A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF \textit{AMERICAN IDOL} AND \textit{SUPER GIRL}:

A CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

OF AMERICAN AND CHINESE CULTURES

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Chapter One: Introduction

Throughout the world, international and cross-cultural communication has increasingly become more important every year. The range and significance of the topics and issues shaping cross-cultural communication are decisive and can indeed be perceived as life and death issues. Peace and security, social and economic development, climate change, urbanization, scarcity of water and other resources, land degradation are all among the common challenges threatening today’s world. To deal with these issues, collaboration among nation-states as well as the development of regional planning systems, more extensive educational development, and fostering private sector and developmental partnerships are only part of the reality of interdependence that should and must dominate global interdependent reality. Better understanding of the rich diversity and multicultural legacies that connect us and form who we are therefore is so essential for us to live in a peaceful and interdependent reality. Accordingly, the popular international arena is dominated by terms such a partnership, cooperation, and collaboration.

One of the most important relations at bilateral and multilateral levels is the one between the United States, the superpower of this world and China, the fastest developing and new emerging economy.
Two different countries, two different cultures

After the World War II, the United States became the richest developed country in the world. Since that time, as Christensen (2007, state.gov) has noted, “After almost 30 years of unprecedented, increasingly market-driven, economic growth, China has become one of the world’s largest economies. It is now the world’s third-largest trading nation.” As the largest developing country and the richest developed country, China and the US are becoming strategic partners in international peace and development as the world witnesses the development of their relations after the so many twist and turns in over 30 years of establishing diplomatic ties. Their constructive and cooperative bilateral relationship is important, not only to the two nations, but also to the world.

Diplomatic interaction between the United States and China

In 1972, President of the United States Richard Nixon visited China at the invitation of Premier Zhou Enlai. Since then, the door to the United States and China exchanges has been reopened. Although there were some difficult times in the process, the relationship between the United States and China has been improved remarkably. The contacts between American and Chinese top-level leaders have become more and more frequent. In the first twenty years, from 1972 to 1992, there were only nine top-level meetings and contacts between the United States and China. From 1993 to 1996, there was such a meeting each year. At least twice top-level meetings and contacts were held between the two nations in most years after 1997 and up to five times between 2002 and 2007 (See Appendix C for the details of top-level
meetings and contacts between the United States and China). In the National
Committee on U.S.-China Relations Gala Dinner, the Deputy Secretary of State Mr.
Negroponte (2007) expounded that:

Today, our two presidents see each other several times a year. Secretary Rice
participates in regular meetings and telephone calls with her Chinese
counterparts, now-Foreign Minister Yang. Our Assistant Secretaries in our
regional bureaus meet for regular intensive dialogues with their counterparts in
the Foreign Ministry. Just a few years ago, it would be hard to imagine these
people even knowing each other, let alone engaging in a deep, collaborative
process. . . . Our presidents have launched two important diplomatic initiatives
to coordinate our bilateral and global cooperation. The senior political
dialogue, which I lead, and the Strategic Economic Dialogue, led by Treasury
Secretary Hank Paulson.

Although they initially perceived themselves as opponents, the United States
and China prudently began to cooperate in key areas such as business and trade,
counterterrorism, energy and climate change, science and technology, education and
culture and law enforcement. The relationship between the United States and China
has been changing in fundamental, positive, and extremely significant ways.
Cooperation brings reciprocity and mutual benefits as both countries continue to
promote all-around growth of constructive and cooperative China-US relations in the
21st Century. As Christensen (2007) stated before the House Committee on Foreign
Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment:
In all of our interactions with China, we seek to further U.S. national interests by encouraging China to adopt measures at home and abroad that will benefit the United States, the international community, and China itself as it seeks long-term, stable development and greater integration into the international economy and multilateral institutions. (state.gov)

In the process of this development, communication between these two cultures, high-level strategic dialogue and advanced exchanges in cooperation in major issues, act as important impellers. These cross-cultural communication exchanges have helped both nations to realize that it is normal to have certain disagreements because of their different national conditions. As Jiang (2001) has noted, “Despite our disagreements of this type or that, the two countries share extensive common responsibility and interest on major issues that bare on the survival and development of mankind.” For example, after the attacks of September 11, 2001, Present Bush (2001) declared:

The President and the government of China responded immediately to the attacks of September 11th. There was no hesitation, there was no doubt that they would stand with the United States and our people during this terrible time. . . . President Jiang and the [Chinese] government stand side by side with the American people as we fight this evil force. China is a great power. And America wants a constructive relationship with China. (Yale.com)

In this case, because of the common comprehension of counterterrorism based on effective communication, the relationship between the United States and China has
been solidly improved after the attacks of September 11th. Hence, cross-cultural communication is an appropriate and powerful way to build a healthy relationship between the United States and China.

However, achieving such a relationship has not been easy, because the United States and China are two remarkably different countries. They are different in almost every aspect of their respective societies, different histories, cultures, nationalities, and political systems. Even from the geographical perspective, the United States and China are literally on opposite sides of the world. These differences, especially the differences of cultures, are potential reflections of the cross-cultural communication differences and issues that can exist between the United States and China. However, no matter how different they are, they have to and must learn to understand each other to better uphold their national and international responsibilities.

Culture is so important that it influences every aspect of human life and behavior in the deepest and most subtle ways. As Hall (1981) stated culture influences:

How people express themselves (including shows of emotion), the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved, how their cities are planned and laid out, how transportation systems function and are organized, as well as how economic and government systems are put together and function.” (p. 17)

Culture is “shared and in effect defines the boundaries of different groups” (Hall, 1981, p. 16). When people encounter a cross-cultural situation, people from
different cultures have different assumptions and expectations about people from other cultures. People make these assumptions and expectations based on their own cultural background, namely, their own norms, values, symbols and beliefs. These cultural assumptions and expectations are right or reasonable for themselves but not for people from other cultures. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001, p. 18) have aptly noted that, “Different cultural values often create unintentional clashes.” Hence, misunderstanding and conflict are likely to appear. The different culture backgrounds, assumptions, and expectations have caused many hard times in the relationship between the United States and China.

How should people understand these two distinctive cultures? Generally, American culture is categorized as Western culture; Chinese culture is categorized as Eastern culture. Oliver (1971) has vividly stated the immense difference between Eastern and Western cultures as:

The East is not the West. Cultures differ, and minds, feelings, and intentions in differing societies intermesh in differing ways. Discourse occurs, or is constrained, under different circumstances and has different styles for different reasons. . . . Any attempt to discover in Asia prototypes of the Western rhetorical canons would be unavailing. It would resemble trying to measure the salinity of water with a ruler. (p. 3)

Human societies are a world of diversity. It is important to understand other cultures in order to build healthy relationships among different nations. Although the relationship between the United States and China has been experienced ups and
downs in the past several decades, it has been observably improved. The interactions between the United States and China from 1972 have advanced the understanding and comprehension between these two nations. The relationship between the United States and China is developed from confrontation to strategic partnership, from strategic competitive to “candid, constructive, and cooperative” (President Bush).

**Cross-Cultural communication**

This study provides a cross-cultural comparison of two television shows, one produced in the United States and the other in China. These television programs are examined in this study as reflections of the cultural differences between the United States and China. As Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) point out, “One needs to understand not only different aspects of communication divergence but also why the divergence exists” (p. 84). Culture is a very broad and complicated conception. It is frequently necessary to select a “representative anecdote” that seeks to reflect a broad and extremely complex social system. Burke (1969) has argued:

Men seek for vocabularies that will be faithful reflections of reality. To this end, they must develop vocabularies that are selections of reality. And any selection of reality must, in certain circumstances, function as a deflection of reality. Insofar as the vocabulary meets the needs of reflection, we can say that it has the necessary scope. In its selectivity, it is a reduction. Its scope and reduction become a deflection when the given terminology, or calculus, is not suited to the subject matter which it is designed to calculate. (p. 59)
While there can perhaps be no single anecdote that adequately represents either the United States or China, the fact that both cultures are so deeply and profoundly linked to television provides one possible “representative anecdote” for comparing these two cultures. In this sense, the comparison of two television shows in this study provides an “inside view” of the American and Chinese cultures. By exploring one popular television show from each culture, the specific influences of cultures on the behavior of people from different cultures can be examined. As Miike states (2007), “A cross-culture comparison can reflect on culture-specific and universal aspects of communication” (p. 4). A cross-cultural comparison explores the differences of the symbol-using concepts, rituals, values and heroes between two or more nation-states cultural systems which ultimately seek to reflect and analyze the cultural identity of the two or more cultures.

Specifically, this study explores how television shows in the United States and China are both similar while also being paradoxically different. Two television shows, *American Idol* and *Super Girl*, are chosen for this study because telecommunications are an important part of contemporary society. In all, then, this is ultimately a cross-cultural communications study of telecommunications of these two cultures. Telecommunications are a group of media. Although the influence of internet is becoming increasingly important, television is still the major and most powerful medium in both the United States and China. Television programs can not only influence but also reflect the culture of a society. As Kellner (1995) stated:

Radio, television, film and other products of the culture industries provide the
models of what it means to be male or female, successful or a failure, powerful or powerless. . . media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and its deepest values: it defines what is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. (Quoted by Holtzman, 2000, p. 3)

In the United States, television is still the major medium. The amount of time American people spend on watching television has kept increasing from 2000 to 2008. On average, American people spent 1467 hours per person watching television in 2000. This figure rose to 1548 hours in 2005. The average is expected to increase to 1566 hours in 2008 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Holtzman (2000) sees the entertainment media of the United States, including prime time television, popular film, and music, as “a primary fact of life in most U.S. homes” (p. 6). Entertainment media help to shape what is true and what is normal in a society. He further explains the influence of entertainment media as:

Much of our sense of personal and group identity, our beliefs about what is “normal,” and our understanding of groups that are different from us is created and/or reinforced by the pervasive entertainment media culture. . . . Many researchers have maintained that the common messages in entertainment media have a homogenizing or “mainstreaming” affect on the American public. This means that popular television, film, and music help shape what we think of as “true” and “normal.” (p. 6)

In China, according to The Report of 2007 National TV Audience Survey, the television audience is 1.205 billion in 2007. It increased 90 million compared to five
years ago. Television is still the major medium in China. The 99.89 percent of households have television sets and 93.72 percent of audience see watching television as the most important entertainment of their spare time. The average time of watching television is more than three hours per day (Liu, Liu, Xu & Zhang, 2008).

*American Idol*\(^1\) and *Super Girl*\(^2\)*

*American Idol* is a popular American television show which began airing on June 11, 2002. *Super Girl* was a popular Chinese television show that was broadcast for three seasons from 2004 to 2006. Both *American Idol* and *Super Girl* are talent reality television shows. Contestants are selected and then can participate in the singing competitions and their performances may be aired countrywide. The winners of these two shows receive contracts from the national major record companies and can become top popular singers and superstars. Cast as a “rhetorical fantasy” (Bormann, 1972), in either country, anyone can become a super star. This fantasy has attracted thousands of young singers to participate in rehearsals every year.

*American Idol* completed its seventh season on American television in 2008. *American Idol* aims to find the greatest young singer in the United States. At the beginning of the contests, there are a series of nationwide auditions. Three judges, Simon Cowell, Randy Jackson, and Paula Abdul, decide which contestants advance in the early stages. However in the semifinal and final rounds, the outcomes are

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\(^1\) The official website of *American Idol* is: http://www.americanidol.com/

\(^2\) The official website of *Super Girl* is: http://supergirl.hunantv.com/
determined by public voting via telephone and text message (*Wikipedia*).

The principle of *American Idol* is Americans vote for whom they like. “On its stage, everything gets bigger. Viewers can treat unknown singers like established stars – and more important” (Sanneh, 2005). “With an average of 32 million viewers casting nearly 35 million votes, the show’s interactive nature has created a fanatical punditry” (Aurthur, 2006).

Up to now, the winner of *American Idol* in 2005, Carrie Underwood is the most successful singer. She has won 35 awards, including three *American Music Awards*, eight *Billboard Awards*, and three *Grammy Awards*. Meanwhile, she has received 18 nominations, including one nomination for *American Music Award*, one nomination for *Billboard Music Award*, and one nomination for *Grammy Award*, from 2005 to September, 2008 (Aceshowbiz.com).

