intent. The degree of correspondence between the initial message and the message feedback from the receiver will determine the degree of communication effectiveness achieved. The model suggests that the message sender should monitor communication effectiveness, make subsequent changes in the communication process, and try to reduce cultural and language barriers in order to improve communication. Behavior and performance also have consequences for the receiver. The message sender's feedback following receivers' behavior and performance affect the receivers' psychological response. Such individual factors change in response to feedback thus can change the way individuals interpret future communications. Because the major objective of this study is to investigate

communication in the area of international business instead of within an organization, role perceptions will be discarded from this study. Cultural barriers and language barriers will be used as the communication barrier. A modified model designed for using in this study is showed in figure 1.

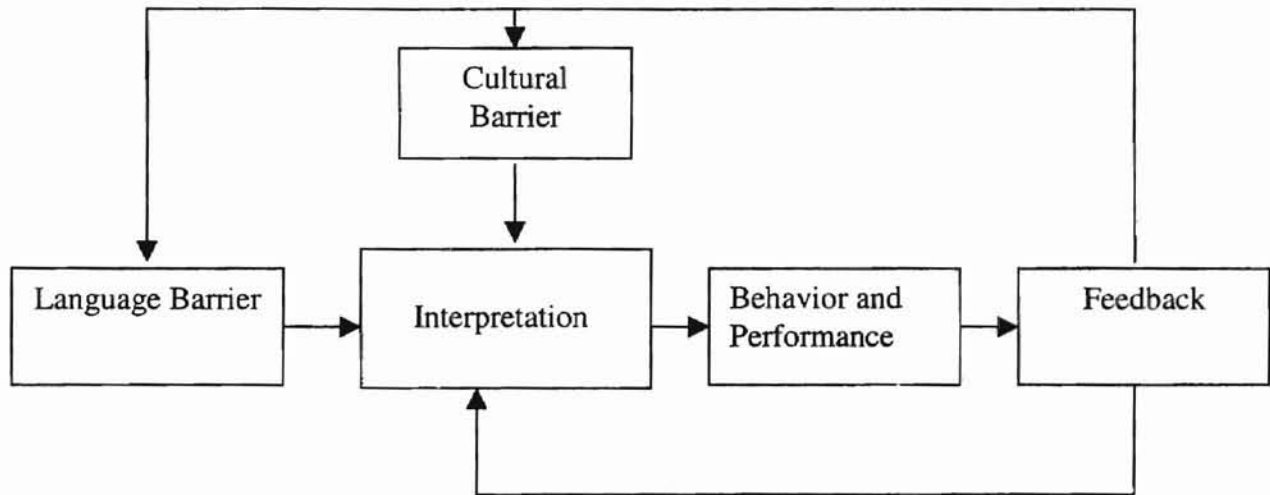


Figure 1

The model in figure 1 implies that cultural barrier and language barrier impact interpretation and interpretation impacts on behavior and performance. Behavior and performance will lead to feedback from the message sender. During the international business communication process, feedback from the message sender can contribute to eliminate language barrier and cultural barrier that will eventually improve the message receiver's interpretation accuracy.

Cultural barrier

Yeung and Tung (1996) reported that business relationships have a different definition and plays a different role in the Chinese and American world because of

cultural differences. In the United States, business is business. There is not usually a significant personal relationship in the business relationship. Yet in China, relationships mean a lot in the business interaction. Since relationship is one factor that can represent different cultures, it will be used in this study as a factor that may influence interpretation. Interpreters' experience with American culture will also influence their interpretation. Bloch's (1991) study and Sperber and Wilson's (1986) study suggested that without a cultural-basis reference, the meaning expressed in one language may not find an exact equivalent meaning in another culture. So, it is possible that the more American cultural experience Chinese interpreters have, the more correct the interpreters' interpretations. Besides, Chinese manufacturers' export business with the United States is also an American culture understanding procedure. Therefore, it will be presumed that manufacturers' export experience with the United States. will contribute to their interpretation with American buyers' information.

Language barrier

According to Sziagyi and Wallace's (1990) study, individual variations of the person who interprets information play a very important role in the interpretation. During business negotiations between American and Chinese business people, most interpreters are Chinese. The main reason is that very few Americans can speak Chinese, yet in China, English is the required secondary language which makes a lot of interpreters available in China (Gilsdorf, 1997). The English ability of Chinese interpreters will be tested to identify the impact they may have on the interpretation process.

Feedback

Feedback is a mechanism by which the sender can check to see how the message was actually interpreted. This makes communication a two-way process. From Szilagyi and Wallace's (1990) study, feedback is one factor that can improve the communication efficiency. In this study it will be used as one variable which can influence the interpretation.

Hypotheses

Several research hypotheses will be investigated. It is hypothesized that:

1. The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy level in interpreting that American buyer's information.
2. The higher an interpreter's self-reported language ability, the higher he/she will rate his/her accuracy level in interpreting American buyers' information.
3. The more experience an interpreter has with American culture, the higher he/she will rate his/her accuracy level in interpreting American buyers' information.
4. The more business experience with American companies a Chinese manufacturer has, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy level in interpreting that American buyer's information.
5. The higher the frequency of feedback that a Chinese manufacturer gets from an American buyer, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy level in interpreting the American buyers' information.
6. The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American

buyer, the higher the acceptance rate for final products.

7. The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the less likely the manufacturer will have asked for a postponement the shipping date. The
8. The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the less cancellations of orders.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for the study:

1. In terms of accuracy of interpretation, Chinese export apparel manufacturers' self reported interpretation would be assumed to be accurate.
2. Acceptance rate of final products is an indication of the American buyers' satisfaction with the products' quality.
3. Meeting the shipment date required on the Letter of Credit was assumed to represent that Chinese manufacturers have a punctual delivery time.
4. Shipment later than the shipment date that is required on the Letter of Credit was assumed to represent that Chinese manufacturers were not punctual in meeting the specified delivery time.

Limitations

First, the factors that were chosen in this study do not represent all of the factors that might influence Chinese apparel export manufacturers' performance. Further research is needed to test other important factors that may influence Chinese

manufacturers' performance. The second limitation is that only one side of the business transaction (Chinese export side) will be tested. If two sides (both China and United States) could be tested, the results may be more reliable. For example, it would be much accurate and effective to test the Chinese manufacturers' interpretation of American buyers' information from the message senders' perspective (American buyers) than to test it from the message receivers' perspective (Chinese manufacturers). The third limitation of this study lies in the sampling method. Purposive and snowball sampling methods will be used in this study. The potential participants whom the researcher has personal contact will be the purposive sample in this study. Therefore, respondents used in this study may not represent the real world very well.

Definition of Terms

Culture: the values, ethics, rituals, traditions, material objects, and services produced or valued by the members of a society (Solomon, 1999).

Culture shock: the state of acute anxiety produced by unfamiliar social norms and social signals (Larry & Richard, 1988).

Feedback: an informal or a formal mechanism by which the sender can check on how the message was actually interpreted (Szilagyi & Wallace, 1990).

Language: a symbolic system used by communicators to construct and convey information (Findley, 1998).

Quality: a reflection of consumers' opinion on the value they see in your product compared to that of your competitor (Mehta, 1992).

Subculture: a group whose members share beliefs and common experiences that

set them apart from other members of a culture (Solomon, 1999).

Tie strength: a multidimensional construct that represents the strength of the dyadic interpersonal relationship in the context of social networks (Money, Gilly, & Graham, 1998).

Letter of credit: a guaranteed form of payment worked out by the banks of the seller and the buyer (Wilfong & Seger, 1997).

Lead time: amount of time between the placing of an order for merchandise and the desired delivery date (Wolfe, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

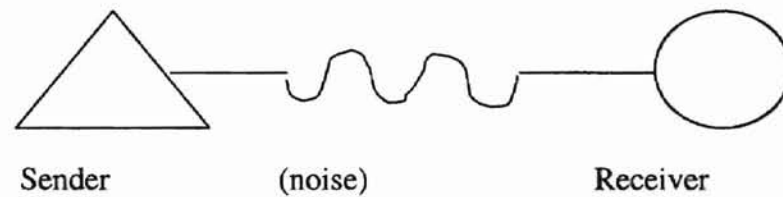
Introduction

This review of literature is divided into four main sections. The first section concerns intercultural communication, particularly, the impact of language and cultural differences on the intercultural communication. Relationships in China are also discussed because of its uniqueness and importance in the Chinese business world. The second section of the literature review concerns the function of feedback during communication. Studies on whether feedback can affect the communication efficiency are discussed. The third section explains the importance of quality and timing in apparel industry.

Intercultural Communication

Communication is the process of people interacting through the use of a message (Reinard, 1998). There are two kinds of communications. One is nonverbal communication; the other is verbal communication. Nonverbal communication refers to information that is transmitted from senders to receivers when the information is not conveyed through the use of words. The second type of communication, verbal communication, is the communication wherein the main information is transmitted by words. Because of the geographic distance between China and the United States, most business interactions are not made face to face, therefore, communicators can not

interpret information from the other party's facial expressions or other body language. Therefore, nonverbal communication is not the focus in this study. The main focus of this study is on verbal communication (including both written communication and oral communication). At the most basic level, the communication process is stated in the form of a simple model:



* Noise represents factors that may distort the message.

Figure 2

This standard communication model is derived from the Shannon and Weaver transmission model of 1949. This model showed a process that began with a sender who encoded a message and sent it through a channel to a receiver, who then decoded the message. This communication model shows that distortion noise is very common in the communication. During the verbal communication, language is the basis for the communication. In order to understand communication, a basic knowledge of language is needed.

Language

Language is a powerful tool in verbal communication. A language is a symbolic system used by communicators to construct and convey information. It is the main media in verbal communication because it plays an important role in information construction and exchange (Findley, 1998). Yet language has its limits. Language sometimes lacks a

one-to-one relationship with reality, which makes it unable to represent our sensations and perceptions about reality in a comprehensive way (Findley, 1998). That is, language cannot really represent some sensations, such as, visual, auditory, tactile, taste and smell. Furthermore, Reinard (1998) argued that language might establish a sensory-perceptual bias. Language may also distort information because its words and grammatical forms may emphasize or neglect certain events to be perceived over others. Because of the limitation of language during the communication process, distortion may happen among people who speak the same language. Intercultural communication becomes much more risky because in addition to the language distortion, there is an extra language translation process which might distort the original meaning in some extent during communication.

Language is one of a number of fundamental barriers to overcome during intercultural communication (Wang, 1998). Basic concepts, particularly in business, are often improperly translated across cultures. "Sometimes understanding and agreement are presumed because the English-language fluency of a Chinese negotiator is overestimated, or it is incorrectly accepted that a Chinese counterpart understands Western culture" (Wang, 1998, p3). By understanding the importance of language in the communication, we may be able to predict that the English language ability of Chinese interpreters may have a significant influence on their interpretation of American buyers' information. The better the English language ability a Chinese interpreter has, the better the understanding and communication efficiency achieved.

Cultural Difference

Although language is one of the most important differences and one of the greatest barriers between different cultures, persons who have learned a foreign language quite well may make serious mistakes. In the 1980s, researchers (Bloch, 1991; Sperber & Wilson, 1986) suggested that not only language is important in intercultural communication, but cultural basis must also be important in intercultural communication. Bloch (1991) suggested that much of knowledge is fundamentally non-linguistic which is formed through the experience of, or the practice in, the empirical life. Under certain circumstances, some of the non-linguistic knowledge would be rendered into language, step by step, the characters of the non-linguistic knowledge changed with time. Without a cultural-basis reference, the meaning expressed in one language may not find an exact equivalent meaning in another culture. This study supports the relevance theory offered by Sperber and Wilson in 1986, which demonstrated that contextual factors (like culture) played an important role in the cognitive process of decoding meaning. Both studies showed that culture is the foundation of communication. During intercultural communication, culture and communication are inseparable because culture helps to determine the specific way people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages are sent or interpreted (Larry & Richard, 1988). Knowing the cultural context for language is extremely helpful for interpreting meaning in intercultural communication. Psychological research supports that a person's cultural background and knowledge strongly influences how he perceives stimuli and construct information (West, 1981). All persons in a given culture share some similar experiences and some unique experiences.