*Super Girl* can be regarded as the Chinese version of *American Idol*. It was aired by Hunan Satellite Television Station for only three seasons from 2004 to 2006. “Singing loudly whenever you want; let music trace wherever the sunshine covers.” This is the slogan of the show of *Super Girl*. It was the first mass music TV activity in mainland China. From 2004 to 2006, the program has attracted over 400 million audience in the Mainland and received over 60 million short message votes through cell phones (Hunantv.com). The three 2005 finalists, Li Yuchun, Zhou Bichang, and Zhang Liangying, have been considered the most successful singers from the entire show because of the big success of this show in 2005 (*Wikipedia*).

*Super Girl* was completely inclusive at the very early stage. Theoretically, any
girl in China might compete and even become the winner of this competition. The request of minimum age of eighteen was set up later during the last season in 2006. To a certain degree, this show almost turned the standard of China’s singing competition shows upside-down. It stimulated intensive criticism on the traditional singing competition shows by China Central Television Station (CCTV), the biggest and most prestigious television station in China. The public opinion criticized the traditional talent show of CCTV as it only accepted professional singers, not common persons.

At the same time, it should be noted that Super Girl was not very successful in the first season. The impact of 2004 season was just constrained to Hunan Province, China. However, the 2005 season became the most successful season of Super Girl, which helped Hunan Satellite Television become the No.2 channel in China by attracting the most audience during its airing time. In the finale show, which was aired on August 26, the winner received 3.52 million text message votes. The top three singers received more than 8 million text message votes (Wikipedia, 2008). However, the impact of 2006 season did not surpass 2005 season. Super Girl was substituted by another similar show named Happy Boy on the Hunan Satellite Television in 2007. Happy Boy is also a singing competition show which has the similar rules as Super Girl except this show is only open to male contestants. As the substitution of Super Girl, Happy Boy was only aired in 2007, from May 25 to July 20.

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3 The direct translation of the Chinese title of this show is Happy Boy although Hunan Satellite Television Station translates it to Super Boy.
On September 11, 2008, Mr. Zhang Huali, the Vice President of Hunan Satellite Television Station, announced that Hunan Satellite Television Station would temporally halt production of *Happy Boy*. Five days later, Mao (2008) reported that Mr. Li Hao, the leader of the Chief’s Office of Hunan Satellite Television Station, committed that *Happy Boy* would no longer be treated as the most important program of Hunan Satellite Television Station if this show continue to be held in 2009.

**Summary and Conclusion**

This study seeks to analyze these two similar talent television shows, giving full recognition to the extremely diverse cultures in which they exist. *American Idol* which has been aired for seven seasons from 2002 to 2008 is still popular and is expected to be broadcast for another several years. *Super Girl* which had just been aired for three seasons from 2004 to 2006 had a different destiny from *American Idol*. What are the reasons causing the different results of these two similar television shows? This study examines the finale shows respectively in 2005 season for its case study. It examines these two talent television shows as reflections of the values commonly shared and distinguishing American and Chinese cultures.

The balance of this study is divided into four chapters. In next chapter, the literature review contains the examination of previous study on cross-culture and comments on *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. In terms of the method of analysis outline in Chapter Three of this thesis, an eclectic approach seems initially appropriate due to the difference between American and Chinese cultures. Indeed, the approach employed in this study actually uses a combination of four research
methods, content analysis, analog criticism, cross-cultural criticism, and fantasy theme analysis. Chapter Four presents the results of the multiple methods used in this study. A discussion on the findings and limitations of this study is drawn in Chapter Five which also suggest further implications and directions for similar studies in the future.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

This study employs a cross-cultural communication analysis. Culture is so important that it endows people with their unique identities, shapes their ways of thinking and profoundly influences their behavior. Any misunderstanding, incomplete knowledge, or misconception about other cultures can promote misunderstanding and block effective communication. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) have argued that most intercultural conflicts are based on or can be traced to cultural misunderstanding (p. 2). Underscoring an even broader social implications, Gudykunst and Kim (1992) have suggested that “we perceive communication with people who are familiar as more agreeable and less abrasive than communication with strangers” (p. 19-29).

Indeed, when encountering different cultures, people tend to view people from other cultures as strangers. Meanwhile when confronting strangers they not only have a high level of uncertainty but also a high level of anxiety. When interacting with strangers, on one hand people feel discomfort, frustrated and irritated. They worry about feeling incompetent, confused, and not in control. They fear that they may lose self-esteem, their social identities may be threatened. They also feel guilty if their behaviors offend others. On the other hand, people may feel that strangers
will exploit them, take advantage of them, try to dominate them, or worry that physical harm or verbal conflict will happen (Gudykunst and Kim, 1992, p. 19-29).

These negative expectations—stemming or emerging from high levels of uncertainty and anxiety—can form a huge gap and false assumption between people from different cultures even before they meet. Unless people have prior knowledge of how other cultures can alert how people communicate, they are unlikely to eliminate these negative expectations which will lead to negative evaluations of strangers.

The balance of this chapter reviews previous studies on the definition of culture, cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural studies on west and east, reviews of journal articles employing comparisons of the United States and China, *American Idol*, and, *Super Girl*. These previous studies of cross-cultural communication can provide a platform for offering comparisons of American and Chinese versions of the same kind of television program.

**Definition of Culture**

*Culture* has various definitions. In 1917, Robert Lowie proclaimed that culture “is, indeed, the sole and exclusive subject-matter of ethnology, as consciousness is the subject-matter of psychology, life of biology, electricity as a branch of physics” (quoted in Kuper, 1999, p. ix). Later, Herskovits (1955) even suggested that culture ultimately is everything that is made by human beings. Meanwhile, Hall (1959) interpreted that “culture is communication” and “communication is culture.” Keesing (1974), Gudykunst, and Kim (1992) describe culture as a system of
knowledge, shared by a relatively large group of people, that allows them to know how to communicate with others and how to interpret behavior of others (p. 13).

Kuper (1999) maintained that:

Culture is here essentially a matter of ideas and values, a collective cast of mind.

The ideas and values, the cosmology, morality, and aesthetics, are expressed in symbols, and so—if the medium is the message—culture could be described as a symbolic system. (p. 227)

Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) further define culture is “a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community” (p. 9). People of a culture can learn the meanings of right and wrong from this learned meaning system. Chesebro (2008) viewed culture as a conception “imposed to create or replicate a sense of coherence and system, culture is an integrated pattern of symbol-using—reflecting and constructing a system of values, behaviors, technologies, and social institutions—transmitted from one generation to the next.”

As these various definitions of culture suggest, culture has been used in diverse ways to reflect the host of unusual elements that can shape the values of a community or nation-state. Scholars have also observed correlations between different cultures and behavior. Moreover, Kupper (1999) points out the significance of culture as “cultural identity goes hand in hand with cultural politics. A person can only be free in the appropriate cultural arena, where his or her values are respected” (p. 236).
further compared the difference between membership of a group and identity of a
culture: “Membership in a group may be established only after a protracted process of
self-examination, but one cannot escape one’s identity. It is fixed by something even
more essential: by one’s very nature” (p. 238). DeCrow (1969) described:

Some of these cultural differences are immediately apparent in variations in
dress, food, manners and other customs. Others, however, arise from the
depths of national culture or individual personality and involve non-verbal and
even unconscious differences in ways of thinking, in basic assumptions about
life and the world, and in value systems. (p. 1)

Gudykunst and Kim (1997) point out “cultural variability in people’s
backgrounds influences their communication behavior” (p. 23). People raised in a
particular culture learn language, rules and norms of the culture. Based on the
language, rules and norms, they will be unaware of how culture influences their
behavior in general. Acceptable and unacceptable behavior is specified by norms
and rules of a culture (Gudykunst and Kim, 1992). Oliver (1971) described the gap
between different cultures as “where ideally there ought to be a drawing together,
there is instead a pulling apart. A socio-psychological chasm develops that is not
readily bridged; indeed, clumsy efforts to bridge it result rather in its being pushed
further apart” (p. 5).

However, Taylor and Simard (1975) believed that communication between
people from different cultures can be as effective as from the same culture.
Cross-cultural communication can help to counterbalance the gap between different
cultures. In this study, the definition of culture refers to “a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community” (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001, p. 9).

Cross-Cultural Communication

Understanding other cultures is a significant factor in the process of effective cross-cultural communication. Oliver (1971) described the reactions when a foreigner confronts cross-cultural barriers as “the strange behavior that each notices causes him to alter his own behavior. He adjusts his manner of speaking and acting; concurrently he also adjusts his ways of interpreting what he sees and hears” (p. 5). Miller and Sunnafrank (1982) pointed out the importance of cultural information. They stated:

Knowledge about another person’s culture—its language, dominant values, beliefs, and prevailing ideology—often permits predictions of the person’s probable responses to certain messages. . . . Upon first encountering a stranger, cultural information provides the only ground for communicative predictions. (p. 226-117)

Gudykunst and Kim (1992) believe that “one of the major factors influencing our effectiveness in communicating with people from other cultures is our ability to understand their culture. It is impossible to understand the communication of people from other cultures if we are highly ethnocentric.” They point out the influence of ethnocentrism as “ethnocentrism leads us to see our own culture’s way of doing things
as ‘right’ and all others as ‘wrong’.” They further suggest that cultural relativism, relative to the cultural background of other people, can help to understand the behavior of people from other cultures (p. 5).

Gudykunst (1994) also maintained that cross-cultural communication is a way of meeting strangers and making predictions. He believed that if people want to communicate effectively when they interact with people from another culture, “We must use our knowledge of the other culture to make predictions. If we have little or no knowledge of the other person’s culture, we have no basis for making predictions” (p. 16). Further Gudykunst and Kim (1997) have argued “cultural data are used to predict behavior of people from our own culture and people from other cultures” (p. 28). They continue their explanation:

Two major factors influence our predictive accuracy when we use cultural data. First, the more experiences at the cultural level we have, the better our predictive accuracy is. . . . If we know little or nothing about strangers’ culture, our predictions will be more inaccurate than if we know a lot about their culture. Second, errors in predictions are made either because we are not aware of the strangers’ cultural experiences or because we try to predict the behavior of strangers on the basis of cultural experiences different from the ones they have had, for example, when we make ethnocentric predictions on the basis of our own cultural experiences. (p. 28)

Two former American Presidents have also called attention to the importance for understanding other cultures in order to communicate effectively with people from
other cultures and minimize misunderstandings. President John F. Kennedy maintained:

So let us not be blind to our differences, but let us direct our attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved.

And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can make the world safe for diversity. (quoted in Gudykunst & Kim, 1992, p. 2)

Similarly, President Jimmy Carter emphasized the importance of understanding other cultures on American foreign affairs. He said:

It is . . . in our interest—and the interest of other nations—that Americans have the opportunity to understand the histories, cultures and problems of others, so that we can understand their hopes, perceptions and aspirations. [These efforts] will contribute to our capacity as a people and a government to manage our foreign affairs with sensitivity, in an effective and responsible way. (quoted by Gudykunst & Kim, 1992, p. 2)

In this analysis, it is presumed that cross-cultural communication—as a mode of analysis—can reveal differences and similarities between the United States and China. And, it is also presumed that cross-cultural communication also possesses certain diagnostic implications that allows a critic to even prescribe recommendations for how the United States and China more effective recognize their commonalities and differences as well as use their commonalities to minimize their differences.

Cross-Cultural Studies on West and East

In classical conceptions, the American culture is often treated as a reflection of,
if not a forging element, of Western culture. Similarly, China is traditionally viewed and classified as belonging to the block of Eastern nation-states. West culture and East culture often see each other as a mystery and have looked at each other remotely for several thousand years. The mystery and distance between these two cultures made the people living in one culture strangers to the other culture. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) have maintained, “When we are confronted with cultural differences (and other forms of group differences, such as gender, ethnic, or class differences), we tend to view people from other cultures (or groups) as strangers” (p. 24). Oliver (1971) quoted a description of an American diplomat on his first mission to Tokyo at the beginning of the twentieth century. The American diplomat found:

Everywhere about lay a mystery that either lured or irritated, but one felt it and could not escape. The Japanese themselves, the islands in which they lived, their customs and their language seemed so utterly unlike anything ever imagined that they either absorbed the stranger in an attempt to understand, or he rejected it as impossible to understand. (p. 4)

Meanwhile, Eastern culture is unacquainted with Western culture in the same way. Oliver (1971) continued to quote a report of a Chinese describing how he felt when he first met white men in his country about a century ago. Oliver described:

Decades earlier, a scholarly Chinese, seeing white men in his country for the first time, found them quite incredible. “These ‘Ocean Men,’ as they are called,” he reported, “are tall beasts with deep sunken eyes and beaklike noses. The lower part of their faces, the backs of their hands, and , I understand, their
entire bodies are covered with a mat of curly hair, much as are the monkeys of the southern forest. But the strangest part about them is that, although undoubtedly men, they seem to possess none of the mental faculties of men. The most bestial of peasants is far more human, although these Ocean Men go from place to place with the self-reliance of a man of scholarship and are in some respects exceedingly clever. It is quite possible that they are susceptible to training and could with patience be taught the modes of conduct proper to a human being.” (p. 4-5)

Western and Eastern cultures are so different that Oliver metaphorized the attempt of perceiving Eastern culture based on the standard of Western culture into the “trying to measure the salinity of water with a ruler” (P. 3). Ground on his experience, Oliver stated: “Working on the Republic of Korea’s relations with Japan, India, China, the United States, and the United Nations, it became apparent to me that some of our Western communicative perceptions and presumptions differ significantly from those of Asian statesmen” (p. x). He further pointed out:

The difficulties to be encountered in this attempt to discover, depict, and evaluate the rhetorics of ancient India and China are apparent. . . . Any attempt to see inside a culture from the outside must be carefully guarded, with the difficulties understood. [The people of] India and China cannot be expected to think or to communicate as do Americans. They react to different stimuli in different ways. Their goals are not the same, nor are their ways of trying to achieve them. (p. 5)
With the rapid development of the Chinese economy, China is becoming one of the popular topics of more and more Americans. American politicians, economists, and journalists made many comments and predictions about China. Khanna (2008) has argued, “The rise of China in the East and of the European Union within the West . . . Europe’s and China’s spirits rise with every move into new domains of influence, America’s spirit is weakened” (p. 64). He has predicted that the geopolitics in the 21st century will be the new “Big Three”—the United States, the European Union, and China (p. 36).

Although concerned with the relationship between the United States and China, Khanna still believes that solutions can be found to solve the differences between these two countries and “maintain harmony among the Big Three, keep the second world stable and neutral and protect our common planet” (Khanna, 2008, p. 67).

Through cross-cultural communication, nations can more deeply understand other cultures. Such understanding will help nations to make accurate predictions about other nations and reduce potential risks caused by misunderstanding. Maintaining harmony among countries, and advancing global peace and security are important goals of cross-cultural communication.

Review of Journal Articles Employing Comparisons of the United States and China

Since early 1970s, scholars in the United States began to pay increasing attention to cross-cultural communication. At the outset, most cross-cultural communication studies focused on comparisons between the United States and Japan. About two decades later, comparisons of the United States and China started to
emerge on the horizon of cross-cultural communication scholarship as relationships between the United States and China became more popular in the media. For instance, *International and Intercultural Communication Annual* has been published by the National Communication Association in the United States since 1974. The issues were solely related to Japan during the 1970s. Discussions on Chinese culture became intensive since 1990s. This same phenomenon also exists in the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* issued by the World Communication Association in 1972.\(^4\)

In 2005, *China Media Research* was first published in the United States. It is an official publication of the American Chinese Media Research Association and Communication Studies Institute of Zhejiang University of China. It has editorial offices in both the United States and China. *China Media Research* aims to “serve as a bridge between Chinese and world media studies, therewith to promote global harmony” (Chinamediaresearch.net, 2008), which foresees more studies on comparison of the United States and China to emerge in the near future through the platform this journal establishes.

The analysis in this thesis has focused predominantly upon previous studies in *International and Intercultural Communication Annual, Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, and China Media Research*, which are the key academic publications in the area of cross-cultural study. These comparisons of the United States and China... 4 The name of this journal has been changed twice in its history. It was entitled: *Communication* (1972-1984), *World Communication* (1985-2001), and *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* (2002-present).
States and China have been conducted from different angles and aspects of these two cultures. They provide many insights into both the American and Chinese cultures.


Many studies in *China Media Research* have compared mass media in the United States and China. Zhang (2006) analyzes mass media use and media credibility in China, because he believes that, “Mass media are supposed to play an important role in individuals’ political, economic and cultural life” in China (p. 37). Hu and Zhang (2006) have argued that, “Mass media becomes an important soft power” (p. 97); and “media development represents the general level of social development, which is also restricted by such social factors as economy, politics and culture” (p. 104). Zhang (2007) suggested that media can “serve as influential news sources for worldwide audiences interested in China and Chinese culture” (p. 84). Pan (2008), Yin (2007), Li (2006), McMillan and Hwang (2002) compare the United States and China through the coverage of some particular issues in their media.

Previous studies on comparison of the United States and China employ multiple angles and aspects of American and Chinese societies. They have emphasized many of the differences between American and Chinese cultures. Furthermore, many scholars acknowledge that media play an important role in Chinese society. Indeed, as the data reported in the chapter one of this study indicated, television is still the major and powerful medium in both the United States and China.

However, most of these previous examinations have virtually neglected a USA-China comparison and any meaningful analysis of U.S. and Chinese television programs. Hence, this study will complement the cross-cultural communication analysis between the United States and China through comparing the two popular talent television shows *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. 
American Idol

*American Idol* is a talent reality show. Goolsbee (2007) has explained why reality shows are becoming popular in the United States. He has maintained that the reduction of potential market makes broadcast networks reduce their programming cost. In this case, reality shows are good choices for them. With the remarkable shift from broadcast networks to cable and satellite television, Americans watch more cable than broadcast programs now. “Reality shows cost much less to make than scripted shows . . . this is just a profit play by the broadcast networks” (Goolsbee, 2007).

The fact proves this choice is right, at least for Fox. Table 1 provides the rankings of *American Idol* finale shows. As Table 1 indicates, *American Idol* is very successful except its first season.
Table 1. Rankings of *American Idol* Finale shows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Viewers (in millions)</th>
<th>TV Season</th>
<th>Timeslot</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>September 4, 2002</td>
<td>22.77</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Wednesday 9:30PM</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>May 21, 2003</td>
<td>34.24</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Wednesday 8:30PM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>May 26, 2004</td>
<td>28.84</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Wednesday 8:30PM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>May 25, 2005</td>
<td>30.27</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Wednesday 8:00PM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>May 24, 2006</td>
<td>36.38</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Wednesday 8:00PM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>May 23, 2007</td>
<td>30.74</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Wednesday 8:00PM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>May 21, 2008</td>
<td>31.66</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Wednesday 9:00PM</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*American Idol* originated from the reality show *Pop Idol* aired in 2001 in the United Kingdom. It has been shown on Fox in the United States from 2002.

*American Idol* seeks to find the greatest young singers in the United States. Three judges decide which contestants advance in the early auditions. But in the semifinal and final rounds, the outcomes are decided by public voting, via telephones and text messages. The show is usually aired on Tuesday and Wednesday nights in the United States, Thursday and Friday nights in the United Kingdom. In the past seven seasons from 2002 to 2008, the winners are Kelly Clarkson, Ruben Studdard, Fantasia Barrino, Carrie Underwood, Taylor Hicks, Jordin Sparks, and David Cook.

Contestants of *American Idol* must be the citizens or permanent residents of the United States and are not allowed to have any current record deals or talent.

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5 Note: Seasonal rankings are based on average total viewers per episode of *American Idol* on FOX. (Wikipedia.com, 2008)
management agreements. In the first three seasons, the contestants had to be 16 to 24 years old. In order to attract more diverse contestants, the age limit was changed to from 16 to 29. The winners of American Idol can get contracts from a major record company. (Wikipedia.com, 2008)

Holloway (2002) described the popularity of Ms. Clarkson, a 20-year-old Texas waitress, the first winner of American Idol in 2002. Her double-sided CD, featuring “A Moment Like This” and “Before Your Love,” had sold 450,000 copies and was the No. 1 selling single at that time. He wrote:

From New York to Cleveland to Los Angeles radio, listeners are calling stations and asking D.J.’s to play the single, which was written for the television series. . . . She is an incredible phenomenon. It has been a long time since we have seen any artist with single sales this high and this consistent. (Holloway, 2002)

Super Girl

Super Girl was partly inspired by the United Kingdom show Pop Idol. It was aired on Hunan Satellite Television Station from 2004 to 2006 in China. From 2007, this show was substituted by Happy Boy. Super Girl was opened to any female amateur contestant regardless her age and the level of her singing. In the first two seasons, Super Girl attracted contestants from 4 to 89 years old. The minimum age of eighteen was required by in the third season of 2006. The 2005 season attracted more than 120,000 applicants during the audition sessions. Many applicants traveled long distance to take part in the contest hoping to become a super star.
There were two groups of judges in *Super Girl*. One was a group of professional judges. The other consisted of audience representatives. There were two major stages of this contest, regional competitions and national finals. Regional competitions, the early stage of this show, were held in five locations in China. The winners of the five regional competitions automatically joined the national finals. All of the regional second-place and third-place participants would compete again for a second chance to reach the finals. Audience could watch each of the preliminaries and vote for their favorite singers. In the early stage of the contest, judges had the right to decide who would be retained and who would be eliminated through the selections. However, in the final stage of both regional and national competitions, judges did not have the right to decide who would be the first-place winner. The rankings of three finalists in regional and national final competitions were only voted by audience through telephone and text message.

*Super Girl* led to a big discussion in China. Some scholars see this discussion as the rising of popular culture against elegant culture (Luo, 2006). People had tired of traditional television programs. Those traditional elegant programs are too serious to entertain the public. On the contrary, *Super Girl*, as a representative of popular culture, was relaxing, lively, interactive and participatory. It was these very characteristics that attracted audience to watch and discuss this show. It was substituted by *Happy Boy*, a similar singing competition show open to male participants only.

*Summary and Conclusion*
Culture is so important that it not only reflects but also influences the behavior of people. People can learn the meaning of right and wrong from their culture. People from the same culture share the same patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, rules, and symbols. When people encounter different cultures, they tend to see the ones from other cultures as strangers. People make more negative expectations based on high level uncertainty and anxiety when they confront with strangers from other cultures. Many conflicts are caused by cultural ignorance, misunderstanding and lack of communication. Cross-cultural communication can help people to understand the behavior of ones from other cultures. Understanding other cultures is the foundation of accurate prediction and effective communication when people encounter different cultures. Chapter Three will outline the methods to be used in this study.
Chapter Three: Methods

The U.S. and China have become linked more and more closely especially in the economic area in recent years. Globalization has become a reality for both nations, ultimately creating a communication system that potentially affects the entire world. The world is witnessing the two economies intertwine, and two nations develop broader cooperation and collaboration in a wider range of social areas, such as peace and security, social and economic development, climate change, etc.

At the same time, the U.S. and China are two remarkably different countries. From the geographical perspective, the U.S. and China are literally on opposite sides of the world. From the historical perspective, the U.S. is one of the youngest countries while China is one of the oldest countries in the world. From the perspective of culture, although the American culture is derived from Europe, it is very different from European culture. Meanwhile, the large-scale migration fosters continual change in the United States. Because it is still in the formulative phase, American culture is extremely active and full of energy. Chinese culture was founded by a famous scholar named ZhouGong about three thousand years ago, and it has been shaped by a series of decisive and remarkable historical figures and alien cultures. This long history makes current Chinese culture extremely rich, stable, and
In terms of the remarkable differences and complexity of American and Chinese culture, this study employs an eclectic approach to analyze the two talent television shows, *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. Based on the study of previous scholars, this chapter will illustrate the importance of the eclectic approach which combines four research methods and how the combination of content analysis, analog criticism, cross-cultural criticism, and fantasy theme analysis are used to examine the two television shows.