The similarities among them will develop some unique perceptual predisposition that is different from those who have different experiences.

Because this study will focus on the business between the United States and China, an understanding of these two different cultures is needed. Western and Chinese cultural values have different origins (Wang, 1998). For many reasons (historical, cultural and religious reasons), Western culture values the concept of relative social equality, such as “equality in the sight of God” or equality of opportunity for individual effort in every field in the society.

In contrast, the Chinese cultural values originate from a civilization. Chinese culture is actually built on the family economic unit-an autocratic and hierarchical organization. Oetzel (1995) proposed that American model for decision making tend to focus on the task dimension. However, collectivist cultures, such as China, Japan, and Korea, may place more importance on the relational dimension of interaction. Coincidentally, Aaker and Williams’s research in 1998 examined the persuasive effect of emotional appeals on members of collectivist versus individualist cultures. The results of their research demonstrated that collectivist culture tend to appreciate ego-focused versus other-focused, while other-focused versus ego-focused emotional appeals lead to more favorable attitudes for members of an individualist culture. This study revealed that individualism-collectivism is a cultural-level variable referring to the extent to which members of a culture tend to be independent versus interdependent. In individualist countries, such as those of the United States, Australia, and Canada, each individual has its unique internal attributes. In contrast, in collectivist cultures an individual is assumed to be inseparable from others and the social context. Consequently, individualists tend to

separate themselves from others, displaying qualities of uniqueness and not being mixed or influenced by others. However, collectivists tend to affiliate and maintain connection with others (Singelis, 1994). As a result of these cultural differences between the United States and China, knowing more about the cultural context would be very helpful for encoding meaning during communication.

Understanding the impact of intercultural communication is important because it can improve the way business people trade with each other. Business strategy research has been developed to the 'fit' between business strategy and various circumstances. For example, Bartlett and Ghoshal's study in 1989 was to identify conditions for applying generic strategies. This study supported that companies must develop a multidimensional organization. The effectiveness of each management group is maintained and each group is independent, in order to succeed in the international operating environment. Feder and Werther's study regarding international alliances (1996) revealed one reason why international alliances often fail is because the deal makers ignore one dimension in evaluating a potential alliance: culture. Learning issues of compatibility will impact the alliance. To explore the international business between the United States and China, Tsang also did some research to find out whether "guanxi" could be the source of sustained competitive advantage for foreign companies doing business in China. The results showed that valuable, rare, and imperfectly immutable business tend to get advantages from guanxi. However, even if a certain advantage is gained, it can be difficult to sustain, because guanxi can be disrupted by something as simple as staff mobility. By suggesting ways for companies to protect their guanxi, it is hoped that this important aspect of Chinese management may be made more understandable to

westerners and its use by western managers enhanced and encouraged. Kought and Singh's study in 1988 investigated how national culture affects American companies' entry choice, adopting acquisitions, joint ventures, or wholly owned greenfields. The results supported that national culture to a large extent determine entry choice. The more culturally distant between the United States and the nation of the entering firm, the more likely the firm will choose a joint venture. In addition, the greater the size of the United States partner, the more likely the entry will be a joint venture.

Recently, Buckley and Casson (1998) called for recognition of "new dimensions to corporate strategy" because of the variability and volatility of the international environment. Ross's (1999) study treated culture as a context for multinational business. Ross developed a framework for assessing the fit between a country's culture and a generic strategy. By integrating previous research within the framework, guidelines for an international business to use in evaluating its possible strategy choices were generated. In Ross's study, a framework for multinational business was developed first, it was then used to assess the 'fit' between a generic strategy and a country culture. Ross's framework has provided insight into partner actions and competitor moves. Last, this framework provided specific guidelines for multinational business. Lin and Germain's study in 1999 examined the linkages among relationship commitment, cross-cultural adaptation, relational norms and international joint venture (IJV) interaction frequency. It explored that the value of interaction frequency as a performance measures in IJV research and the role of relationship commitment as a key predictor. The model was tested empirically using LISREL on US-Chinese IJVs. The results showed that relationship commitment positively predicted IJV interaction frequency and cross-

cultural adaptation.

Although there have been a number of studies about cross-cultural business, most of them have focused on business strategies used to explore a foreign market. Exploring a foreign market is different from purchasing from a foreign market. In this study the intercultural communication happens between American buyers and Chinese manufacturers. Few research studies examining this have been conducted at this point.

Understanding another culture may become the basis for successful communication during international trade. However, what standard can be used to judge the level of the understanding of another culture? One assumption might be made that enough knowledge about that country will help eliminate an “outsider’s” false predisposition that obstructs effective communication (Beamer, 1995). Previous studies have shown that the similarity of two countries’ cultural, psychological, economic, educational, and occupational environment will benefit from successful multinational communication (Samovar & Porter, 1991; Kim, 1988). These studies also proved that under the condition where the culture of another person or organization is unlike one’s own, the level of how much one finds out about the unlike/unknown culture will determine the success in communication. These studies reveal some conditions that will help cross-cultural communication.

A study by Crabtree in 1998 argued that sufficient knowledge of another culture would be critical in developing cultural awareness. Cross-cultural participation would be very meaningful in framing intercultural experiences. Working side-by-side with other cultural members offered a unique vantage point from which to see each other’s perspectives and experiences. Based on this conclusion researchers may predict that the

more export experience Chinese manufacturers have with American buyers, the better chance Chinese manufacturers can understand their American buyers' information.

Besides the cultural barriers experienced by Chinese manufacturers, individual attributes may also impact the intercultural interpretation. Some studies have been conducted to show this impact in this aspect. Intercultural communication is defined as the exchange of information between individuals who are unlike culturally. This definition identified the importance of people who directly join the exchange procedure. A variety of studies on cross-cultural adjustment focused on the effects of international experience on individual personal growth (Kim & Ruben, 1988), the impact of international experience on individual's creation of a global worldview (Bachner, Zeuschel, & Shannon, 1993; Sharma & Young, 1985). From Gudykunst & Wiseman's study in 1978, it also revealed that international business experience enhance individual's acquisition of intercultural communication skills. In fact, cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation are viewed increased during intercultural communication (Kim, 1997; Kim & Ruben, 1988) because these processes are experienced primarily through interaction.

Kim and Ruben (1988) argued that the stress of culture shock is critical to the growth process of an individual's cultural sensitivity and that, after a cross-cultural experience, the person's "cultural identity is open to further transformation and growth" (Kim & Ruben, 1988, p. 313). Kim and Ruben's transformational model of cross-cultural identity illustrated how cross-cultural experiences increased individuals' cultural knowledge, communication competence, and cognitive complexity, as well as their emotional sensibilities. Furthermore, Hanvey (1979) claimed that contacts alone will not necessarily result in global awareness. He argued for the importance of "respect and

participation” (p.10) in order for a person to reach deeper levels of intercultural awareness. He explained that “here must be a readiness to respect and accept, and a capacity to participate. The participation must be reinforced by rewards that matter to the participant (p.10). He also declared that “The ability to learn and change is crucial” (p.10). Living with and under the same conditions as, host cultural members for a certain time facilitates an experience quite distinct from that of tourists or other sojourners (Baty & Dold, 1977). Based on these theories of cultural experience, we may predict that a Chinese interpreter’s cultural experience with the United States will impact his/her understanding of information consisted from American cultural context. The time Chinese interpreters spend in the United States and the frequency they already have contacted with Americans will be used as measures of their cultural experience with the United States. In addition, Chinese manufacturers’ experience of exporting to the United States is also a type of cultural experience. The time Chinese manufacturers spent to cooperate with their American buyers is also the time Chinese manufacturers used to understand their American buyers. We can also predict that Chinese manufacturers’ experience of exporting to the United States will impact their proceeding of American buyers’ information.

Relationships in China

Business success on amicability is a traditional value that is still popular in the modern Chinese business culture (Wang, 1998). Amicable business treats friendly cooperation as the basis for success. Chinese businesspeople strongly believe that in business, friendship is more valuable than outcomes. For Chinese businesspeople, good

feelings and trust have an actual commercial value. In China, the dinner table is one important place that business people can use to develop harmonic and trustable relationships with partners. Failure to realize and appreciate this may be very risky for any foreign company in the Chinese market. Based on these business principles, personal relationships play a pre-eminent role in Chinese business (Wang, 1998). Lin and Germain (1999) proposed that the Chinese tend not to separate business from interpersonal relationships.

In contrast, United States residents are more likely to believe that business and personal relationships can and should be separated from business transactions. In order to establish a world class organization, it is imperative that the firm maintain an extensive web of worldwide connections. The special significance of maintaining an extensive web of connections in business and valuing relationships is developed in Confucian societies. As one popular saying in these societies: “Who you know is more important than what you know.” (Wang, 1998 P103). “Who you know” refers to personal connections or relationship with authorities or individuals. These connections are known in Chinese as *guanxi*. “What you know” refers to technological expertise, including the price and the quality of a product or service. In Chinese, *guanxi* is a term for social networking and is translated as “relationship” or “connection”. *Guanxi* refers to the connection between two independent individuals that enables a bilateral flow of personal or social transactions. One basic tenet of Confucianism is that an individual is a part of a system of interdependent relationships, not an isolated entity.

Despite widespread belief among Asians and non-Asians that *guanxi* is important for the Chinese (perhaps more important than price and quality), its relationship with

business performance has not been investigated fully. Yeung, Irene and Tung (1996) have reported how to achieve business success in Confucian societies. They investigated the definition of guanxi for the Chinese and how is it different from friendship or networking patterns in the Western world; why guanxi has such a significant meaning in Confucian societies, how guanxi impacts on long-term business success in China, and how one builds and maintains guanxi. Their analysis was based on a literature review and on an empirical study that investigated 19 firms that have business dealings with China. The results from their studies showed that if foreign investors or buyers did not establish a relationship with crucial people, then their experience in China would be a frustrating one. These foreigners would have more chance to encounter innumerable obstacles and in the end they would have a greater chance to fail. However, Chinese business people would be more willing to commit themselves to a project if they felt that there was a friendship and trust between parties. Chinese businessmen tended to believe that the best way to deal with unpredictable risks or difficulties was to secure a sincere commitment based on trust, and trust was built on firm relationships. Based on how Chinese businessmen emphasis relationship in their business life, the relationship between the United States buyers and Chinese manufacturers will play a key role in their business transaction, and it may affect Chinese manufacturers' commitment to the business.

Feedback

The function of feedback during communication is to establish either an informal or a formal mechanism by which the sender can check on how a message was actually

interpreted. Feedback makes communication a two-way process. In a face-to-face situation, the sender may use the receiver's facial expressions, action, and other signs to indicate how the message was being received (Szilagyi & Wallace, 1997). During an international business communication, it is very common for people to be unable to see each other, and for most communication to be achieved through written or oral methods. Although there are many research studies about feedback, most focus on the feedback procedure within an organization. No research has been found that focuses on the feedback in an intercultural communication.

Geddes and Linnechan's (1993) study examined feedback recipients' and sources' perceptions of the performance feedback message. Lawrence and Wiswell's study in 1995 showed that feedback needs to be a two-way procedure. Behavioral research studies over the past forty years have isolated three key characteristics of feedback: specificity, empathy and inquiry. Feedback that is not specific can cause misperceptions, misunderstandings, and a general lack of agreement on both sides of the feedback exchange. Empathy refers to the trust during a feedback exchange, which can promote the sharing of perspectives and improve the understanding. Inquiry is an action during feedback exchange that can solicit data showing employees how others perceive and interpret their attitudes and behaviors. Pincus (1986) conducted studies regarding three aspects, supervisor communication, communication climate (refers to the communication environment) on organizational and personal levels, and personal feedback related to both job satisfaction and performance (refers to what an individual knows about how his or her performance is being judged). The previous studies on feedback focused mainly on communication within an organization. There is little research regarding understanding

the function of feedback in a cross-cultural business action. Because of this, it should be meaningful to reveal how feedback affects the cross-cultural communication.

Considering the functions of feedback within an organization, this two-way communication is assumed to improve the cross-cultural communication efficiency during Chinese-American business action.

Timing and Quality

Usually, buying imported goods increases lead time (Diamond, 1993). This may lead to risks because delivery may be slow or unpredictable. Retailers may worry about whether a garment will still be fashionable by the time it arrives on the store shelves. In order to understand how critical time may be in the apparel industry, knowing the circumstances apparel retailers faced may be very valuable.