*American Idol* is a popular annual American television show starting on June 11, 2002. *Super Girl* was a popular Chinese television show aired from 2004 to 2006. Both *American Idol* and *Super Girl* are fantasy television shows. The winners of these two shows receive recording contracts from the national major record companies and have promising futures as top popular singers and superstars. The fantasy offered by these two television shows has attracted thousands of young singers to their auditions every year.

This study analyzes these two similar talent television shows as commonly shared yet discrete cultural icons of the United States and China. This study employs a critical analysis. While criticism can have a host of functions, within this context, it functions as a research method that provides procedures for describing and interpreting experiences and ultimately for assessing and evaluation the meanings and worth of these experiences. Chesebro and Bertelsen (1996) have stated that criticism is “a practice, but it also constitutes a body of guidelines, techniques, and applied
illustrations that can be used to analyze communication technologies as symbolic and
cognitive systems” (p. 58). Criticism can extend the meaning of a communicative act, and it does so by introducing new meanings to the original communicative act.

In a phase, the meanings criticism introduced are statements of understanding that articulate the potential meanings of an experience that may have gone unknown without the critical analysis. In this sense, criticism also is persuasion because it not only judges and values communicative acts but also gives reasons and evidence for the claims it renders. Thus criticism “has been designed to explain ongoing communication transactions” and can “contribute to theories of communication” (p. 61-68). As a research technique, specifically, criticism assesses the meaning and value of communicative acts to society and to a culture not just data collection but a critical view provides a statement of the meaning and value and importance to a culture. Towards that end, the orientation of a critic himself or herself is crucial to a judgment rendered.

In this case, the critic of this study is Chinese. He was born and raised in China, speaks Chinese, grew up within the Chinese culture, and was shaped and influenced by Chinese culture in every way, even by Chinese television. In addition, he worked in the Chinese television industry for 14 years. Because culture is also “a knowledge system,” as Shore (1996) has maintained, the critic of this study could certainly gain knowledge of Chinese culture from his experience of growing up and working in the culture. Meanwhile, media industries have also provided models and norms to society (Holtzman, 2000). Working as one of the models and norms
providers of Chinese television industry for 14 years provided this critic with a deeper and more profound understanding of Chinese culture. The critic of this study also came to and lived in the United States for two years and has a strong sense of the differences between the U.S. and China. In terms of “a person can only be free in the appropriate cultural arena” (Kupper, 1999), this critic has suffered culture shock just as anyone encounters different cultures. However, culture shocks can have many kinds of consequences, such as “what one culture regards as normal and acceptable behavior the other one may regard as insulting and irritating” (Reisinger and Turner, 2003, p. 29). The critic has obtained much knowledge of American culture from his experience of knowing the differences between the United States and China.

The knowledge of both American and Chinese cultures that the critic of this study possessed provides him a foundation to generate new knowledge. Cook and Brown (1999) have pointed out, “knowledge is a tool of knowing, that knowing is an aspect of our interaction with the social and physical world, and that the interplay of knowledge and knowing can generate new knowledge and new ways of knowing” (p. 381). Hence, from interacting with American culture and knowing the differences between the United States and China, this critic can generate “new knowledge” about and “new ways of knowing” these two nations.

Because of the distinctive difference of cultures between the U.S. and China, an eclectic approach is applied in this study to answer the questions posed in chapter one. The eclectic approach is “the tendency to pick and choose from the parts of the
culture that appeal to one is as ancient in Western thought as its records” (Brock, Scott, and Chesebro, 1989, p. 90). The eclectic approach is a powerful research method that can work to maximize insights of several different procedures as content differences warrant. Brock, Scott, and Chesebro have additionally stated that:

When the eclectic critic does use a method, it is an “open-ended” one that does not force or prescribe a specific and provides the critic with a great deal of creative decision making. The eclectic approach stresses the critic’s ability to assemble and absorb ways of working, subordinating these to the task at hand. (p. 91)

To better understand how content analysis, analog criticism, cross-cultural criticism, and fantasy theme analysis are employed in this study, each of the four methods is described in detail and a justification of their use is provided throughout the rest of this chapter.

*Content Analysis*

Content analysis is an important method of this study. It is used to examine how the two talent television shows were laid out in front of the audience in the different culture background. Krippendorff (2004) defined content analysis as:

a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. . . . As a research technique, content analysis provides new insights, increases a researcher’s understanding of particular phenomena, or informs practical actions. Content analysis is a scientific tool. (p. 18)
Both of *American Idol* and *Super Girl* are talent television shows. Although they are the same style television shows, they have each been adjusted to “fit” the audience of different cultural contexts. Content analysis is employed to compare the details of these two talent television shows, a procedure which reveals new insight of these two different cultures. The new insight may lead to better understanding of the different cultures. As Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, and Newbold (1998) stated:

The purpose of [content analysis] is to identify and count occurrences of specified characteristics of dimensions of texts, and through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance. (p. 95)

In this study, content analysis is used to examine how the same type television shows were displayed in front of American culture and Chinese culture. The knowledge acquired from content analysis will be analyzed in combination with the insights obtained from analog criticism.

*Media and Analog Criticism*

In general, criticism “can be used to analyze communication technologies as symbolic and cognitive systems” (Chesebro & Bertelsen 1996, p. 58). Criticism can “contribute to theories of communication” and “explain ongoing communication transactions” (p. 66). Criticism can also help people to obtain “a fuller and richer understanding of a particular work as it exists within the context of human endeavor” (Andews, 1983, p. 4). “The primary dimensions of rhetorical criticism are description, interpretation, and evaluation” (Brock, Scott & Chesebro, 1989, p. 16).
In terms of media analysis, Chesebro and Bertelsen (1996) believed that criticism could carry out one or more objectives. They have stated six objectives of media criticism as:

1. Media criticism can reveal the subtle and unnoticed complex stimuli embedded in media experiences.
2. Media criticism can reveal how media systems affect human cognition.
3. Media criticism can reveal the effects of media systems, particularly their effects on individuals and society.
4. Media criticism can alter the communication process by introducing quality control components into the media communication system.
5. Media criticism can create counterarguments to the messages generated by media technologies.
6. Media criticism can generate individual, rather than social class, reactions to media experiences, energizing the media user in an attempt to shift him or her from an inactive to an active role. (p. 70-74)

Criticism can be a powerful research method. In this study, the specific criticism method, analog criticism and cross-cultural criticism are employed.

As a method, analog criticism is employed in this study to compare the two television shows, *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. Rosenfield (1968) stated, “The generic resemblance of the two speeches (both may be classified as mass-media apologia) invites what may be called analog criticism—comparing the speeches in such ways that each address serves as reference standard for the other” (p. 435).
Using the analog criticism method, this study analyzes one of these two talent television shows, *American Idol* and *Super Girl*, based on the other one. As Rosenfield (1968) has argued, the comparison employed in analog criticism is:

followed by discussion of similarities in the rhetorical contexts which gave rise to the speeches, by specification of the common elements in the two addresses, by consideration of their divergent features, and by discussion of the critical and theoretical implications of the entire rhetorical analysis. (p. 435-436)

Analog criticism can help to recognize similarities and differences of each television show. As Rosenfield (1968) stated, “The identification of similar qualities in the two messages suggest to the critic certain constants operating in an otherwise undefined form.” The unique features of each television show present “as evidence of the individual speaker’s artistry in responding to the exigencies of the situation” (p. 435). The knowledge gained from content analysis and analog criticism help to lead to better understanding of the two different cultures, American culture and Chinese culture. This comparison provides a foundation for using two other methods in this chapter: cross-cultural criticism and fantasy theme analysis.

**Cross-Cultural Criticism**

Every society has its own culture. People in the same culture have their own ways of thinking, behaving, and believing. Underscoring the essential ingredient of a culture, Oliver (1971) stated “Every culture constitutes a unique value system” (p. 5). He described the situation when two cultures meet as “What happens when we try to understand a set of meanings in another culture is . . . that one difference creates
another. Strangeness begets strangeness” (p. 5). Globalization makes different
cultures meet more and more frequently. The progress of technologies has changed
the ways that people travel to other parts of the world and communicate to each other.
It is very easy for people to encounter multiple cultural situations. Understanding
other cultures is a formidable task. In the history of human beings, war was used to
solve not only conflict over wealth but also cultural clash. After the World War II,
people began to slowly realize that war was not the best choice. Cross-cultural
criticism is an apt approach for understanding other cultures.

Essentially, cross-cultural criticism is a comparison of the symbol-using
concepts, rituals, values and heroes of two or more national-state cultural systems
which ultimately seek to reflect and analyze the cultural identity of the two or more
cultures.

In this context, Jandt (2004) suggests that a culture exists if, “The population of
a community is large enough to be self-sustaining. The large enough population can
produce new generations without relying on outside peoples” (p. 7). Additionally,
Jandt argues that a culture includes shared symbols, rituals, values, and heroes.
Jandt specifically defines them in this fashion:

Symbols refer to verbal and nonverbal language. Rituals are the socially
essential collective activities within a culture. Values are the feelings not open
for discussion within a culture about what is good and bad, beautiful or ugly,
normal or abnormal, that are present in a majority of the members of a culture
or at least in those who occupy pivotal positions. Heroes are the real or
imaginary people who serve as behavior models within a culture. (p. 7)

Finally, Jandt argues that a culture exists if people “consider themselves the members of that group based on cultural identity or are accepted into a group that share the common system of symbols and meanings and ways of doing things” (p. 7).

In different cultures, people may use same symbols to express different message, or they use different symbols to convey similar meanings. How people use symbols can reflect the characteristics of their cultures.

In general, rituals are derived from the history of cultures. Some historical activities of a culture evolved as rituals. People follow rituals to absorb the inspiration of their ancestors who founded their cultures. As Starhawk (1989) described, “Rituals are part of every culture. They are the events that bind a culture together . . . . In ritual . . . we become familiar with power-from-within, learn to recognize its feel, learn how to call it up and let it go” (p. 162). People can also get better understanding from the value of a culture and discern the ideal of a culture from their heroes. Consistent comprehension of symbols, rituals, values, and heroes creates culture identity, and makes people feel that they belong to a particular group.

Value dimensions are important means used by scholars to distinguish world cultures. For example, Chesebro (2004) compiled “thirteen core value dimensions.” These dimensions included the analysis of variables such as: good, evil, or neutral, and changeable or unchangeable are the basic nature of the human being; controllable or controlling indicates the opinion of a culture for the relationship between people and fate; emphasizing people or “nature” is another value dimension; doing or being
shows the “purpose in life” of a culture; short-term or long-term orientation reveals
the attitude towards time of a culture; individualism or collectivism decides the
societal roles of members in cultures; high context or low context discloses the
different methods of message expression; power distance presents “the degree to
which people accept unequal distribution of power”; masculinity and femininity are
used to describe a culture which is tough or tender; members of universal cultures and
particularistic cultures have different judgment of adapting to specific circumstances;
in contrast to specific cultures, everything is related to everything else in diffuse
cultures; ascription or performance dimension determines which form and content is
more important; and, uncertainty avoidance dimension measures the tolerance for
ambiguity and unfamiliar situation in a culture (See Appendix D for the details of
these “thirteen core value dimensions”).

This study employs three of these value dimensions to compare the cultures
guiding the two talent television shows, American Idol and Super Girl.
Individualism and collectivism; short-term and long-term orientation; and power
distance are used to reveal the differences between American culture and Chinese
culture in the next chapter.

Culture is so important that it not only reflects but also influences behavior of its
members. By comparing the core value dimensions of different cultures, a better
understanding of how people use symbols to express different or similar messages in
American culture and Chinese culture can be obtained in this study. When combined
with fantasy theme analysis, a framework exists for comparing and contrasting the
two television shows that have emerged from the United States and China.

*Fantasy Theme Analysis*

This study also employs a fantasy theme analysis to examine *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. “Fantasy is a technical term in the symbolic convergence theory and does not mean what it often does in ordinary usage” (Bormann, 1985, p. 5). Fantasy can be found in any culture. As Bormann (1972) stated:

Against the panorama of large events and seemingly unchangeable forces of society at large or of nature the individual often feels lost and hopeless. One coping mechanism is to dream an individual fantasy which provides a sense of meaning and significance for the individual and helps protect him from the pressures of natural calamity and social disaster. (p. 400)

Bormann (1972) also described the emotional response of people to social situations as “[when] group members respond emotionally to the dramatic situation they publicly proclaim some commitment to an attitude” (p. 397).

Table 2, developed by Chesebro (2007), has described the basic components, definitions and critical concepts/notes on method of fantasy theme analysis.
Table 2. Fantasy theme analysis: basic components, definitions, and critical concepts/notes on method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Components</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Critical Concepts/Notes on Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Fantasy Theme** | “The content consists of characters, real or fictitious, playing out a dramatic situation in a setting removed in time and space from the here-and-now transactions of the group.”  
“the mental sensation or impression of an object which may, but usually does not, possess an actual referent in the physical world.”  
“Fantasy, as a carefully defined technical term, has proven to be a heuristic and useful concept for dramatizations that are nonfictitious as well as fictitious.”  
The emotional response of people to social situations: “When group members respond emotionally to the dramatic situation they publicly proclaim some commitment to an attitude.” | • Fantasies reside in the language, stories, and the symbols used by people to communicate with others, create understanding for themselves and others, and to create and maintain social systems.  
• Fantasies are the content of people’s fictitious and non-fictitious interactions with others.  
• Fantasies contain characters, real or fictitious, playing out a dramatic situation in a setting removed in time and space from the here-and-now.”  
• A fantasy can have multiple components that “fill out” the “story” to make it complete and coherent. These elements can include:  
--**Characters**--Heroes and villains (good, bad, and various kinds of helpers who may be real or unreal);  
--**Situations** characterized to convey an attitude;  
--**Emotions** or tools and means used to reflect the situations and personality of the characters;  
--**Purposes**, implied or attributed, reasons for acting; objectives, or ends; and,  
--**Acts** cast as having various effects and consequences on others (acts with an attitude). |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fantasy Type</strong></th>
<th>A fantasy type is “a recurring scenario in a body of discourse.”</th>
<th>“A fantasy type is a stock scenario repeated again and again by the same characters or by similar characters.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Rhetorical Vision** | “The composite drama which catch up large groups of people in a symbolic reality.” | • Frequently, a rhetorical vision can be equated to a person or group’s sense of what is, consciousness or awareness, and overall sense of reality. In the sense, a rhetorical vision reflects what is known but also what a person or group knows works or is a pragmatic way of doing things.  
• A rhetorical vision generally has more impact and significance if it is explicitly labeled.  
• Those actually using a rhetorical vision may not explicitly label the rhetorical vision. In some cases, especially for politicians, they may find it useful to label their rhetorical vision before others label it in a negative fashion.  
• Rhetorical visions are generally explicitly labeled by critical observers of the chaining out process. |
<p>|                  | “A rhetorical vision is constructed from fantasy themes that chain out in face-to-face interacting groups, in speaker-audience transactions, in viewers of television broadcasts, in listeners to radio programs, and in all the diverse settings for public and intimate communication in a given society.” |                                                                                               |
|                  | “A <em>rhetorical vision</em> is a coherent integration of various shared fantasies which present a broader view of a campaign or issue. The fantasy types and themes of a specific campaign are often integrated by a master trope or analogy which pulls the elements of the vision together. When a coherent rhetorical vision emerges during a campaign, it is often indexed by a label such as the New Populism, the New Politics, the New Frontier, or the New Deal.” |                                                                                               |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chaining Out</strong></th>
<th>Chaining out can occur when a group perceives its present interpretation of reality as an appropriate mode for the understanding the past as well as an agenda for future action. The “chaining can also be an expression of a given social field of the individual psychodynamics of the participants. A dramatic theme might related to the repressed psychological problems of some or all of the members and thus pull them into participation.” Chaining out can move from an individual and from a group into “larger groups hearing a public speech. The dramatizations which catch on and chain out in small groups are worked into public speeches and into the mass media and, in turn, spread out across larger publics, serve to sustain the members’ sense of community, to impel them strongly to action (which raises the questions of motivation), and to provide them with a social reality filled with heroes, villains, emotions, and attitudes.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Path Analysis</strong>—Chaining out can be perceived as path analysis—following the use of a symbol or the path it takes from a small group into ever-increasing circles of use.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trace Analysis</strong>—The chain must be demonstrated to exist—the researcher-critic must be able to systematically trace an innovative use of a symbol from its original use across successive time and circumstantial uses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First, fantasy theme analysis is employed in this study to identify fantasy themes present in *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. As Foss (2004) stated, “The term fantasy is designed to capture the constructed nature of the theme. Fantasy themes tell a story about a group’s experience that constitutes a constructed reality for the participants” (p. 111). A fantasy contains multiple components. A fantasy theme can be figured out from the elements of a fantasy. These elements are characters, situations, emotions, purposes, and acts.

Second, this study explores fantasy types in these two television shows. Bormann (1985) stated “When a group of people have shared a fantasy theme, they have charged their emotional and memory banks with meanings and emotions that can be set off by a commonly agreed upon cryptic symbolic cue” (p. 6). Symbolic cues can include code words, phrases, slogans, and gestures. Bormann saw the inside-joke as a typical instance of a symbolic cue: “When a particular number of similar scenarios or outlines of the plot of the fantasies, including particulars of the scenes, characters, and situations have been shared by members of a group or larger community, they form a fantasy type” (p. 7).

Third, this study distinguishes the rhetorical vision emerging in *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. A rhetorical vision is “a unified putting-together of the various scripts which gives the participants a broader view of things” (Bormann, 1985 p. 8). After emerging, rhetorical visions are not always compelling or important to the individuals sharing the fantasies. Some rhetorical visions are stable and inflexible and can exist for long periods of time. If rhetorical visions are unstable, they will
“suffer from a continuous threat of spontaneous internal combustion” (p. 14).

Fourth, this study compares the results of chaining out in *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. Chaining out means a fantasy theme moves from a group into a larger group. “Value and attitudes of many kinds are tested and legitimatized as common to the group by the process of fantasy chains” (Bormann, 1972, p. 398). The result of chaining out of a fantasy theme can reflect whether this fantasy theme successfully suits the culture. Chaining out stably to larger groups makes a fantasy theme last for a long time. If the chaining out is not successful, the fantasy theme can not catch up to people and convert them. This situation will make the group sharing the same fantasy theme unstable and break up finally.

**Summary and Conclusion**

This study employs an eclectic approach to answer the question posed in the chapter one: What are the reasons causing the different results of these two similar television shows? This approach allows for the use of a combination of four research methods to analyze the two talent television shows, *American Idol* and *Super Girl*, from very different cultures. These four research methods are: content analysis; analog criticism; cross-cultural criticism; and, fantasy theme analysis. Content analysis is used to examine how the two talent television shows were laid out in front of the audience in the different cultural backgrounds. Analog criticism can help to recognize similarities and differences of the talent television shows. Cross-cultural criticism is a good approach to understand other cultures from people’s point of view based on their own cultures. The fantasy theme analysis in this study is engaged to
explore the fantasy themes, fantasy types, rhetorical vision, and chaining out present

in American Idol and Super Girl.
This chapter analyzes the 2005 finale shows of *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. Based on an eclectic approach that links four research methods, the primary purpose of this chapter is ultimately to isolate the cultural differences between the United States and China, differences that are reflected in *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. Towards this end, based upon a content and analog analysis, it is initially noted that there is every reason to believe that these two television shows would be the same, for they are both examples of one genre, the reality competition television show. However, as the two television shows are observed, it also becomes clear that these two shows possess some extraordinary differences, differences that seem to stem from the unique cultures of the countries producing each show. Accordingly, employing a cross-cultural perspective, this study formally examines the differences between American and Chinese cultures by virtue of three core cultural dimensions. Finally, the distinct fantasy orientations of these two cultures are highlighted employing a fantasy theme analysis.

*Content Analysis*

*American Idol* season four was aired from January 18 to May 25, 2005. The three judges were Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell. The winner was
Carrie Underwood.

During this season, some changes were made in the rules that governed the show. Celebrity guest judges were invited to participate in the auditions for the first time. The age of contestants was expanded from 16-24 to 16-28. This change allowed more mature and diverse contestants to participate in the competitions. Another important change was made to prevent the highly unbalanced gender composition of season three. In the semi-final competitions of season three, female contestants took a clear super majority of the final 12, 8 women to 4 men. In season four, 24 semifinalists, 12 men and 12 women, competed separately with 2 of each gender being voted off each week until 12 finalists were left.

*American Idol* 2005 auditions were held in Washington, DC; St. Louis, Missouri; New Orleans, Louisiana; Las Vegas, Nevada; Cleveland, Ohio; Orlando, Florida; and San Francisco, California; from August to October 2004. The top 24 contestants were selected by the judges during this audition stage. The semi-finals lasted for only three weeks. They were aired on February 23, March 2, and March 9, 2005. Every week, two contestants of each gender from the bottom were eliminated until the 12 finalists were remained.

The finals lasted eleven weeks from March 16 to May 25, 2005. The bottom three vote-getters of contestants were declared and the lowest one was eliminated each week. In the early stage of the finals, each contestant performed a song from a weekly theme. In the top five and four round, each contestant performed two songs. In the top three and finale round, the contestants sung three songs each competition.
In the finale, one remaining contestant was declared as the winner. It was announced that approximately 500 million votes were received in the fourth season of *American Idol*.

Carrie Underwood, a country singer, was the winner of season four. She not only won but also avoided being in the bottom three during the entire competition. On February 11, 2007, she became the first winner of *American Idol* who swept all three major music awards, *American Music*, *Billboard Music*, and *Grammy Awards*, in a single season. From 2005 to September 2008, Carrie Underwood had won 35 awards.

Table 3. The Awards and Nominations that Ms. Carrie Underwood won

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Nominations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academy of Country Music Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academy of Country Music Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Music Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>American Music Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Billboard Music Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>Billboard Music Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CMT Music Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>CMT Music Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country Music Association Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>Country Music Association Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dove Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grammy Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammy Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>MTV Video Music Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horizon Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teen Choice Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspirational Country Music Award</strong></td>
<td><strong>World Music Award</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People’s Choice Award</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teen Choice Award</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time, *Super Girl* was often regarded as the Chinese version of *American Idol*. Its second season was aired on Hunan Satellite Television, which covered most

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Note: This table is based on the information from website: aceshowbiz.com on September 29, 2008.
of China via satellites, from March 19 to August 26, 2005. The winner was Li Yuchun. Although she had “the weakest voice among the top finalists,” Li Yuchun received the most votes in the three finalists. Wikipedia has reported that, “Despite the heavy criticism that arose during the competition season, the three 2005 finalists have been considered the most successful singers from the entire show.”

There were two major stages in Super Girl contest, regional competitions and national final competitions. In 2005, regional competitions were held in five locations of China, including Changsha of Hunan province, Guangzhou of Guangdong province, Zhengzhou of Henan province, Hangzhou of Zhejiang province, and Chengdu of Sichuan province. The regional competitions began with preliminary selection rounds. Every participant had thirty seconds to express herself. More than 100,000 applicants from 4 to 89 years old applied to the preliminary selection (Lynch, 2005). In each preliminary, fifty participants were selected by judges to take part in the next regional round. Contestants were eliminated during the regional rounds. Finally, three finalists were selected from each region. The ranks of the three finalists of each region were voted by audience via telephone and text messages.

In the 2005 Super Girl final competitions stage, fifteen participants consisting top three singers from each region participated. At the beginning, the five second-place and the five third-place singers of each region took part in the contest. Half of them were eliminated. The five winners of this stage and the five first-place singers of each region continued to compete until the top three were selected. In the
finale contest, the rank of the three finalists was decided by the votes they received from the audience. In general, one cell phone number could vote fifteen times by text message. Each telephone number and cell phone number could vote fifteen times by calling certain numbers answered by automatic voice machine. Thus, each cell phone number could vote at most thirty times. The winner, Li Yuchun, had more than 3.52 million votes.