Every item selling in a store has an original markup. Selling the goods at the markup price can bring retailers profits. Yet not every item can be sold at the original markup. Some of the merchandise may need to be reduced in price in order to motivate purchasing. The amount of the reduction is known as the markdown. The circumstances that cause merchandise to be marked down include errors committed by the buyers, situations not controlled by the store, and inaccurately timing the arrival of the merchandise (Wolfe, 1993).

Apparel retailers need to keep current merchandise in the stores at all times. There are several consequences of not keeping current goods in the store. First, fashion

items like apparel will find the market for such goods severely reduced if they are held too long in the store which will surely decrease the profits. Second, if merchandise is held too long its sale will require more significant markdowns. Third, by quickly disposing of less desirable goods the store's rate of turnover will improve and enable the sale of the fully marked-up goods. Last, if there is a lot of old merchandise on the shelves, there will be less room to display the new season's offerings, thus affecting the sale of the fully marked-up goods. In order to make the importance of time in the fashion industry more clear, a product life curve is shown as below:

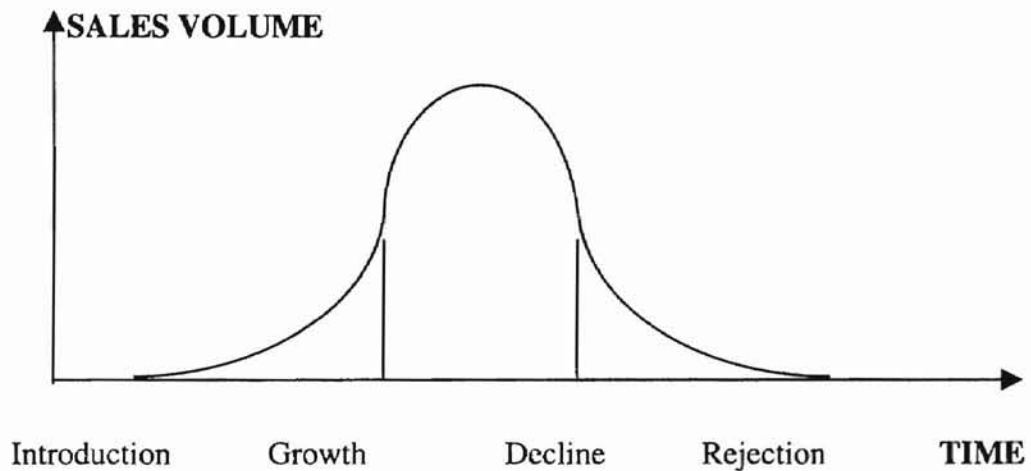


Figure 3

The above figure shows that having products available before the products' decline period have more possibility to bring retailers profits than having products available after the products' decline period. In an industry like fashion apparel, it is highly competitive and product life may be short because product styles can be quickly imitated (Richardson, 1996). Retailers may also need extra time required for reordering profitable merchandise and with the problems of returns when quality proves unsatisfactory.

Because of the importance of “time”, timely delivery of desired goods offers enormous potential for effective competition in apparel area. Not all cultures have the same sense of time. A foreign plant that promises quick delivery on goods may not be operating on the same schedule as its fast-paced American counterpart. Based on the cultural difference between China and the United States, it is very possible that Chinese and Americans have a different sense of time. However, because there is almost no research on the sense of time’s difference between China and the United States, no conclusion could be made at this point.

Theoretically, sense of time could be a barrier to overcome during the intercultural business. Inadequate transportation may also lead to slow delivery. Getting timely delivery of products from another country is based on at least two prerequisites: first, the cooperation between the buyer and the manufacturer. Second, how quickly the offshore manufacturers’ production and delivery goods are (Wolfe, 1993). The whole production of apparel includes the textile manufacturer through the apparel design and manufacturing process, distribution, stocking in the retail stores, and purchase by the ultimate consumer. Each component of the production process may influence the lead time. Several factors such as difference in the sense of time, difficulty of time control and shipment in international trade, manufacturers’ production efficiency as well as the cooperation between the buyers and manufacturers may delay the shipment. Based on the importance and challenges of timely delivery, delivery time will be used as one basic measure for Chinese manufacturers’ performance. Besides time, another element that must be considered is quality.

Perceptions of quality may differ from one consumer to another and among retail firms; it may also change from one time period to another (Stamper, 1991). Research has shown that most consumers' concepts of quality focus on construction details that closely related to the appearance of the garment rather than its expected durable life. Each manufacturer, buyer and consumer defines quality within a particular cost framework. In each cost framework people will define quality differently. Judging quality depends on the degree of match between consumer expectations and product characteristics. For retailers, they need to first identify the values of their target market and then look for the product characteristics that will meet those expectations. Therefore the retailer's definition of quality varies with their target consumers. Increased competition in the apparel industry has affected the concern for product quality. Product quality will be increasing essential to success in an extremely competitive global market. Because of the geographic distance between America and China, it is difficult for American buyers to control the products' quality. In addition, the difference in body build, sizing, and standards between the Chinese and American apparel industries make misunderstandings (Diamond, 1993). In order to avoid of quality difficulties caused by barriers created by language and cultural differences, American buyers need send clear, exact specifications along with patterns and apparel samples to Chinese manufacturers. Prior studies have found that both time and quality are crucial for apparel industry. In this study, time and quality will be chosen as two elements that can represent Chinese manufacturers' performance.

Summary of Review of Literature

This selected literature review has looked of the impact of language, culture and feedback on Chinese and American intercultural communications in the apparel business. The literature review also explained why timeliness deliver and quality have been chosen as two measurements of Chinese manufacturers' performance. To better understand the effects of language on intercultural communication, the review began with a general discussion on studies about language efficiency during communication. Culture awareness was also discussed regarding to its importance and the way to improve it. Both interpreters and Chinese manufacturers' experience with American (or American buyers) are supposed to impact on their communication efficiency. Because the uniqueness and importance of relationship in China, this study choose "relationship" as one factor that may influence the interpretation. Because of few research studies focus on how feedback could contribute to an intercultural communication, in this study, we will find out how feedback may influence the efficiency of communication. Delivery time and quality are chose as standards of Chinese manufactures' performance to reveal the impact of efficiency of communication on it.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

This study investigated the impact of culture, Chinese interpreters' attributes, and Chinese manufacturers' previous business experience with the United States on Chinese apparel manufacturers' exports performance. The feedback from American buyers was also examined in order to determine the importance of feedback during the business transaction. An email survey method was used to collect the data.

Development of Experiment

Questionnaire

A two-version questionnaire was developed (one in English, the other in Chinese) in order to collect accurate data from Chinese manufacturers. A two-way Language pretest was executed before the data collection to achieve the equivalence of the two-version questionnaire.

A questionnaire written in English was designed first. Five Chinese graduate students who were proficient both in English and Chinese were invited to translate the original English questionnaire into Chinese. Then, five different Chinese students who were also proficient in both English and Chinese were asked to translate the Chinese

questionnaire back into English. This back-translated procedure were used to ensure the equivalence of both versions of the questionnaire in two different languages (McNeal & Ji, 1999). If the two versions of the questionnaire did not achieve equivalence, an enhancement will be made to the questionnaire. At this point, the back-translated language test procedure was again used to achieve meaning equivalence in order to guarantee that the researcher received the correct information.

The questionnaire used for this study contained questions separated into eight major sections to achieve the objectives of the study. In order to make the data analysis more consistent, only closed questions were used.

Development of the survey instrument:

The survey instrument was designed after a systematic literature review. Because of confidentiality, each questionnaire was separated into two parts. Part 1 included all questions for hypothesis 1, 4,5,6,7 and 8. This part 1 was sent to an export manager or production supervisor of a Chinese apparel manufacturing firm. Part 2 included all questions for hypotheses 2 and 3 that was sent to an interpreter (if the Chinese apparel manufacturing firm employer has one; otherwise, this part was answered by the same person who answers part 1). Table 1 shows the questions structure.

Table 1

Questionnaire Structure

Part 1 Questionnaire					Part 2 Questionnaire	
H1	H4	H5	H6	H7	H 2	H 3
Q1-6	Q3, 6-9	Q10-13	Q1, 4, 14-15	Q1, 4, 16-19	Q1-7	Q7-14

Questions used to test interpreters' American cultural experience were based on the information in the literature review regarding culture and language. For example, Kim and Ruben's study examining the relationship between "culture shock" and sensitivity of another culture, and Hanvey's study (1979) about the significance of participation and living with and under the same conditions as, host cultural members for a certain time were used to design the questions for testing Chinese interpreters' cultural experience. The measurements used to identify a strong relationship between Chinese manufacturers and their American buyers were derived from Money, Gilly, and Graham's study (1998) titled "Explorations of national culture and word-of-mouth referral behavior in the purchase of industrial services in the United States and Japan". Because there was not an existing questionnaire designed to gather information on feedback frequency, quality control, delivery time and previous export experience, the researcher designed questions based on the literature review. Besides questions used to test seven hypotheses, there were three extra questions both in Part 1 and Part 2 to identify the person who answered the questionnaire. These three questions were also used to investigate whether these personal attributes (age or gender) had a relationship with their interpretation accuracy.

A structured set of questions were developed to obtain a common set of data from each manufacturer. (Appendix A).

Selection of Sample:

Purposed sampling and snowball sampling, a sampling method where each person interviewed may be asked to suggest additional people for interviewing (Babbie, 1989), was used to select participants for this study. The export manufacturers in the sample was selected from the Eastern and Southern region of China. The reason that the eastern region and southern region of China was selected is because they are major apparel producing areas for the Chinese export sector (Gilsdorf, 1997).

The criteria used for sample selections were: 1) each Chinese manufacturer was a Chinese apparel producer and exporter with a license to export to the United States; 2) each Chinese manufacturer had a current business relationship with the United States; 3) each company should have direct communications with the United States importers without any outside intermediaries. Manufacturers who had no direct relationship with American buyers usually depend upon outside intermediaries for communication. Therefore, the manufacturers, or anyone employed by their firm, do not interpret American buyers' information for themselves. Since this study focused on the how manufacturers interpreted the information directly from their American buyers, all manufacturers selected to participate in this study had a direct relationship with American buyers.

The initial sample was qualified companies where the researcher had a personal contact. After collecting data from the initial purposed participants, a snowball sampling

technique was used to identify additional companies that meet the criteria. The research will then contacted these additional manufacturers to ascertain their willingness to participate.

Procedure:

An electronic mail (e-mail) survey method was used to collect data in this study. Data collection through self-administered electronic surveys by email through the Internet have now been developed (Dillman, 1999). According to Dillman, the Internet surveys for conducting high quality probability surveys can be used in business, universities and large organizations. There are some advantages of using e-mail to collect survey data, such as: eliminate the paper, postage, mailout, and data entry costs. Using e-mail can also eliminate international boundaries and save survey implementation time. However, there are also some shortcomings with e-mail data collection such as insufficient coverage.

Until now, only a fraction of the United States population could be contacted through e-mail. In the developing countries, a smaller fraction of the population can be accessed through e-mail. According to Dillman, an e-mail approach is currently inadequate as a means of accessing random samples of defined populations of households and/or individuals. However, because the participants in this study will be Chinese apparel export manufacturers, the overall coverage for companies was better than for individuals. Furthermore, because of the use of purposive participants, the majority of

original purposive samples were accessed through e-mail. While there may be some limitations in data collection through e-mail, the efficiency of this data collection method outweighs the limitations.

A notice e-mail (Appendix B) was sent to the participants to briefly explain the researcher's interest and to determine the participant's willingness to participate in the study. After two days, an e-mail survey was sent to the participants. Sending the e-mail survey only two days after the notice e-mail was important because the elapse time between these two e-mail messages needed to be very short in order to increase the likelihood that the recipient would connect the memory of the first contact with the second (Dillman, 1999). All e-mails were sent as a blind carbon copy (the condition under which no recipient will see the address of any other member and all responses will be sent only to the sender) in order to personalize every e-mail contact to achieve a better response rate. A fax-back alternative was offered in this study. The fax-back alternative offered participants a chance to print out the questionnaire on paper and complete the survey in a traditional way without feeling uncomfortable with e-mail (Dillman, 1999).