Table 4. Votes of 3 finalists in Finale show of Super Girl season 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Votes of Finale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Li Yuchun</td>
<td>3,528,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Zhou Bichang</td>
<td>3,270,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Zhang Liangying</td>
<td>1,353,906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the same year, Li Yuchun, “with her tomboy-style hair and a shy smile, appeared on the cover of latest edition of Time Asia Magazine . . . as one of the 25 Asia Heroes of 2005.” Time Asia Magazine introduced Li Yuchun as, “The 21-year-old Li, a pop singing major at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, has become a new pop icon for her boyish charm and unconventional personality.” Time Asia Magazine also reported that “the influence brought by the ‘Li Yuchun phenomenon’ goes far beyond her voice in China. Her ‘attitude, originality and a proud androgyny’ are challenging the country’s traditional customs” (chinaview.cn). Miss Li received many honors after she became the winner of Super Girl. However, almost all these honors came from non-professional organizations (Wikipedia).

Analog Criticism

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Note: This table is based on the information from website: wikipedia.com on April 6, 2008.
This study also employs analog criticism to examine these two television shows, *American Idol* and the *Super Girl*. This method allows a critic to analyze one of the two talent television shows based on the other one. Using analog criticism, the similarities and differences between these two shows can be analyzed in detail. Each of these similarities and differences provides preliminary evidence for identifying the cultural influences shaping each of the shows.

**Similarities**

Both *American Idol* and *Super Girl* are television talent singing competitions. They were inspired by the United Kingdom show *Pop Idol* and changed to some degree to suit the culture in which each is aired. These two shows were open to ordinary people nationwide. For the majority of the contestants of these two shows, the most important issue is participation. For the viewers, the diverse and unique backgrounds and performance of the various singers, both good and bad, enrich the experience of the viewers. In addition, they also can enjoy an element of control over the interactions between themselves and the contestants by their votes that determine the outcome of the contest.

Everyday people can participate in the singing competitions and their performances may be broadcast nationwide. The winners of these two shows receive contracts from the national major record companies and can become top popular singers and super stars. An ordinary person can become a super star and the audience can treat these unknown singers like established stars, sometimes even more important. This fantasy has attracted thousands of young singers to attend both
contests every year. At the beginning of the contests, a series of nationwide auditions in both *American Idol* and *Super Girl* were conducted. Participants only have very short time to reveal their talent in the audition stages. Judges decide which contestants advance in audition stages and the early stage of competitions. However in later stage of both contests, the outcomes are determined by public voting via telephone and the number of text messages each contestant receives.

In this sense, both *American Idol* and *Super Girl* can be considered “reality shows” even though the procedures of the contents and post production editing very strongly influence what viewers see when they watch the shows. In the United States, with the remarkable shift from broadcast networks to cable and satellite television, Americans now watch more cable and satellite than broadcast programs. Although the amount of time Americans spend watching television keeps increasing, the amount of time they watch via broadcast has notably been reduced, from 793 hours per person in 2000 to 679 hours in 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). At the same time, Americans increased their time watching cable and satellite television from 674 hours per person a year in 2000 to 869 hours per person a year in 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Following this shift, reality shows became popular in broadcast networks. Goolsbee (2007) has argued that reality shows are popular in the United States, because “reality shows cost much less to make than scripted shows” and “this is just a profit play by the broadcast networks.” He implies that the reduction of potential market makes broadcast networks reduce their programming cost.
Likewise, in China, financial considerations are a major reason why reality shows are so popular. There were 363 television networks in China in 2003. They broadcast on 2,165 television channels. The huge amount of television stations and channels has reduced the available resources for each station in this developing country. Most television stations are in very difficult financial situations (Xie, 2005). Reality shows allow these stations to possibly survive with small budgets.

Compared to later seasons, both American Idol and Super Girl were not very successful in their first seasons. In the first season of American Idol, the finale just ranked 25th. In the first season of Super Girl, its impact was just limited within Hunan Province, a moderately developed province of China. Meanwhile, the 2005 season of these two shows was the most successful season so far. For American Idol, it was because the winner, Ms. Carrie Underwood, became the first winner of American Idol who swept all three major music awards, American Music, Billboard Music, and Grammy Awards, in a single season on February 11, 2007. For Super Girl, on one hand it was because its effort reached every corner of the country from this season; on the other hand it was because the three finalists of this season have been considered the most successful singers from the entire shows and their names are most related with the brand of the show.

Differences and Potential Reasons

However, there are some remarkable differences between American Idol and Super Girl although they are similar singing competition shows. Culture is so powerful that it can not only reflect but also influence the behavior of people in it.
American culture and Chinese culture are significantly different from each other in many aspects. “Most people around the world prefer to be entertained by people who look the same, talk the same, joke the same, behave the same, play the same games, and have the same beliefs (and worldview) as themselves” (Tunstall, 2008, p. xiv). These led to *American Idol* and *Super Girl* having many different rules. Especially, they have distinct results. *American Idol* is still popular after seven seasons. *Super Girl* had to change to *Happy Boy* to avoid an entire failure.

In this context, three differences exist between these two shows.

Firstly, *American Idol* and *Super Girl* have different rules. According to the names, gender issue is apparently different in these two shows. *American Idol* opens to both male and female singers whereas *Super Girl* only opened to female singers. From the very beginning, the singing competition show was intentionally separated into two editions in China based on gender in order to refresh the audience later. Another difference is the limitation of age. In the first three seasons of *American Idol*, the contestants had to be 16 to 24 years old. From 2005, the age limit was changed to 16 to 28 to attract more diverse contestants. Unlike *American Idol*, *Super Girl* had no restriction on age at the beginning. The minimum age of 18 was requested only in the last season. It attracted contestants from 4 to 89 years old during the first two seasons. No age restriction gave every female the right to sing in public and utilize broadcasting resources in spite of her ability to sing. At the same time, it stimulated communities and media to discuss the show. Furthermore, the composition of judge panels is notably different. All the judges of *American Idol*
come from the entertainment industry while there were two judge groups in the competition of *Super Girl*. One group was composed of professional judges coming from the Chinese entertainment industry; the other group consisted of audience representatives including the singers eliminated from the previous contests and ordinary audience. This rule further diluted the power of professional judges and gave more authority to audience in order to attract them to be involved in this show.

Second, *American Idol* and *Super Girl* used different methods to achieve popularity. Undoubtedly, being popular and gaining benefit are the common goals of these two shows. However, they attain these goals through different paths. For *American Idol*, it “seeks to find the greatest young singer” who has the potential of becoming a favorite in the United States (*Wikipedia*). At the same time, the distinct personalities of the judges also help *American Idol* to be popular. For instance, Heffernan (2004) described Simon Cowell as the most astute judge; Sanneh (2005) called Randy Jackson as the most enthusiastic judge. Different from this, *Super Girl* pursued another way. It tried to attract eyeballs by activating debate. By challenging traditional values, norms and rules, *Super Girl* profoundly impacted traditional Chinese culture. The controversy that *Super Girl* created between the show and traditional Chinese culture has led to major discussions among Chinese people and media. This was the major reason causing *Super Girl* to be popular and attracting many advertisers. A good example is that two of the three finalists in 2005 season were “tomboy-style.” The winner Li Yuchun was chosen as 25 Asia Heroes of 2005 by *Time Asia Magazine*. After becoming “a new pop icon for her boyish
charm” and “a proud androgyny” (chinaview.cn), she switched to a sexy style and appeared on the stages with fewer and fewer clothes.

Finally, *American Idol* and *Super Girl* produce different results. The apparent dissimilarity of the two shows is that *American Idol* is still popular after the seventh season in 2008 while *Super Girl* had to change to *Happy Boy* to avoid failure. Obviously, to make a television show popular by raising controversy and heated discussion is not a good strategy in China. High quality and creative programs will attract longer and consistent attention than those with bizarre styles. Different content discussion is another remarkably different result of these two shows. Most discussion and criticism on *American Idol* focused on the show itself. Singers and judges were the major topic of the discussion or criticism. Conversely, the discussion aroused by *Super Girl* was far beyond the show. The supporters saw this show as the embodiment of democracy based upon the voting means and tolerance toward the challenge against traditional culture. The opponents doubted the professional qualification of the singers and the controversy caused by the anti-traditional behavior both of the singers and the show. Some scholars see this discussion as the rising of popular culture against elegant culture (Luo, 2006).

*Cross-Cultural Criticism*

Beyond the differences that exist between these two shows in terms of competition rules and production schedules, these two shows are also aptly perceived as representative anecdotes of the cultures from which they have emerged. In this context, three core cultural dimensions are employed here to examine *American Idol*
and Super Girl. These three core cultural dimensions are individualism and collectivism, long-term and short-term orientations, and power distance. They provide a useful and insightful way of comparing and contrasting these two shows.

*Individualism and Collectivism*

Gudykunst and Kim (1992) have provided the definitions of individualism and collectivism as:

Individualism—collectivism is the major dimension of cultural variability used to explain cross-cultural differences in behavior. . . . Emphasis is placed on individuals’ goals in individualistic cultures, while group goals have precedence over individuals’ goal in collectivistic cultures. Individualistic cultures . . . promote self-realization for their members. . . . Collectivistic cultures, in contrast, require that individuals fit into the group. (p. 42)

Further, they pointed out the significance of individualism and collectivism as “individualism-collectivism is expected to affect communication mainly through its influence on group identities and the differentiation between ingroup and outgroup communication” (p. 42). Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) has additionally argued that:

Individualism is a cultural pattern found in most northern and western regions of Europe and in North America. . . . The cultural pattern of collectivism is common in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America, and the Pacific Islands. One third of the world population is represented by cultures with high individualistic value tendencies, whereas the remaining two thirds of
the people lie in cultures with high group-oriented value tendencies. (p. 30-31)

As this study argues shortly, in contrast to the value that dominates China, the American culture possesses a far more individualistic orientation. Kuper (1999) has maintained that, “America in particular has traditionally emphasized the right to individual self-fulfillment” (p. 237). Americans have the value tendencies to “emphasize individual identity over group identity and individual rights over group obligations” (Ting-Toomey and Oetzel, 2001, 30). Laungani (2007) has argued that:

The roots of individualistic philosophy can be traced in the writings of St Augustine in the fourth century, who asserted that one can and should be able to commune with God directly, without having to receive the sanctions of the clergy or the Church. Over the centuries theistic notions of individualism gave way to secular and humanistic notions of individualism as a result of a viable social and political philosophy, which came into being during the sixteenth century. (p. 58)

In the United States, perhaps the notion of individualism does possess a kind of mystical, if not religious overtone. But, it is certainly possible that the age of the United States makes a difference in how individualism can and is employed. In terms of its history, the United States is a little over 200 years, and virtually all of its experiences—as a culture—have been recorded in a variety of ways. In this context, the “living history” of the nation is relatively new. Specific individuals are often recalled, and even the founders of the nation can be appreciated and understood as unique individuals, simply because the individual leaders of the nation are relatively
few in number. In this sense, individualism is both a viable and feasible cultural mode for the United States.

Encouraging individual success by fully expressing the unique and personal character is a mandate of *American Idol* as well as a direct reflection of the American culture. Brantley (2005) has underscored the consistency between *American Idol* and the American culture in these words: “Self-congratulatory element is also part of the *American Idol* package - the subtext that goes, ‘I deserve to be a star because it is my right as an American, and because I try so hard.’”

In sharp contrast to the control value orientation of the United States, in China, *Super Girl* has been consistently challenged, if not directly attacked, whenever it appeared to foster individualism at the expense of a more collectivistic orientation. The Chinese culture possesses a far more collectivistic orientation than that found in the United States. Laungani (2007) argues that collectivism derived from the big family structure of Eastern countries, as he calls “extended family networks.” He states:

The extended family would normally include all their children: their married sons and their wives, and their children (if any), their unmarried sons, their unmarried daughters, and other relatives such as the father’s younger brothers, their wives and children, the father’s widowed sister, all of whom would live under the same roof. In such a family structure incomes are pooled and are redistributed according to the needs of the respective members within the family. . . . One’s individuality is subordinated to collective solidarity, and one’s
ego is submerged into the collective ego of the family and one’s community. (p. 62)

In this context, collectivism is almost an essential feature of the Chinese culture, given its age and longevity. The Chinese culture goes back some 5,000 years, and it would virtually be impossible to identify all of the outstanding individuals who have shaped and dominated this culture. Indeed, it is now virtually impossible to even identify the unique dynasties that have exerted powerful and shaping influences of the cultural development of China. While a host of variables influence how and why collectivism shaped and determines cultural development, in the case of China, its age and the length of its history draws attention to the meaning of the totality and overall meaning of China rather than any single individual within the 5,000 years that have shaped the cultural meanings influencing China.