Approximately seven days after the second e-mail containing the questionnaire, a reminder email (Appendix C) was sent to those who had not yet responded. A second questionnaire was included in this message to the participants to complete at their convenience and return the survey. At the same time, a follow-up email was sent to companies which had answered the questionnaire to thank them for sharing their valuable time and participating in this project (Appendix D). In addition, the researcher asked the initial responsive participants to identify other companies they knew who meet the criteria and might be willing to participant in this study. The same procedure

was then used to start data collection from those companies recommended by the initial participants. Twenty one companies were reached using purposive sampling and extra sixteen companies were reached using snowball sampling.

Statistical Analysis

For different hypotheses, mean values of responses to different questions were used to represent different variables.

For hypothesis one, questions one and four in part one of the questionnaire were used to test Chinese manufacturers' self-reported relationships with American buyers with whom they have had the longest relationship and American buyers with whom they have had the shortest relationship. Both questions had five choices that ranged from excellent relationship (5), above average relationship (4), average relationship (3), below average relationship (2), to poor relationship (1). The higher the scores on these two questions, the better the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceived with their American buyers. Mean scores of responses for these two questions were used to rate Chinese manufacturers' self-reported relationship with their American buyers.

Questions three and six in the part one of the questionnaire were used to test Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information. Question three asked about Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers with whom they have had longest relationship. Question six asked about Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers with whom they have had shortest relationship. Five choices were used for both questions ranging from excellent interpretation accuracy (5), above average

interpretation accuracy (4), average interpretation accuracy (3), below average interpretation accuracy (2) to poor interpretation accuracy (1). A higher score represented a better interpretation accuracy.

For hypothesis two, question five in part two of the questionnaire was used to determine the Chinese interpreters' English language ability and question six was used to determine participants' level of understanding of apparel manufacturing terminology. For each question, five choices were offered that ranged from "excellent" (5) to "poor" (1). A higher score indicated greater language ability. A mean score of each participant's responses for question five and six were used to represent that participant's general language ability. For hypothesis two, The mean values of each participant's language ability ranged from 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, to 5.0. Five categories were identified to categorize each participant's language ability: excellent language ability (5.0), above average language ability (4.5), average language ability (4.0), below average language ability (3.5), poor language ability (2.5-3.0).

For hypothesis four, in order to determining exporting experience, participants were asked to indicated the number of years they had worked in the apparel export business. Five choices were offered ranged from less than two years (1, n=3), two to four years (2, n=0), five to seven years (3, n=4), eight to ten years (4, n=9), to more than ten years (5, n=11). A higher score represents more exporting experience.

For hypothesis four, question nine in the part two of the questionnaire asked interpreters how many times they had been to the United States. Question ten in the part two of the questionnaire asked interpreters how long they had stayed in the United States. A mean value of each participant's response for question nine and ten was calculated as a

score to represent his/her American cultural experience. The mean scores of Chinese interpreters' responses for these two questions were unevenly spread from 1.0, 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, to 4.0. Five categories were developed to describe Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience according to the mean values: most experience (4.0, n=1), much experience (3.5, n=2), some experience (2.5, n=3), less experience (1.5, n=1), and least experience (1.0, n=4). For hypothesis three, if a participant had been to the United States many times and had stayed in the United States for relatively long times, the participant was categorized as having more experience with American culture. On the other hand, when a participant had been to the United States for very few times and had stayed in the United States for a relatively very short period of time, the participant was categorized as having less experience with American culture. Eleven participants had been to the United States, therefore, only data from eleven questionnaires were used for testing hypothesis three.

Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy ranged from excellent interpretation accuracy (5) to poor interpretation accuracy (1). A higher score of response represented a better interpretation accuracy. Question nine and ten in part two of the questionnaire asked participants how many times and how long they had stayed in the United States. Responses for these two questions were combined to represent participants' American cultural experience.

For hypothesis five, questions were asked regarding the frequency of communication between the Chinese manufacturers and their American buyers. A mean value of most frequent communication and least frequent communication with American buyers that a Chinese manufacturer reported were used to represent the Chinese

manufacturer's communication frequency with American buyers. The answers offered on the questionnaire included less than once per month, one to two times per month, one to two times per week and three or more times per week. The researcher coded responses in the following manner: less than once per month =1, one to two times per month =2, one to two times per week =3, three or more times per week =4. A high score indicated a greater frequency of communication. The mean scores for Chinese manufacturers' most frequent and least frequent communication ranged from 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0 to 3.5. Six categories were used to represent Chinese manufacturers' communication frequency: very low frequency (1.0, n=2), low frequency (1.5, n=3), moderate frequency (2.0, n=5), relatively high frequency (2.5, n=11), high frequency (3.0, n=4), and very high frequency (3.5, n=1). A high score of the mean value represented a higher communication frequency.

The mean values of Chinese apparel manufacturers' interpretation accuracy regarding American companies they communicated with most frequently and least frequently were used to represent Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy for hypothesis five. The mean scores ranged from 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, to 5.0. Therefore five categories were used for Chinese manufacturers' self-reported interpretation accuracy: excellent (5.0), above average (4.5), average (4.0), below average (3.5), poor (3.0).

For hypothesis six, Chinese manufacturers' self-rated relationship with their American buyers was the independent variable and Chinese manufacturers' self-reported American buyers' acceptance rate for their final products was the dependent variable. In the questionnaire, two questions were used to test Chinese manufacturers' final products' quality. One question asked about the American buyers' acceptance rate for Chinese

manufacturers' final products with whom a Chinese manufacturer had the longest relationship, another question asked about the American buyers' acceptance rate for final products with whom a Chinese manufacturer had the shortest relationship. A mean value was calculated based on each participant's response for these two questions. For each question, there were four choices listed in the questionnaire: less than 85% (coded as 1), 85%-90% (coded as 2), 91%-95% (coded as 3), more than 95% (coded as 4). A higher score represented a higher acceptance rate. The mean values for the acceptance rate of Chinese apparel manufacturers' final products ranged from 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5 to 4.0. Five categories were used to describe Chinese manufacturers' final products' acceptance rate: very high acceptance rate (4.0), high acceptance rate (3.5), average acceptance rate (3.0), low acceptance rate (2.5), and very low acceptance rate (2.0).

Chinese manufacturers' self-rated relationship with their American buyers ranged from excellent (5, n=2), above average (4, n=10), average (3, n=5), below average (2, n=6), to poor (1, n=3).

For hypothesis seven, two questions were adopted in the questionnaire to determine the frequency with which the Chinese apparel manufacturer postponed an American buyer's order with whom they had the longest and shortest relationship. To analyze this data, a mean score was calculated from each participant's responses for the above two questions. The mean values ranged from 2.0, 2.5 to 3.0. Because of the responses, only three categories were used to describe Chinese manufacturers' performance in postponing shipment: never (3), almost never (2), and sometimes (1). A higher score represented a lower likelihood of a manufacturer asking for a postponement on the shipping date.

For this hypothesis, Chinese manufacturers' self-reported relationship with their American buyers was the independent variable and ranged from excellent (5, n=2), above average (4, n=10), average (3, n=5), below average (2, n=6), to poor (1, n=3).

For hypothesis eight, Chinese manufacturers' self-rated relationship was the independent variable and Chinese manufacturers' cancellation of orders was the dependent variable. Two questions were used to test whether a Chinese manufacturer would cancel an American buyer's order with whom they have had the longest relationship and another American buyer's order with whom they have had the shortest relationship. Four responses were offered for each question: never (4), almost never (3), sometimes (2), and always (1). A higher score represented a less likelihood of the manufacturer cancelling orders. Mean scores for these two questions were calculated to describe Chinese manufacturers' performance in canceling orders. The mean scores ranged from 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, to 4.0. Therefore, four categories were established to describe Chinese manufacturers' order cancellation situation: never =4.0, almost never =3.5, sometimes =3.0, frequently =2.5, always =2.0.

A regression analysis was used to test all eight hypotheses. For data collected from Part 1 questionnaire, the relationships between Chinese manufactures and American buyers and American buyers' feedback was used as independent variables and Chinese manufacturers' interpretation of buyers' information was treated as dependent variables (Hypotheses 1, 4, and 5). Also, the relationship between Chinese manufacturers and American buyers was treated as independent variables and Chinese manufacturers' performance in quality and delivery was treated as dependent variables (Hypotheses 6 & 7). For data collected from Part 2 questionnaire, Chinese interpreters language ability

and interpreters' American cultural experience was interpreted as independent variables. Interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy was treated as dependent variables. The correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength of the linear relationship.

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how relationship, Chinese interpreters' English ability, their experience with American culture, and Chinese manufacturers' experience in exporting to the United States influenced Chinese manufacturers' understanding of American apparel buyers' information. This study also examined the impact of American buyers' feedback on Chinese manufacturers' interpretation of American buyers' information. Furthermore, this study explored how Chinese manufacturers' perception of their relationship with American buyers influenced Chinese manufacturers' performance in two aspects: quality and delivery time. A questionnaire was designed based on the objectives of this study. E-mail was used to distribute the questionnaire and collect data. Thirty-five email messages and questionnaires were sent out to export apparel manufacturers in the Eastern and Southern region of China. Twenty-seven (27) completed questionnaires were returned for a 77.1% response rate.

Demographic Characteristics:

A total of 27 (of 35 deliverable) questionnaires were collected representing a 77.1% response rate. Although there were two methods offered to participants in order to submit their completed questionnaire, all completed questionnaires were returned through email. All of the completed and returned questionnaires were usable. The data collected

for this study were obtained from a self-administered questionnaire which was written in English then translated into Chinese. Potential participants were first contacted by an email that contained a brief introduction to the study. Two days later, an email survey containing the questionnaire was sent to the participants. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part one was designed to test hypothesis one, four, five, six, seven and eight. These six hypotheses were about Chinese manufacturers' performance related to their interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information, and their performance in delivery time and quality level. The potential participants for part one were managers, supervisors, salesmen, or directors.

Part two was designed to test hypothesis two and three. These two hypotheses focused on Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience, English language ability and their self-reported interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information. The potential participants for part two were people with direct communication with American buyers, such as managers, directors, supervisors, salesmen, or interpreters. Therefore, participants who finished part one might have been the person who also acted as an interpreter for their company and completed questionnaire part two as well. In another situation, participants who completed part one might have had a person specifically working for their company as an interpreter. Therefore, participants who completed part one of the questionnaire might be different from the participant who completed part two of the questionnaire.

Among all of the participants who completed the questionnaire, 70.4% completed both parts of the questionnaire. Table 2 presents the data describing characteristics of participants who finished both parts of the questionnaire. A majority (78.9%) of the

respondents were male, and 21.1% were female. The majority of the sample who finished both parts of the questionnaire were between 25 and 35 years of age. Over sixty percent (63.2%) of the participants belonged to this age group, 26.3% of the respondents were between 36 and 45 years old and 10.5% of the respondents were between 46 and 55 years old. None of the participants who finished both parts of the questionnaire were under 25 or over 55 years old. Some (31.6%) of the participants were salesmen, 42.1% managers, 21.1% directors, and 5.1% supervisors in their companies. The information collected for this study indicated that the majority of Chinese apparel manufacturers who participated this study did not have interpreters for their company who were in charge of communications or translation with their American buyers. In most instances managers, directors or salesmen communicated directly with American buyers.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics for Participants Who Completed both Parts of the Questionnaire

Participants	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	15	78.9%
Female	4	21.1%
Age		
25-35	12	63.2%
36-45	5	26.3%
46-55	2	10.5%
Position		
Salesman	6	31.6%
Director	4	21.1%
Manager	8	42.1%
Supervisor	1	5.2%

Table 3 shows the demographic characteristics of people who completed only the second part of the questionnaire. Although the majority of manufacturers (n=19, 88.9%) had their managers, directors, supervisors, or salesmen communicate with their American buyers directly, eight (11.1%) Chinese apparel manufacturers assigned specific interpreters to communicate with American buyers. The majority of these participants (87.5%) were female. On average, participants who only finished part 2 were younger

than the participants who finished both parts of the questionnaire. More than thirty seven percent (37.5%) of the participants were less than 25 years old, the remaining participants were between 25 and 35 years old. All of these participants held positions as interpreters or salesmen in their company.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics for Participants Who Completed Only Part Two of the Questionnaire

Participants	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	1	12.5%
Female	7	87.5%
Age		
Less than 25	3	37.5%
25-35	5	62.5%
Position		
Interpreter	3	37.5%
Salesman	5	62.5%

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Hypothesis 1

The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy level in interpreting that American buyer's information.