Indeed, as China has entered the 21st century and had to deal with the kind of individualism associated with the United States, the tension between individualism and collectivism may even be more profound and explicit. Certainly, the tension between individualism and collectivism fostered a conflict between Super Girl and Chinese culture. As Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) have argued, “By comparison, collectivism refers to the broad value tendencies of people in a culture to emphasize the group identity over the individual identity and ingroup-oriented concerns over individual wants and desires” (p. 30-31). Therefore, the characteristic of individualism that Super Girl conveyed heavily irritated the traditional conception of Chinese people, which put Super Girl in a very subtle and risky situation from the
beginning. Chinese audience tends to see television stations as public property for two reasons. First, television stations in China are state owned. Second, the Chinese people believe that the limited channel resources of television are a public space based upon their collectivistic culture. Since there were no restrictions to prevent everyday and ordinary females from taking part in *Super Girl*, not all the performances of the participants were professional and enjoyable. Many viewers considered individualistic and unprofessional performances should not occupy their time and public channel resources.

*Short-Term and Long-Term Orientation*

In common parlance, the American culture is typically viewed to operate within a short-term orientation, with a 30-day orientation governing a host of its interactions. In contrast, perhaps because of its long and distinguished history, the Chinese culture frequently employs a long-term orientation. Short-term orientation tends to attach importance to present and ignore the future. Gudykunst and Kim (1992) explain that:

The present orientation predominates where people pay relatively little attention to what has gone on in the past and what might happen in the future. In this orientation the past is seen as unimportant, and the future is seen as vague and unpredictable. . . . only the here and now is real; the future and the past have little reality. (p. 49)

The short-term orientation of American culture and the fairly good social security system make Americans enjoy their ongoing, everyday, or present lives.
They do not need to think too much about their future. A good example of the influence of the short-term orientation on telecommunication of the United States is American audience still enjoys weekly broadcast prime time episodes on major broadcasting networks. As Reisinger and Turner (2003) state, “Tolerance, leisure, importance of the past and present, and spending characterize people who have a short-term orientation toward life” (p. 114). Without a doubt, these broadcasting networks would have changed their programming model immediately if most audiences were not satisfied with the current situation.

Different from the American culture, Chinese culture is long-term orientation more focus on future issues. Indeed, the Chinese have a saying, “Ju An Si Wei (居安思危),” which urges everyone to be prepared for danger in times of safety and to be vigilant in times of peace. The conflicts that have dominated the thousands of years of China’s history have taught Chinese people that life is full of danger and danger may come at any time, even when people are in a safe environment. Stability, development and prosperity are the ultimate goal of a society. For that, Chinese people are eager for change to betterness. As Gudykunst and Kim (1992) has stated the point: “The future orientation predominates where change is valued highly. In this orientation the future generally is viewed as bigger and better, while being old-fashioned is (the past) scorned” (p. 49). However, Chinese people respect “Zhong Yong (中庸)” (golden mean in English⁸) as they believe the changes should

⁸ According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Golden Mean is “the course between extremes.” Collins Essential English Dictionary defines Golden Mean as “the middle course between extremes.” (thefreedictionary.com)
come incrementally not radically and balance always exists in nature and should be observed. "Zhong Yong (中庸)," which is an important thought of Confucianism, tells people that “moderation in all things is the best of rules” (iciba.com). This teaching encourages people to behave moderately but not extremely.

The contemporary history of China is full of complexities. After serving as the leader of East Asia for thousands of years, China became one of the poorest countries in the world during the twentieth century. Additionally, as China shifted from its closeness to open-door policy, Chinese people have experienced massive transformations in its society, economy, politics, and culture. So far, they are still in the process of striving to establish a new and better society adequate for new era of the world. These factors make Chinese people eager to change, eager to keep seeking a better future. They may not be very tolerant of the same type of shows for a long time. In contrast to the “tolerance” and “leisure” of American audiences (Reisinger & Turner, 2003), Chinese audiences may easily get bored with a specific television show. Accordingly, in a rather predictable way, Super Girl only lasted for three seasons. When it was changed to Happy Boy, it failed entirely.

Power Distance

The differences between American and Chinese cultures are also embodied in different power distance orientation. Hofstede and Bond (1984) define power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally” (p. 419). Gudykunst and Kim (1992) explain that:
High power distance cultures see power as a basic fact in society, and stress coercive or referent power, while low power distance cultures believe power should be used only when it is legitimate and prefer expert or legitimate power. . . . Parents in high power distance cultures value obedience in their children, and students value conformity and display authoritarian attitudes more than those in low power distance cultures. (p. 46)

The American culture is a low power distance culture. People tend to see their children as friends and, while some exceptions can be noted (e.g., John F. Kennedy and the “Camelot Era”), Americans typically believe that their political leaders should somehow come from and reflect the culture of the “average American.” Likewise, children can express their own ideas and even dispute with their parents. Moreover, there are sufficient resources to guarantee all children with a high school education. And for those who wish to enter a college, American children do not—as is the case in China—spend almost all of their time studying just to be admitted to a university. Parents also enjoy watching popular television shows with their children. As Stanley (2006) describes that *American Idol* “is watched by parents and children together, gives people a heady but safe sense of empowerment — choice without consequences.”

In contrast, the Chinese culture is a high power distance culture. In terms of the relationship between parents and their children, children are expected to respect their parents. Most of the time, the words of parents are considered as orders to children. In addition, the social resources of China, particularly the educational
resources, are limited for the large population. Children are expected to study hard to pass the national placement exam to go to universities. Traditionally, education is a major means for people to upgrade their social levels. However, most enthusiastic fans of Super Girl were students. They spent lots of money and time watching and supporting the singers. In a survey reported by Liu (2006), more than 90 percent of the secondary and primary school students watched Super Girl every Friday when the show aired. The intensity of the audience’s involvement was also captured by Liu when he reported as a typical example that one girl spent about two months income of her family voting for the “super girls.” The conflicts between the fans of Super Girl and their parents could be real and intense. For example, Wang (2006) reported that many parents and teachers appealed to cancel Super Girl. On April 25, 2006, a survey conducted by Sina, which is one of the most famous websites in China, showed that 58.23 percent of the voters believed that Super Girl was harmful to the young generation. The anger and complaints of the parents led to heavy criticism on Super Girl.

Certainly, this value analysis has suggested that the United States and China differ dramatically in terms of three value dimensions. These value dimensions include individualism and collectivism, long-term and short-term orientations, and power distance. In practice, then, it means that Americans and Chinese people will differ in how they perceive and understand the same kind of television show. Americans indulge in their American Idol, and the indulgence is a reflection of their celebration of the present, while the Chinese people exploit Super Girl, exploring the
show for its useful resources for dealing with and exploring the future. This perspective provides an appropriate context for examining the fantasies that govern *American Idol* and *Super Girl*.

**Fantasy Theme Analysis**

Fantasy theme exists in any culture. Bormann (1972) has defined a fantasy theme as “the content consists of characters, real or fictitious, playing out a dramatic situation in a setting removed in time and space from the here-and-now transactions of the group” (p. 397). He has further pointed out fantasy theme analysis is a powerful research method, because it “views the entire process of communication, practice, criticism, and special theory as the object of analysis” (1985, p. 4).

From the perspective of fantasy theme analysis, American audiences are goaded by a different set of fantasies from Chinese audiences. Accordingly, the rest of this chapter explores the ways in which the notions of *fantasy theme*, *fantasy type*, *rhetorical vision*, and the *chaining out process* can be useful employed to distinguish *American Idol* and *Super Girl* as representative icons of two distinct cultures.

**Fantasy Themes**

A fantasy contains multiple components. A fantasy theme is composed of characters, situations, emotions, purposes, and acts within a single scenario. Fantasy themes “tell a story about a group’s experience that constitutes a constructed reality for the participants” (Foss, 2004, p. 111). *American Idol* and *Super Girl* have similar fantasy themes.

The fantasy themes of *American Idol* are everyday and ordinary people can be
Successful through this show and become popular singers and superstars. This is no new idea. They can be considered as parts of the American Dream or the extension of American Dream. *American Idol* provides a specific way to realize the American Dream by hard work. The fantasy themes of *Super Girl* are any Chinese female can do what she wants to do. They can daringly express themselves on the stage of *Super Girl*. An ordinary person can become a famous singer and super star through expressing a true selfhood.

**Fantasy Types**

A fantasy type is “a stock scenario repeated again and again by the same characters or by similar characters” (Bormann, 1985, p. 7). Unless several fantasy themes have been shared first, fantasy types can not be generalized. At the same time, “When communicators begin to use fantasy types or allusions to types in their messages, it is further evidence that fantasy themes have been shared” (p. 7).

The fantasy types of both *American Idol* and *Super Girl* were formed via various media by repeating the images of the successful singers again and again. Advertisements of these two shows were posted nationwide and constantly repeated. Discussions made by media and common viewers were ardent. These further enhanced the fantasy themes and people began to share some symbolic cues. When people have shared fantasy themes, “They have charged their emotional and memory banks with meanings and emotions that can be set off by a commonly agreed upon cryptic symbolic cue” (p. 6). As a result, fantasy types were developed. Symbolic cue includes code words, phrases, slogans, gestures. In the United States, people
usually use Idol in stead of *American Idol*. The word “Idol” and names of the winners of this competition, Kelly Clarkson, Ruben Studdard, Fantasia Barrino, Carrie Underwood, Taylor Hicks, Jordin Sparks, and David Cook, have become the symbolic cue of *American Idol*. In China, *Super Girl* and the phenomenon of *Super Girl* became hot topics of ordinary people and media. In many of these discussions, the phenomenon of *Super Girl* was related to the social reform. Li Yuchun, the name of the winner in 2005 season, and her “tomboy-style” also became symbols of *Super Girl*.

*Rhetorical Vision*

Bormann (1985) defines a rhetorical vision as “a unified putting-together of the various scripts which gives the participants a broader view of things” (p. 8). Rhetorical visions may be more or less compelling to the individuals sharing the fantasy and can lead to different situations. Some rhetorical visions may be very stable and impelling even penetrating into all aspect of social lives. Some visions may be shared by few people and last for a very short time. Some may be unstable and “suffer from a continuous threat of spontaneous internal combustion” (p. 14). Bormann (1972) also pointed out:

In most instances, a viable rhetorical vision accounts plausibly for the evidence of the senses so those who pick up the dramatic action and find it personally satisfying are not troubled by contradictory evidence from common-sense experience. On occasion, however, small, highly dedicated groups of people generate and sustain rhetorical visions so out of joint with the common-sense
and everyday experience of the majority of a community that their appeal is very limited. (p. 400)

The rhetorical vision of *American Idol* is everyday and ordinary people may become super star. By watching this show, people can witness the whole process of producing a super star from being “Cinderella.” By voting for their favorite contestants, people may take part in the process of building a super star. They see the super star which they partly built as the incarnation of their dream. They enjoy the combination of the visual reality (their dreams of success) and the super stars (real reality).

At the beginning, the rhetorical vision of *Super Girl* was similar to *American Idol*, for it was believed that any girl could become a super star and viewers could not only witness but also join in the producing process. Although there is no particular “Chinese Dream” in China, desiring big success is the same dream for Chinese people as for Americans. The original rhetorical vision that any girl may become a super star accommodated to Chinese culture as the vision of *American Idol* is suitable to American culture. However, this vision was deformed to flaunt individuality which goes too far from the balance and surpassed the tolerance of the majority of people. The new vision made *Super Girl* conflict with traditional culture and created heavy criticism about the show.