For hypothesis one, Chinese manufacturers perceive relationship with their American buyers was the independent variable and Chinese manufacturers' self-reported interpretation accuracy level was the dependent variable. Questions one and four in part one of the questionnaire were used to test Chinese manufacturers' self-reported relationships with American buyers and Questions three and six in the part one of the questionnaire were used to test Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information. Table 4 shows a matrix detailing the Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship with their American buyers to their self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information.

Table 4

Chinese Manufacturers' Perceived Relationship and Their Self-rated Interpretation Accuracy with Their American Buyers' Information

Self-rated Strength of Relationship N=26 ^a	Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy									
	Excellent		Above		Average		Below		Poor	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Excellent	1	3.7%			1	3.7%				
Above average			5	18.5%	3	11.1%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%
Average			1	3.7%	2	7.4%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%
Below Average							1	3.7%	5	18.5%
Poor	1	3.7%			1	3.7%			1	3.7%

Note. ^aOne participant did not report the relationship with buyers.

Simple linear regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese manufacturers perceived relationship (independent variable) with their American buyers and their self-rated interpretation accuracy (dependent variable) with these American buyers' information. An R² of 0.164 and adjusted R² of 0.126 indicated that the Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship with their American buyers accounted for approximately 12.6% of the variance in Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information. This indicated that Chinese manufacturers perceived relationship with their American buyers had a small but significant influence (t= 2.078, p≤0.05) on Chinese manufacturers' self-rated

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participants had studied English, how long they have worked as interpreters in the apparel industry, and their self-reported English abilities.

In order to determine Chinese interpreters' English language ability, participants were asked to indicate their passage level on two Chinese national English language ability tests: CET-4 and CET-6. Passing CET-4 test represents a good English ability which means good reading and writing skills, CET-6 is a higher level English test. Only people who pass CET-4 have the opportunity to take the CET-6 test. Passing CET-6 represents excellent English reading comprehension and writing skills.

A majority of interpreters (74%) had passed the CET-4 English test, 14.8% of interpreters had not passed CET-4 test, and 11.2% participants offered no responses. Approximately forty-four percent (44.4%) of the sample had passed the CET-6 English test, 40.7% of the sample had not pass CET-6 test, and 14.8% interpreters did not respond to this question. The reason for the missing data for these two questions may be because that participants had been unable to participant in the CET tests. As a result, it was difficult to determine the all of the participants' English language ability. Table 6 summarizes participants English test results.

Table 6

Chinese Interpreters' Self-Reported English Test Results

Chinese National English Tests	Pass		Not pass		Missing	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
CET-4	20	74%	4	14.8%	3	11.2%
CET-6	12	44.4%	11	40.7%	4	14.8%

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In addition to determining the Chinese interpreters' English test situation, the length of time the participants had studied English was also investigated. A majority of sample (51.9%) had studied English for eleven to fifteen years, 37% participants have studied English for five to ten years, 7.4% participants have studied English for more than sixteen years. Only 3.7% participants had studied English for less than five years. Table 7 shows the length of time the respondents had studied English.

Table 7

Chinese Interpreters' Self-Reported Length of Time Studying English

Number of years	Number of participants	Percent
Less than 5 years	1	3.7%
5-10 years	10	37%
11-15 years	14	51.9%
16 years and above	2	7.4%
Total	27	100%

In addition to investigating the length of time the participants had studied English, a question was used to identify the length of time the participants had worked in the apparel industry or as an interpreter. The results showed that 51.9% of participants had worked in the apparel industry as an interpreter for less than three years, and 44.4 % of participants had worked as an interpreter between three and five years in the apparel industry area. Only 3.7% had worked as an interpreter in the apparel industry for more than ten years. Table 8 shows the length of time that the participants had been worked in the apparel industry.

Mishamun Qusta Mishamunithi 11/1/2021

Table 8

Participants' Self-Reported Length of Time Working as an Interpreter in the Apparel

Industry

Number of years	Number of participants	Percent
Less than 3 years	14	51.9%
3-5 years	12	44.4%
6-10 years	0	0
More than 10 years	1	3.7%
Total	27	100.0%

Using the Chinese interpreters' self-rated language ability as an independent variable, and the Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy of American buyers' information as a dependent variable, a linear regression analysis was used to test hypothesis two. In this study, interpreters' English language ability and their understanding of apparel manufacturing terminology were combined to represent Chinese interpreters' language ability. A mean score of each participant's responses for question five and six were used to represent that participant's general language ability. Question seven in part two of the questionnaire asked for participants' self-rated interpretation accuracy of American buyers' information. A matrix regarding Chinese interpreters' language ability and their self-rated interpretation accuracy is shown in table 9.

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Table 9

Comparison of Chinese Interpreters' Self-Rated Language Ability to Their Self-reported Interpretation Accuracy

Self-rated Strength of Relationship	<u>Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy</u>									
	Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Excellent	1	3.7%			1	3.7%				
Above average			5	18.5%	3	11.1%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%
Average			1	3.7%	2	7.4%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%
Below Average							1	3.7%	5	18.5%
Poor	1	3.7%			1	3.7%			1	3.7%

Note. ^a= One participant did not report the language ability

Simple regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese interpreters' self-reported language ability and their self-rated interpretation accuracy. An R^2 of 0.524 and adjusted R^2 of 0.503 indicated that Chinese interpreters' self-rated English language ability accounted approximately 50.3% of the variance in Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy. Therefore, Chinese interpreters self-rated language ability had a strong and significant influence ($t= 5.029, P\leq .001$) on Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy. Hypothesis two was accepted. Table 10 shows the statistical results for hypothesis two.

Mishra's Study: Interpretation Accuracy

Table 10

Regression Equation Summary of Chinese Interpreters' Interpretation Accuracy with American Buyers

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	R^2	adjusted R^2	t	significance
Relationship	0.900	0.179	0.724	0.524	0.503	5.029	0.001

Interpretation Accuracy is the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 3:

The more experience an interpreter has with the American culture, the higher he/she will rate his/her accuracy level in interpreting American buyers' information.

Four criteria were chosen to evaluate Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience: the interpreters visit/non-visit to the United States, living/not-living with Americans, feelings of culture shock during his/her stay in the United States, how long the interpreter stayed in the United States and number of times the interpreter had been to the United States.

Table 11 describes the responses to the question of whether the participants had been to the United States or not and their corresponding self-rated interpretation accuracy. Interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy was coded from "excellent" (5) to "poor" (1). Sixteen interpreters (59.3%) had never been to the United States and eleven (40.7%) had been to the United States. The mean value for Chinese interpreters who had never been to the United States was 3.73. The mean value for Chinese interpreters who had been to the United States was 3.82. An independent-samples t test

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was conducted to investigate the difference of having been/never been to the United States. The t-test result ($t = .243$, $t_{.025} = .221$, $df = 24$, significance = .015) demonstrated that Chinese interpreters who had been to the United States reported significantly higher interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information than did those interpreters who had never been to the United States.

Table 11

A Comparison of Chinese Interpreters' American Cultural Experience to Their Self-Rated Interpretation Accuracy with Their American Buyers' Information

Cultural Experience	Interpretation Accuracy									
	Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Have been to the United States	4	14.8%	3	11.1%	2	7.4%	2	7.4%		
Never been to the United States	1	3.7%	9	33.3%	5	18.5%			1	3.7%

Since culture shock was introduced as an approach to test a person's cultural understanding, question twelve in part two of the questionnaire was used to test Chinese interpreters' feeling of culture shock during their stay in the United States. The frequency of Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy corresponding to their feelings of culture shock were listed in Table 12.

Mikhaela Nita Mariani, Ph.D.

Among the interpreters who had been to the United States (n=11), five (45.5%) interpreters felt culture shock during their stay in the United States and six (54.5%) interpreters did not feel culture shock during their stay in the United States. The mean value of Chinese interpreters' self-reported interpretation accuracy who felt culture shock when they stayed in the United States was 4.2. However the mean value of interpreters' self-reported interpretation accuracy who did not feel culture shock during their stay in the United States was 3.6. In an attempt to test the relationship between the feeling of culture shock during Chinese interpreters' stay in the United States and their self-reported interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information, a t-test was conducted. A t test comparing the two groups was not significant ($t = .775$, $t_{.025} = .775$, $sig. = .854$, $df = 8$). This indicated that interpreters who felt culture shock during their stay in the United States did not report a significantly higher perception of their interpretation accuracy compared to those who did not feel culture shock

Table 12

A Comparison of Chinese Interpreters' Feeling of Culture Shock Who had Visited United States and Their Self-rated Interpretation Accuracy with American Buyers' Information

Culture Shock	Self-rated Interpretation Accuracy											
	Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor		Missing	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Feel culture shock	3	27.3%	1	9.1%	1	9.1%						
No culture shock	1	9.1%	2	18.2%	1	9.1%	1	9.1%			1	9.1%

Mikhaela Nida Marlina, Ph.D.

Another criteria used to evaluate Chinese interpreters' cultural experience was whether they had lived with Americans or not. Among the participants who had been to the United States (n=11), only one participant had lived with an American. Although this participant reported excellent interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information, there were not enough data to make a decision to determine if living with an American helped Chinese interpreters' improve their understanding of American buyers' information. Therefore, this question was excluded from the statistical analysis.

The fourth criteria used to test Chinese interpreters' cultural experience was to compare how long Chinese interpreters had stayed in the United States to how many times they had been to the United States.

A mean value of each participant's response for question nine and ten was calculated as a score to represent his/her American cultural experience. Table 13 shows Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience comparing to their self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information.

Michael Scott, Ph.D., 1/10/2011

Table 13

Chinese Interpreters' American Cultural Experience and Their Self-Rated Interpretation Accuracy with Their American Buyers' Information

American Cultural Experience	Interpretation Accuracy											
	Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor		Missing	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Most experience	1	9.1%										
Much experience	1	9.1%	1	9.1%								
Some experience	2	18.2%	1	9.1%								
Less experience			1	9.1%								
Least experience			2	18.2%	2	18.2%						

Simple regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese interpreters' self-reported American cultural experience and their self-rated interpretation accuracy with these American buyers' information. For hypothesis three, a simple regression analysis revealed R^2 was 0.263, adjusted R^2 0.181, and $t = 1.792$, ($p \leq .107$). These values indicated that the Chinese interpreters' self-reported American cultural experience accounted for approximately 18.1% of the variance in Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information. Therefore, Chinese interpreters self-reported American cultural experience did not significantly influence the Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy with American buyers information. Table 14 shows the statistical data for hypothesis three. Hypothesis three

was not accepted. It may be that cultural experience was not a significant predictor of American cultural experience because the number of participants (n=11) who had been to the United States was very limited in this study.

Table 14

Regression Equation Summary of Chinese Manufacturers' Interpretation Accuracy with American Buyers

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	R ²	adjusted R ²	t	significance
Relationship	0.522	0.292	0.513	0.263	0.181	1.792	0.107

Interpretation Accuracy is the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 4:

The more business experience with American companies a Chinese manufacturer has, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy level in interpreting that American buyer's information.

Questions eight and nine in part one of the questionnaire asked participants the value of exporting experience. Table 15 showed the sample's responses to these two questions. The results indicated that Chinese export manufacturers believed that the experience with the United States was very valuable in helping to understand American buyers' information and technological instructions.

Table 15

Participants' Opinion Regarding the Value of Exporting Experience with the United States to Chinese Manufacturers' Understanding American Buyers' Information

Participants' opinion	Agree		Disagree	
	n	%	n	%
Experience of exporting business with the U.S.				
helps to understand American buyers' information	27	100%		
Experience of exporting business with the U.S.				
helps to understand American buyers' technological	27	100%		
Instruction				

To investigate the relationship between Chinese apparel manufacturers' exporting experience with the United States and their self-reported interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information, export experience was the independent variable and Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy was treated as the dependent variable. Participants were asked to indicate the number of years they had worked in the apparel export business. Table 16 shows a matrix of Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy in relation to their exporting experience.

Table 16

Chinese Apparel Manufacturers' Exporting Experience in Years Compared to Self-rated Interpretation Accuracy with American Buyers' Information

Exporting Experience	Interpretation Accuracy													
	Excellent		Above Average				Below Average				Poor		Missing	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Less than 2 years											3	11.1%		
2 – 4 years														
5 – 7 years					1	3.7%	1	3.7%	2	7.4%				
8 – 10 years					2	7.4%	7	25.9%						
More than 10 years	2	7.4%	6	22.2%	3	11.1%								

Simple regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese manufacturers' self-reported exporting experience with the United States and their self-rated interpretation accuracy with these American buyers' information. An R^2 of 0.628 and adjusted R^2 of 0.611 indicated that Chinese manufacturers self-reported exporting experience accounted for approximately 61.1% of the variance in Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy of American buyers' information with $t = 6.096$ and $P \leq .001$. Chinese manufacturers' self-reported exporting experience had a large and significant influence on Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information. Hypothesis four was acceptable. Table 17 shows the statistical results for hypothesis four.

Table 17

Regression Equation Summary of Chinese Manufacturers' Interpretation Accuracy with American Buyers

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	t	significance
Relationship	0.601	0.099	0.793	0.628	0.611	6.096	0.001

Interpretation Accuracy is the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 5:

The higher the frequency of feedback that a Chinese manufacturer gets from an American buyer, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy in interpreting the American buyers' information.

Questions were asked regarding the frequency of communication between the Chinese manufacturers and their American buyers. A mean value of most frequent communication and least frequent communication with American buyers that a Chinese manufacturer reported were used to represent the Chinese manufacturer's communication frequency with American buyers. The mean values of Chinese apparel manufacturers' interpretation accuracy regarding American companies they communicated with most frequently and least frequently were used to represent Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy for hypothesis five. Table 18 identifies the Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy corresponding to Chinese manufacturers' communication frequency with their American buyers.

Table 18

Chinese manufacturers' Communication Frequency Compared to Their Self-rated Interpretation Accuracy with Their American Buyers' Information

Culture Shock	Self-rated Interpretation Accuracy											
	Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor		Missing	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very low frequency							2	7.4%				
Low frequency					1	3.7%			2	7.4%		
Moderate frequency	1	3.7%					3	11.1%	1	3.7%		
Relatively high												
Frequency	1	3.7%	2	7.4%	3	11.1%	4	14.8%	1	3.7%		
High frequency			1	3.7%	2	7.4%	1	3.7%				
Very high frequency							1	3.7%				

Note. ^aOne participant did not report their communication frequency with their American buyers.

Simple regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese manufacturers' self-reported communication frequency with their American buyers and their self-rated interpretation accuracy with these American buyers' information. An R^2 of 0.119 and adjusted R^2 of 0.079 indicated that Chinese manufacturers' self-reported communication frequency of their American buyers accounted for approximately 7.9% of the variance in Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with their

American buyers' information. Chinese manufacturers self-reported communication frequency had weak and non significant influence ($t= 1.723, p\leq 0.099$) on Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation. Table 19 shows the statistical results for hypothesis five. Hypothesis five was not accepted.

Table 19

Regression Equation Summary of Chinese Manufacturers' Communication Frequency with American Buyers

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	R^2	adjusted R^2	t	significance
Feedback Frequency	0.346	0.201	0.345	0.119	0.079	1.723	0.099

Interpretation Accuracy is the dependent variable.

In order to explain these results it may be possible that different manufacturers had different opinions regarding feedback frequency and its importance. What one manufacturer perceived to be very low frequency of feedback might have been considered the highest level of feedback for another manufacturer. A large percentage of Chinese manufacturers ($n = 11, 40.7\%$) reported that receiving feedback one or more times per week was the most frequent level of communication. However, 37% participants ($n=10$) expressed that one to two times per week was the most frequent communication they had with their American buyers, 14.8% manufacturers ($n=4$) reported that communicating one to two times per month was the most frequent communication they had with their American buyers. Only 7.4% manufacturers ($n=2$) indicated that they had contact with their American buyers less than once a month. When

asked to indicate the level at which they received the least amount of frequent communication, 66.7% manufacturers (n=18) indicated that they communicated less than once month with their American buyers, 14.8% (n=4) indicated that communicating one to two times per month was a very low communication frequency, and 14.8% manufacturers (n=4) reported that communicating one to two times per week was the least frequent amount of communication they had with their American buyers. One participant (3.7%) omitted this question. Table 20 shows Chinese manufacturers reported most frequent and least frequent communication with their American buyers.

Table 20

Manufacturers' Communication Frequency with American Buyers

Communication Frequency	Less than a month		1-2 times per month		1-2 times per week		three or more times per week		missing data	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Most frequent	2	7.4%	4	14.8%	10	37%	11	40.7%		
Least frequent	18	66.7%	4	14.8%	4	14.8%			1	3.7%

Hypothesis 6:

The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the higher the acceptance rate for final products.

For hypothesis six, Chinese manufacturers' self-rated relationship with their American buyers was the independent variable and Chinese manufacturers' self-reported American buyers' acceptance rate for their final products was the dependent variable. In

the questionnaire, two questions were used to test Chinese manufacturers' final products' quality. Chinese manufacturers' self-reported acceptance rate with their final products regarding to Chinese manufacturers' self-rated relationship with their American buyers were listed in table 21.

Table 21

Chinese Manufacturers Perceived Relationship with Their American Buyers and Manufacturers' Self-Reported Acceptance Rate with Their Final Products

Self-rated Strength of Relationship	Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy											
	Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor		Missing	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Excellent	1	3.7%	1	3.7%								
Above average	1	3.7%	4	14.8%	4	14.8%					1	3.7%
Average					3	11.1%	2	7.4%				
Below Average					1	3.7%	5	17.5%				
Poor					1	3.7%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%		

Note. ^aOne participant did not report the relationship with their American buyers.

Simple regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese manufacturers' self-reported relationships with their American buyers and their self-reported acceptance rate for their final products exporting to the United States. An R^2 of

0.608 and adjusted R^2 of 0.591 indicated that the strength of relationships as reported by the Chinese manufacturers accounted for approximately 59.1% of the variance in Chinese manufacturers' self-reported acceptance rate of final products from their American buyers. Therefore, Chinese manufacturers perceived relationship with their American buyers had strong and significant influence ($t= 5.977, P\leq .001$) on Chinese manufacturers' self-reported acceptance rate of their final products. Table 22 shows the statistical results for hypothesis six. Hypothesis six was acceptable.

Table 22

Regression Equation Summary of Chinese Manufacturers' Self-Reported Acceptance Rate with Final Products

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	t	significance
Relationship	0.659	0.110	0.780	0.608	0.591	5.977	0.001

Acceptance rate is the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 7:

The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the less likely the manufacturer will have asked for a postponement of the shipping date.

For hypothesis seven, Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship with their American buyers was the independent variable and Chinese manufacturers' likelihood of

asking for a postponement of the shipping date was the dependent variable. Two questions were adopted in the questionnaire to determine the frequency with which the Chinese apparel manufacturer postponed an American buyer's order with whom they had the longest and shortest relationship. To analyze this data, a mean score was calculated from each participant's responses for the above two questions. Table 23 describes Chinese manufacturers' frequencies of asking for a postponement of the shipping date corresponding to their perceived relationship with their American buyers.

Table 23
Chinese Manufacturers' Perceived Relationship with Their American Buyers Comparing with Their Postpone Shipment

Self-reported Relationship N=26 ^a	Postpone Shipment							
	Never		Almost never		Sometimes		Missing	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Excellent	1	3.7%	1	3.7%				
Above average	4	14.8%	2	7.4%	4	14.8%		
Average	2	7.4%	2	7.4%	1	3.7%		
Below average	3	11.1%	2	7.4%	1	3.7%		
Poor	1	3.7%			2	7.4%		

Note. ^aOne participant did not report their relationship with American buyers.

Simple regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationships with their American buyers and their self-reported

likelihood of postponing delivery time. An R^2 of 0.005 and adjusted R^2 of 0.037 indicated that the relationship between the Chinese manufacturers and the American buyers accounted for approximately 3.7% of the variance in Chinese manufacturers' self-reported postponement shipment with their American buyers. Chinese manufacturers perceived relationship with their American buyers had a neglectable and non-significant influence ($t= 0.336$, $p \leq 0.740$) on Chinese manufacturers' self-reported postponement shipment. Table 24 shows the statistical results for hypothesis seven. Hypothesis seven was not acceptable.

Table 24

Regression Equation Summary of Chinese Manufacturers' Postponing Delivery Time

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	t	significance
Postponing Delivery Time	4.936	0.147	0.068	0.005	0.037	0.336	0.740

Postponing delivery time is the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 8:

The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the less cancellations of orders.

For hypothesis eight, Chinese manufacturers' self-rated relationship was the independent variable and Chinese manufacturers' cancellation of orders was the dependent variable. Two questions were used to test whether a Chinese manufacturer

would cancel an American buyer's order with whom they have had the longest relationship and another American buyer's order with whom they have had the shortest relationship. Mean scores for these two questions were calculated to describe Chinese manufacturers' performance in canceling orders. Table 25 lists Chinese manufacturers' order cancellation frequencies corresponding to their relationship with their American buyers.

Table 25

Chinese Manufacturers' Perceived Relationship with Their American Buyers and Their Self-Reported Order Cancellation

Self-reported Relationship N=26a	Self-rated Interpretation Accuracy									
	Never		Almost never		Sometimes		Frequently		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Excellent			2	7.4%						
Above average	1	3.7%	1	3.7%	4	14.8%	1	3.7%	3	11.1%
Average					3	11.1%	2	7.4%		
Below average			1	3.7%	3	11.1%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%
Poor					1	3.7%			2	7.4%

Note. ^aOne participant did not report the relationship with American buyers.

Simple regression was used to test the relationship between Chinese manufacturers perceived relationships with their American buyers and their self-reported cancelling orders with these American buyers. An R^2 of 0.101 and adjusted R^2 of 0.063

indicated that the relationship between the Chinese manufacturer and American buyers accounted for approximately 6.3% of the variance in the likelihood of the Chinese manufacturers cancelling the order of an American buyer. Hence, Chinese manufacturers perceived relationships with their American buyers had a weak and non-significant influence ($t= 1.639$, $p<0.114$) on Chinese manufacturers' self-reported cancelling of orders with their American buyers. Table 26 shows the statistical data for hypothesis eight. Hypothesis eight was not acceptable.

Table 26

Regression Equation Summary of Chinese Manufacturers' Cancelling Orders

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	R^2	adjusted R^2	t	significance
Cancelling Orders	0.300	0.183	0.317	0.101	0.063	1.639	0.114

Cancelling order is the dependent variable.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States apparel industry depends heavily on international sourcing because of labor shortages and increasing labor cost in the United States. The United States apparel industry has been rapidly losing its labor force to higher wage jobs in industries such as computer and automobile production. Therefore, the United States apparel industry has been forced to seek out countries with an adequate labor force, appropriate technological development and labor costs that are low enough to off-set increased costs from shipping and insurance (Dickenson, 1999). In third world and undeveloped countries, apparel producers continue to retain a labor supply and cost advantage. China is one country that has maintained such an advantage. China is one the very important source that accounts for around 18% of imported apparel in the United States. To understand factors that impact on Chinese manufacturers' and interpreters' understanding of American buyers' information and on Chinese manufacturers' performance in delivery and quality aspects and cooperation will be valuable to improve the communication and cooperation between American buyers and Chinese manufacturers.

The purpose of this study was to identify how Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience, English language ability impact on Chinese interpreters' interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information. How Chinese manufacturers' exporting experience with the United States, their communication

frequency with American buyers, their perceived relationship with their American buyers impact on Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information were also studied. Moreover, how Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationships with their American buyers influence Chinese manufacturers' performance in two aspects: delivery and quality were also investigated. The empirical investigation was based on a survey. Data were collected by means of an emailed questionnaire.

Eight research hypotheses were investigated. To test the research hypotheses, the following variables were analyzed: Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship with their American buyers, Chinese manufacturers' self-rated interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information, Chinese manufacturers' exporting experience with American companies, the frequency of feedback that Chinese manufacturers get from American buyers, Chinese manufacturers' postponement of shipping date, Chinese manufacturers' cancellation of orders, Chinese interpreters' self-rated language ability, Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience, and Chinese interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information.

Discussion of Findings Related to Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: **The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy level in interpreting that American buyer's information.**

Hypothesis two: **The higher an interpreter's self-reported language ability, the higher he/she will rate his/her accuracy level in interpreting American buyers'**

information.

Hypothesis four: The more business experience with American companies a Chinese manufacturer has, the higher the manufacturer will rate their accuracy level in interpreting that American buyer's information.

Hypothesis six: The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the higher the acceptance rate for final products.

Research hypotheses one, two, four and six were accepted. A positive relationship was found between the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceived with an American buyer and the Chinese manufacturer's self-rated interpretation accuracy with that American buyer's information. The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceived with an American buyer, the more confident the Chinese manufacturer rated their understanding of that American buyer's information, and the poorer the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceived with an American buyer, less confident the Chinese manufacturer was of their understanding of that American buyer's information. This finding is supported by previous studies. Chinese businessmen tend to emphasize relationships in their business life (Wang, 1998). Thus it is assumed that the relationship between the United States buyers and Chinese manufacturers would play a key role in their business transaction, this in turn may affect Chinese manufacturers' commitment to the business. The results examining the perceived relationship between Chinese manufacturers' and their American buyers and their self-rated interpretation accuracy with their American buyers' information was supported by the literature and it in turn indicated that the relationship between the American buyers and Chinese apparel manufacturers did affect Chinese apparel manufacturers' interpretation accuracy.

In this study, there was a strong positive relationship between Chinese interpreters' self-reported language ability and interpreters' self-rated interpretation accuracy level in interpreting American buyers' information. Two aspects of Chinese interpreters' language ability were investigated. One aspect was Chinese manufacturers' English language ability, the other aspect was interpreters' understanding of apparel manufacturing terminology. These two aspects combined together to represent Chinese interpreters' language ability as interpreters in the apparel industry. The results indicated that the better language ability a Chinese interpreter had, the higher interpretation accuracy he/she indicated for his/her understanding of American buyers' information. A review of the literature revealed that language has its limits (Findley, 1998). Language might be used to establish a sensory-perceptual bias, language may also distort information because its words and grammatical forms may emphasize certain events and neglect others. Intercultural communication becomes very risky because of an extra language translation process that might distort the original meaning in some extent during communication, in addition to the language distortion. By understanding the importance of language in the communication supported by previous studies (Findley, 1998; Reinard, 1998), it was assumed that the English language ability of Chinese interpreters might have a significant influence on their interpretation of American buyers' information. This study supported the assumption the researcher raised based on the literature review and also supported the previous findings that emphasize the importance of language skills in the communication. In addition, in order to assess possible bias the differences in interpretation accuracy level and language ability between interpreters who finished both parts of questionnaire and interpreters who finished only the second part of the

questionnaire were examined. Results of a t-test indicated that there were no significant differences in interpretation accuracy level and English ability. Those responses, whose primary function was not that of interpreter and who communicated with American buyers directly, did not have significant different interpretation accuracy and language ability when compared to interpreters who were only in charge of communication with American buyers.

This study also indicated that the more exporting experience with American companies a Chinese manufacturer had, the higher the manufacturer would rate their accuracy level in interpreting that American buyer's information. In the literature review, it was reported that understanding another culture may become the basis for successful communication during international trade. Previous studies have shown that the similarity of two countries' cultural, psychological, economic, educational, and occupational environment will benefit from successful multinational communication (Samovar & Porter, 1991; Kim, 1988). Working side-by-side with other cultural members offered a unique vantage point from which to see each other's perspectives and experiences. Based on these previous studies, the researchers expected to find that the more experience in intercultural communication, these manufacturers would understand their American buyers' information better. This expectation was strongly supported. The results of this study indicated that experience in intercultural communication was a valuable factor that contributed to effective intercultural communication.

Data from the study showed that the stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceived with an American buyer, the higher acceptance rate of the final products Chinese manufacturers had from their American buyers. In the literature review

it was mentioned that because of the geographic distance between America and China, it is difficult for American buyers to control the products' quality. In addition, the difference in body build, sizing, and standards between the Chinese and American apparel industries make misunderstandings (Diamond, 1993). Previous studies (Wang, 1998) reported that the relationship between the United States buyers and Chinese manufacturers would affect Chinese manufacturers' commitment to the business. Therefore, it was assumed that the stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceived with an American buyer, the more committed the manufacturer would be put into improving product quality. The results of this study may supported the previous studies regarding the influence of relationship on Chinese manufacturers' commitment to the business. However, the researchers did not ask the manufacturer to identify specific aspects of relationship that were used to report their level of relationship with their American buyers. Different Chinese manufacturer may use different criteria to measure their relationship with their American buyers. Studies regarding the definition of relationship that Chinese manufacturers perceived with their American buyers are needed. In addition, the question may be asked: Does better quality contribute to a better relationship? or Does a better relationship lead to better quality? These questions should be used as the basis for further study.

Hypothesis three: The more experience an interpreter has with American culture, the higher he/she will rate his/her accuracy level in interpreting American buyers' information.

Hypothesis five: The higher the frequency of feedback that a Chinese manufacturer gets from American buyers, the higher the manufacturer will rate

their accuracy level in interpreting the American buyers' information.

Hypothesis seven: The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the less likely the manufacturer will have asked for a postponement the shipping date.

Hypothesis eight: The stronger the relationship a Chinese manufacturer perceives with an American buyer, the less cancellations of orders.

Hypotheses three, five, seven and eight were not supported. The previous studies indicated that individual attributes may impact intercultural interpretation. Intercultural communication is defined as the exchange of information between individuals who are unlike culturally. This definition identified the importance of cultural understanding between people who have directly joined the exchange procedure. A variety of studies on cross-cultural adjustment studied the effects of an international experience on individual personal growth (Kim & Ruben, 1988), and the impact of international experience on individual's creation of a global worldview (Bachner, Zeuschel, & Shannon, 1993; Sharma & Young, 1985). From Gudykunst & Wiseman's study in 1978, it was also revealed that international business experience enhances an individual's acquisition of intercultural communication skills. Other studies supported that intercultural communication will increase people's cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation (Kim, 1997; Kim & Ruben, 1988) because these processes are experienced primarily through interaction.

In this study several criteria were used to test Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience. Responses of this study showed that Chinese interpreters who have been to the United States reported a better interpretation accuracy with American buyers'

information than interpreters who have never been to the United States. However, interpreters who felt culture shock during their stay in the United States did not indicate a higher interpretation accuracy level with American buyers' information than interpreters who did not feel culture shock. It may be possible that some interpreters adapted quickly and very well to the American culture. Thus, reducing the effect culture shock had on the overall experience of visiting and/or living in the United States. These results might also be explained by the number of subjects participating in this study and the low number of those subjects who had visited, worked or studied in the United States. Moreover, when using living/not-living with Americans to judge an interpreter's cultural experience, Chinese interpreters who had lived with an American indicated that they had excellent interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information. Because of the limits of the data (only one participant had lived with an American), it was not possible to determine if living with an American would improve a Chinese interpreters' understanding of American buyers' information. The results for this study also showed that having been to the United States more times and staying longer was not a predictor of better interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information. Overall, Chinese interpreters' cultural experience did not have significant influence on their interpretation accuracy level. The results of this study did not support the previous studies found in the literature. More accurate and comprehensive criteria are needed to evaluate Chinese interpreters' American cultural experience. Meanwhile, more studies are needed to investigate the relationship between Chinese interpreters' American cultural experiences and their perceived interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information.

No direct relationship was found between the frequency of feedback that a Chinese manufacturer received from an American buyer and the manufacturer self-rated interpretation accuracy with the American buyer's information. The model for this study emphasized the function of feedback during communication: feedback is to establish either an informal or a formal mechanism by which the sender can check on how a message was actually interpreted (Szilagyi & Wallace, 1997). Feedback makes communication a two-way process. Therefore, frequent feedback was expected to improve the communications. Although there are many research studies focusing on feedback, most studies emphasize the feedback procedure within an organization. No research was found that focused on feedback in intercultural communication. Nevertheless, the same function of feedback was expected to be found in the intercultural communication. However, this study revealed that feedback frequency did not significantly impact Chinese manufacturers' perceived interpretation accuracy. Therefore, feedback frequency may have a different function in an intercultural exchange. It may be that frequent feedback serves to build and strengthen the relationship rather than improve communication.

There was also not a significant connection found between Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationships with their American buyers and Chinese manufacturers' self-reported postponement of shipping. Having a stronger relationship with an American buyer did not mean that the Chinese manufacturer would guarantee that American buyer's shipping date. On the other hand, having a weak relationship with an American buyer also did not mean that the Chinese manufacturer tended to postpone that American buyer's shipping date. This indicated that other factors may affect Chinese

manufacturers' postponement of shipping date such as commercial profits, marketing strategies, and economical situation.

In addition, no relationship was found between Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship with their American buyers and Chinese manufacturers' cancellation of orders. The sample did not indicate that better relationships prevented Chinese manufacturers from cancelling orders for American buyers.

The rejections for both hypotheses seven and eight indicated that relationship had a different function to Chinese manufacturers' performance in delivery than its function to Chinese manufacturers' performance in quality.

Implications

Findings from this study indicated that the strength of a relationship, interpreters language ability and previous export experiences had a positive significant effect on the Chinese manufacturers' information accuracy of American buyers' information. It appears that a strong relationship (guanxi) may help with Chinese manufacturers' product quality as well. When a Chinese manufacturer perceived a better relationship with an American buyer, the manufacturer reported a higher acceptance rate of products from that American buyer. The reason behind this may be because a stronger relationship helps a Chinese manufacturer to understand an American buyer's instruction and information better. Chinese manufacturers may also be more commitment to the business when working with an American buyer whom they perceive a stronger relationship. Therefore, Chinese manufactures may have a decreased chance of making manufacturing mistakes due to misunderstanding the quality standards for products. As a result, Chinese

manufacturers may do a better job to produce quality products. For this reason, it is suggested that American buyers try to establish stronger relationships with the Chinese manufacturers with whom they conduct business.

However, this study demonstrated that relationship does not mean everything. Strength of relationship showed very little impact when examining the strength of relationship and its impact on Chinese manufacturers' performance in delivery time. Chinese manufacturers may postpone an American buyer's shipment or cancel the American buyer's order with whom the manufacturers have a strong relationship. Therefore, while American buyers need to be aware of the significance of establishing good relationships with Chinese manufacturers, they should also be aware that having a good relationship with Chinese manufacturers does not necessarily mean they will have no problems with shipping dates or cancellation of orders. There may be other factors like profits, marketing strategies, economical situation make it necessary for Chinese manufacturers postpone or cancel orders with American buyers that they have had excellent relationships. More studies are needed to reveal factors that influence Chinese manufacturers' decision with delivery time.

Exporting experience is another important factor that will influence Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information. Results from this study supported that more exporting experience a Chinese manufacturer had, a better interpretation accuracy they would rate for themselves. Based on this finding, it is suggested that American importers should choose Chinese manufacturers who have already had export experience with the United States rather than manufacturers who have never had any export experience with the United States. To Chinese manufacturers, in

order to enter international market, it is always better to do international business earlier in order to have valuable experience in the exporting area.

As to feedback frequency, communications frequency did not impact on Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information as it was assumed in the literature review. More studies are needed to find out the function of communication frequency in the area of intercultural communication.

This study also supported that interpreters perceived language ability was very important to Chinese interpreters' interpretation with American buyers' information. The better language ability a Chinese interpreter had, the higher interpretation accuracy he/she would rate his/her translations. It is suggested for Chinese manufacturers to have interpreters whose English language ability is high as demonstrated by the interpreter's ability to pass the CET-4 and CET-6, and the number of years the interpreter has studied English. A better interpreter means more accurate interpretation accuracy and as a result, Chinese manufacturers will have a better chance to succeed in business with the United States.

However, Chinese interpreters' cultural experience did not influence the interpreters' interpretation accuracy as it was supposed based on the literature review. Only visit/not-visit the United States had influence on Chinese interpreters' understanding level with their American buyers' information. Other differences such as : how many times had the interpreters been to the United States, how long had the interpreters stayed in the United States did not have significant impact on Chinese interpreters' interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information. Another criteria used in the study was testing whether interpreters had lived/not lived with Americans.

Because of the very limited data (only one participant had lived with Americans), it was hard to estimate the impact of living with American might have on Chinese interpreters' understanding ability of American buyers' information. Therefore, more accurate and comprehensive approach to evaluate Chinese interpreters' cultural experience with the United States is needed. The relationship between cultural experience and interpretation accuracy also needs further research.

The summary of the results for each hypothesis is listed in table 27

Table 27

Summary of the results for eight hypotheses

Hypothesis	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Result
Hypothesis 1	Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship	Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy	Supported
Hypothesis 2	Chinese interpreters' Language ability	Chinese interpreters' Interpretation accuracy	Supported
Hypothesis 3	Chinese interpreters' Cultural experience	Chinese interpreters' Interpretation accuracy	Not supported
Hypothesis 4	Chinese manufacturers' exporting experience	Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy	Supported
Hypothesis 5	Communication frequency	Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy	Not supported
Hypothesis 6	Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship	Acceptance rate of final products	Supported
Hypothesis 7	Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship	Postponement of orders	Not supported
Hypothesis 8	Chinese manufacturers' perceived relationship	Cancellation of orders	Not supported

Recommendations for Future Research

This study began to investigate factors that influence Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information and factors that impact on Chinese interpreters' understanding level with American buyers' information. American buyers' feedback during the business communication were also investigated to see how

will it impact on Chinese manufacturers' interpretation accuracy with the American buyers' information. The relationship between relationships Chinese manufacturers perceived with their American buyers and Chinese manufacturers' performances in quality and delivery time were also tested. The results of this study lead to the following recommendations for future research:

1. Further research to determine additional factors that may impact on Chinese manufacturers' performance in the aspect of delivery time.
2. A similar study to determine the American buyers' judgement of Chinese manufacturers' performance is also needed. A matched pair study between American buyers and Chinese manufacturers may provide a great deal of information regarding different perspectives of performance.
3. Further study to determine the relationship between Chinese interpreters' cultural experience and their interpretation accuracy with American buyers' information using new criteria to judge Chinese interpreters' cultural experience is needed.
4. Conduct a survey with a larger sample. New research should gather more data from the south and east as well as from more diverse areas in China, such as Northern China. In addition efforts need to be made to include many different sized manufacturers in the study.
5. A similar study can be conducted with several other Asian countries (i.e., Malaysia, Korea, Japan, Singapore) in order to assess differences and similarities in the power of relationship.
6. Research is needed to further define relationship. The identification of specific factors that contribute to relationship may provide Chinese manufacturers and

American buyers with valuable information that can be used to improve the overall quality of the business relationship.

7. Research to determine the type/direction of influence that relationship has on the acceptance rate of merchandise is needed. For instance, is a relationship strong because of a high acceptance rate exists or does having a high acceptance rate indicate that there is a strong relationship?

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APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CHINESE APPAREL EXPORT
MANUFACTURERS. (PART 1)

There are two ways to answer and return this survey:

1. Answer the questionnaire on the computer and use the E-mail system to return the questionnaire.
2. Print this message out and answer it by pen. Return the answered survey via fax to:
Fax no.: 001-405-624-5781 or 001-405-744-7113 with attention to: Jun Xuan or Dr. Lona Robertson

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact with me by e-mail at:

xuan@okstate.edu or my instructor Dr. Lona Robertson by e-mail at: lona@okstate.edu.

Instructions: Please type an "X" between the appropriate brackets.

Example: Do you conduct an export business with United States?

[X] Yes

[] No

1. Think about the American buyer with whom your company has had the **longest** business relationship. How would you rate the relationship between your company and that American company?

- excellent
- above average
- average
- below average
- poor

2. How long have you conducted business with this American company?

- less than 2 years
- 2-4 years
- 5-7 years
- 8-10 years
- more than 10 years

3. Generally speaking, how would you rate your accuracy level in interpreting the American buyer's information with whom you have **longest** relationship?

- excellent
- above average
- average
- below average
- poor

4. Think about the American buyer with whom your company has had the **shortest** business relationship. How would you rate the relationship between your company and that American company?

excellent

above average

average

below average

poor

5. How long have you conducted business with this American company?

less than 2 years

2-4 years

5-7 years

8-10 years

more than 10 years

6. Generally speaking, how would you rate your accuracy level in interpreting the American buyer's information with whom you have **shortest** relationship?

excellent

above average

average

below average

poor

7. Overall, how long has your company been engaged in the export business with the United States?

less than 2 years

2-4 years

5-7 years

8-10 years

more than 10 years

8. Do you think that the experience of conducting an export business with the United States helps your company to understand American buyers' information?

yes

no

9. Do you think that the experience of conducting an export business with the United States helps your company to understand American buyers' technological instruction?

yes

no

10. How often does your company receive feedback from an American buyer during the business season with whom your company has had the **most frequent** communication?

- less than once per month
- 1-2 times per month
- 1-2 times per week
- 3 or more times per week

11. How would you rate your company's interpretation accuracy of the information received from the American company that you have communicated with **most frequently?**

- excellent
- above average
- average
- below average
- poor

12. How often does your company receive feedback from an American buyer during your business season with whom your company has had the **least frequent** communication?

- less than once per month
- 1-2 times per month
- 1-2 times per week
- 3 or more times per week

13. How would you rate your company's interpretation accuracy of the information received from the American company that you have communicated with **least frequently?**

- excellent
- above average
- average
- below average
- poor

14. On average, what percent of your final products are accepted by the American buyers with whom your company has had the **longest** relationship?

- less than 85%
- 85%-90%
- 91%-95%
- more than 95%

15. On average, what percent of your final products are accepted by the American buyers with whom your company has had the **shortest** relationship?

- less than 85%
- 85%-90%
- 91%-95%
- more than 95%

16. Have you ever asked the American buyer with whom you have had the **longest** business relationship to postpone the shipment date on an order?

never

almost never

sometimes

always

17. Have your ever had the American buyer with whom you have had the **longest** business relationship to cancel their order because you were not able to meet the delivery date?

never

almost never

sometimes

always

18. Have you ever asked the American buyer with whom you have had the **shortest** business relationship to postpone the shipment date on the letter of credit?

never

almost never

sometimes

always

19. Have you ever had the American buyer with whom you have had the **shortest** business relationship to cancel their order because you were not able to meet the delivery date?

never

almost never

sometimes

always

20. What is your position in your company?

office clerk

director

manager

production supervisor

other: _____ (please specify/identify)

21. What is your gender?

male

female

22. What is your age?

less than 25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56 or above

Congratulations! You have finished this questionnaire successfully!

Thank you for your time and cooperation! Please submit the questionnaire by fax or e-mail.

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CHINESE APPAREL EXPORT
MANUFACTURERS. (PART 2)

There are two ways to answer and return this survey:

1. Answer the questionnaire on the computer and use the E-mail system to return the questionnaire.

2. Print this message out and answer it by pen. Return the answered survey via fax to:

Fax no.: 001-405-624-5781 or 001-405-744-7113 with attention to: Jun Xuan or Dr. Lona Robertson

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact with me by e-mail at:

xuan@okstate.edu or my instructor Dr. Lona Robertson by e-mail at: lona@okstate.edu.

Instructions: Please type an "X" between the appropriate brackets.

Example: Do you conduct an export business with United States?

Yes

No

1. Have you passed the CET-4 (College English Test Level 4) English test?

yes

no

2. Have you passed the CET-6 (College English Test Level 6) English test?

yes

no

3. How long have you studied English?

less than 5 years

5-10 years

11-15 years

16 years or more

4. How long have you worked as an interpreter in the apparel industry?

less than 3 years

3-5 years

4-10 years

more than 10 years

5. How would you rate your understanding of apparel manufacturing terminology?

excellent

above average

average

below average

poor

6. How do you rate your English language ability?

excellent

above average

average

below average

poor

7. How would you rate your interpretation accuracy of American buyers' information?

excellent

above average

average

below average

poor

8. Have you ever been to the United States?

yes

no

9. If “Yes”, how many times have you been in the United States? If “No”, please skip to question 15.

once

twice

three times

more than three times

10. In total, how long have you stayed in the United States?

less than 2 months

2-10 months

11 months to 2 years

more than 2 years

11. What were the reason(s) for your trips to go to the United States? (you can indicate more than one choice)

business

travel

study abroad

visit friends or relatives

other

12. Did you feel “culture shock” (the state of acute anxiety produced by unfamiliar social norms and social signals) when you stayed in the United States?

yes

no

13. Have you ever lived with an American during your stay in the United States?

yes

no

14. If “ Yes”, how long did you stay with this American? If “No”, please skip this question and move on to the next question.

less than 2 months

2-3 months

4-5 months

6 months and more

15. What is your position in your company?

interpreter

office clerk

director

manager

supervisor

other: _____(please specify/identify)

16. What is your gender?

male

female

17. What is your age?

less than 25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56 or above

Congratulations! You have finished this questionnaire successfully!

Thank you for your time and cooperation! Please submit the questionnaire by fax or e-mail.

Appendix B

Notice Email

Dear Manager/ Director:

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of a study which focuses on communication factors that affect performance of Chinese apparel manufacturers' exporting to the United States.

This study could be used by Chinese apparel export manufacturers to improve their performance in exporting to the United States and to maintain their competition in the global market. Also, this study can give some suggestions to American buyers regarding their feedback frequency during their business transactions with Chinese manufacturers in order to make the business go smoothly.

In this study, a questionnaire will be used to collect data. The questionnaire will be divided into two parts. One part (Part 1) is for your company's export manager/director, another part (Part 2) is for your company's interpreters (if you have specific interpreters; otherwise, please also let the export manager or director answer this section). Please be informed that all the responses to the questionnaire are confidential.

Please give me a response by email to inform me that you are not willing to join this study. A questionnaire will be sent to you via email shortly.

Thanks for your time and your participation.

Best Regards!

Sincerely

Dr. Lona Robertson

Jun Xuan

Appendix C

Remind Email

Dear Manager/Director:

I sent you an email on (date) with an attached questionnaire for the study I previously mentioned (communication factors that affect Chinese apparel manufacturers' export performance to the United States).

Since I haven't received your response, I would like to remind you again of this study. For your convenience, I have again attached a questionnaire.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lona Robertson

Jun Xuan

Appendix D

Thank you Email

Dear Manager/Director:

Thank you for the questionnaire I received on (date).

Your participation is very valuable for this study and all the information you offered to this study will be used for the research.

In addition, in order for me to get enough data for this study, would you please provide me with the names and e-mail addresses of other apparel manufacturers which also have export business with the United States? This help will be highly appreciated.

Thank you again for your time and information!

Best Regards!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lona Robertson

Jun Xuan

Appendix E
Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 6/12/01

Date: Wednesday, June 14, 2000

IRB Application No: HE00173

Proposal Title: COMMUNICATION FACTORS THAT AFFECT CHINESE APPAREL MANUFACTURERS'
EXPORT PERFORMANCE TO THE UNITED STATES

Principal
Investigator(s):


Jun Xuan
11 1/2 University Cir., #3
Stillwater, OK 74075

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The reviewer suggests that in the notice email you explain that responses to the questionnaire are confidential.

Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Wednesday, June 14, 2000

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

2

VITA

Jun Xuan

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: COMMUNICATION FACTORS THAT AFFECT CHINESE
APPAREL MANUFACTURERS' EXPORT PERFORMANCE TO
THE UNITED STATES

Major Field: Design, Housing and Merchandising

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Huanggang High School, China, 1989, received Bachelor of Science in Textile Engineering, Wuhan Institute of Textile Science and Technology, China, 1993; completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Design, Housing and Merchandising, Oklahoma State University, United States, July, 2000.

Professional Experience: Employed by Derun Textile Industrial Company as assistant director in the export department, 1993-1997; employed by Bremer International Company as a merchandiser, 1997-1998; graduate research assistant, College of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University, 1998-2000.