*Chaining out*

Fantasy themes contain two motives. One is to keep the rhetorical vision in a small group. The other is to “go public” to seek converts, which is chaining out.
Bormann (1972) states that chaining out can move from an individual and from a group into:

larger groups hearing a public speech. The dramatizations which catch on and chain out in small groups are worked into public speeches and into the mass media and, in turn, spread out across larger publics, serve to sustain the members’ sense of community, to impel them strongly to action (which raises the questions of motivation), and to provide them with a social reality filled with heroes, villains, emotions, and attitudes. (p. 398)

The fantasy themes of American Idol have been successfully chained out. It is still popular after seven seasons is the best proof. In its sixth season, “American Idol has drawn an average of 32 million viewers each week, nearly 50 percent more than the next highest-rated show and better than the show has measured in any previous season” (Wyatt, 2007). At the same time, some winners of American Idol have accomplished many professional achievements. On February 11, 2007, Carrie Underwood, the winner of 2005 season, became the first winner of American Idol who swept all three major music awards, American Music, Billboard Music, and Grammy Awards, in a single season. “Jennifer Hudson, who was eliminated in a late round during the show’s third season, went on to win an Oscar for her performance in ‘Dreamgirls’” (Wyatt, 2007).

In contrast, the fantasy themes of Super Girl did not chain out half as successfully as American Idol did in the United States. It was not only because the super girls were not traditional beauties and professional singers but also because they
went too far to challenge the traditional values, norms, customs and rules. In other words, what *Super Girl* challenged is the stable Chinese “Zhong Yong (中庸)” culture and the impact is too radical. Oliver (1971) pointed out:

> In examining Chinese culture, one notable fact about it is that, like the ancient culture of India, it was remarkably stable. There were veritable whirlwinds of surface conflicts, but however much they changed specific political attachments, they affected the basic structure and value system of the people very little. It was not progress, dynamism, and change that characterized early Chinese civilization but continuity, stability and dependability. (p. 86)

However, the fundamental goal of *Super Girl* was not to challenge tradition culture but to obtain benefits from the show. The stability of Chinese culture provides very little room to challenge tradition. This limited the chaining out of the rhetorical vision of *Super Girl*. Without chaining out to a very large group, the market of the correlative products of *Super Girl* was also limited to a small size. Without a viable and significant market, a television show cannot continue. Zhai (2008) has reported, for example, that the winners of both *Super Girl* and *Happy Boy* were scheduled for seven concerts in Beijing, but that, on the average, less than half of the 2,000 seats in the theater were filled. In all, while *American Idol* has overwhelmed segments of the American culture, it simply is not possible to establish that *Super Girl* and *Happy Boy* had an equivalent impact in China. Indeed, available measures of the popularity of these television shows suggest that they, in no way, began to approach the significance of *American Idol*. 
Summary and Conclusion

From the analysis combining four research methods, a full and deeper understanding of American and Chinese cultures can be obtained. Using content analysis and analog criticism, the similarities and differences between *American Idol* and *Super Girl* have been examined. By cross-cultural criticism, a deeper understanding of American and Chinese cultures has been obtained from the analysis of three core cultural dimensions. At last, fantasy themes, fantasy types, rhetorical vision, and chaining out have been examined by fantasy theme analysis.

Although *American Idol* and *Super Girl* have some similarities, dramatic differences have been found in this study. Culture is a major factor influencing these two shows and led to different results. *American Idol* is suitable to the American culture which is individualism, short-term orientation, and low power distance. By watching and voting for the singers, American viewers witness and take part in the process of making superstars. They see the super star which they partly build as the incarnation of their dream. *Super Girl* was inconsistent with Chinese culture which is collectivism, long-term orientation, and high power distance. The conflicts between this show and traditional Chinese culture created nationwide controversy.

At the same time, *American Idol* became popular by focusing on seeking the greatest singer and the potential favorite in the United States. Different from this, *Super Girl* became popular through the strategy of challenging the traditional value of “Zhong Yong (中庸)” as well as creating conflicts and agitation between the show and traditional Chinese values, norms, and rules. These put *Super Girl* in conflict with
traditional culture and created heavy criticism toward this show. These two shows achieved popularity through different paths. It was the different paths that led these two shows to very different results. *American Idol* is still popular after its seventh season. *Super Girl* had to change to *Happy Boy* to survive. These findings demonstrate that the significance of culture is an important factor to the different results of the similar talent television shows. The next chapter is a discussion of the limitations of this study. Suggestion for future study will also be provided.
Chapter Five: Major Conclusions and Limitations

This study has examined two singing competition television shows, *American Idol* and *Super Girl*. In this chapter, several conclusions about this comparison are identified, but the chapter focuses predominantly on the limitations involved in such a comparison.

*American Idol* and *Super Girl* are two similar talent television shows. However, they had very different destinies. *American Idol*, which has been aired for seven seasons, is still popular. *Super Girl* just aired for three seasons. The different outcomes of these two series raise the question posed in chapter one: What are the reasons causing the different impacts of these two similar television shows? By using an eclectic approach and combining four research methods, this study has examined these two shows as reflections of the values commonly shared by as well as those distinguishing American culture from Chinese culture. The four research methods this study has employed are: content analysis; analog criticism; cross-cultural criticism; and fantasy theme analysis. Although *American Idol* and *Super Girl* have some similarities, dramatic differences have been found in this study. Culture is a major factor influencing these two shows and leading to different results.

We would necessarily expect that *American Idol* and *Super Girl* share many
characteristics. They are both examples of one genre, a competitive reality show featuring talent competition. Additionally, they both employ the same medium of communication, necessarily involving the same production elements and processes. Nonetheless, because each show is a product of a distinct but different culture, differences in the meaning, endurance, and transformational effects of the shows have also been noticed. Indeed, these differences appear overwhelming, and they seem to stem from the different cultures that generated the shows.

Accordingly, this study suggests that the differences in American and Chinese cultures influence these two similar television shows and lead to different results. *American Idol* has generated some controversies about the style, mood, and tone that one of its judges has employed to evaluate contestants. And, of course, sometimes a favorite contestant has been voted off because he or she did not receive a sufficient number of votes. However, *American Idol* did not create conflicts between the show and American culture. After seven seasons, *American Idol* is still popular. *Super Girl* is seen as the Chinese edition of *American Idol*. However, it was inconsistent with Chinese culture. It was not only because the “super girls” were not traditional beauties and professional singers but also because they went too far to challenge the traditional value of “Zhong Yong (中庸).” These led to serious conflicts between the show and traditional Chinese culture as well as heavy criticism on it. *Super Girl* had to switch to another show, *Happy Boy*, shortly after it became popular.

The United States and China differ dramatically in terms of three value dimensions: individualism and collectivism; long-term and short-term orientations;
and power distance. The American culture possesses an individualistic orientation, which encourages individual success by fully expressing one’s unique and personal character. *American Idol* is a direct reflection of the American culture. The Chinese culture maintains a collectivistic orientation. Therefore, the characteristic of individualism that *Super Girl* conveyed put this show in a very subtle and risky situation.

Short-term orientation allows Americans to enjoy their ongoing, everyday, present lives. Long-term orientation makes Chinese people eager to change, eager to keep seeking a better future. Comparing to American audiences, Chinese audiences may not be very patient with the same type of shows for a long time.

The American culture is a low power distance culture. People tend to see their children as friends. Parents also enjoy watching popular television shows with their children. In contrast, the words of parents are considered as orders to children in Chinese culture. In addition, the social resources of China, particularly the educational resources, are limited for the large population. Children are expected to study hard to pass the national placement exam to go to universities. However, most enthusiastic fans of *Super Girl* are students. They spent lots of money and time watching and supporting the singers. The conflicts between the identities of fans of *Super Girl* and the identities of students created the conflicts between children and their parents. The anger and complaints of the parents formed part of the heavy criticism on *Super Girl*. Hence, these three value dimensions are utilized to explain why American audiences treated *American Idol* so differently from how Chinese
audiences treated *Super Girl*.

Culture is one of the broadest conceptions in the world. This study only explores it from a specific angle and focuses on a particular topic. Meanwhile, this is a cross-cultural study. It requires the researcher to have rich experience of both American and Chinese cultures. Obviously, there are many unavoidable limitations in this study. This chapter will discuss these limitations. Some suggestions for future studies will be also put forward.

*Limitations*

One limitation of this study is that it only examines American and Chinese cultures in the context of television. American culture and Chinese culture are two significantly different cultures with rich connotation respectively. Culture includes and conveys the social values, norms, rules, symbols, heroes, and beliefs. It influences almost every aspect of people’s lives. As culture is one of the most complicated conceptions of human society, a moderate choice has to be made in this study. Television was chosen because it plays such an important role in contemporary society. As Spigel (2004) has argued, television “remains a central mode of information and entertainment in our present-day global culture, and it appears that it will continue to do so for many years to come” (p. 1). At the same time, the popularity of television which has “achieved almost instantly, and consequent growth have significantly changed the environment in which people grow up and live their lives” (Comstock and Scharrer, 1999, p. 2).

The second limitation is that only one talent television show from each culture
was examined. The American television industry is the most advanced one in the world. The Chinese television industry has been rapidly developing in the past two decades. Thousands of episodes of television programs are produced in each of these two nations. Obviously, one television show from each country may not be enough when examining American and Chinese cultures. However, as Hall (1981) has stated, “you touch a culture in one place and everything else is affected” (p. 16). In this context, we might suspect and even anticipate that two mass communication productions, watched by millions of people, may actually constitute representative anecdotes of the cultures from which they emerged.

Meanwhile, focusing on the finale shows of 2005 season was also limiting the universality of this study. However, the styles of these two shows were not remarkably changed though they were adjusted to some degree during the broadcast. As Carter (2003) reported that “Although Ms. Berman [of Fox] said that the show must ‘continue to make improvements,’ do not expect ‘American Idol’ to change very much. An audience of nearly 40 million viewers always tells a network not to fiddle with success.” Hence, the outcome may make no big difference because of the stable styles of the two shows.

The third limitation is that this study is conducted based on the nature and emphases of Western communication discipline. Scholars have recognized the problem that cross-cultural communication textbooks consistently “treat American rules as the standard against which others are to be judged” (Chang, Holt & Luo, 2006, p. 320). Chesebro, Kim and Lee (2007) suggest that, “A relatively new
transformation in power is now underway in the world, a shift from a Western orientation to a more Eastern perspective that we anticipate will be most clearly dominated by China during the next twenty to forty years . . . this shift in power suggests that different ways of conducting and analyzing international and cross-cultural communication are already emerging” (p. 2).

Nonetheless, while reflecting both Western standards and bias, there are two reasons why a Western orientation can beneficially shape a study such as this one. First, there has been a historical transformation in communication theory that has distinctive cultural characteristics. As Chesebro, Kim, and Lee (2007) have put it, “Historical processions [in communication theory have] followed the power and the money” (p. 6). In other words, Eastern culture followed Western culture in the past century. In the past one hundred years, many more people from Eastern culture have gone to the West to study Western culture than people from Western culture to the East to study Eastern culture. This explains why Eastern scholars understood Western culture much better and deeper than Western scholars understood Eastern culture. Hence, it will be easier for this study based on Western discipline to be understood by Western people.

Second, a Western orientation can be useful simply because “what counts as an Asian communication paradigm will continue to be contested” (Chang, Holt & Luo, 2006, p. 326). A great deal of time, energy and attention must yet be devoted to the development of a comprehensive Eastern cross-cultural communication theory that also admits of the kinds of exceptions that must be made when the diversity of
Eastern communication theories and practices of communication is recognized. Although this study is based on Western theory, it also reflects the Eastern orientation. In any emerging stage of Eastern cross-cultural communication theory, any Western-culture-based cross-cultural communication study along with more Eastern orientation may contribute to the development of a more universal “Eastern” communication paradigm, not a paradigm just for Eastern culture. Indeed, we might expect that an Eastern cross-cultural theory of communication will reflect Western elements, simply because, in the foreseeable future, Eastern and Western nation-states will continue to interact and communicate in ways critical to both.

The fourth limitation is that the television stations of these two shows are not at the same professional levels. Fox is one of the biggest broadcast networks in the United States. It has also important influence on the world. On the contrary, China is still a developing country. The quality of Chinese television programs still needs improving, let alone Hunan Satellite Television Station which is not the best station in China. In most areas, this station is far behind the biggest and best station, China Central Television Station. The quality of American Idol and Super Girl is obviously at different levels. The quality of the television shows is a factor effecting the valuation of audience.

Finally, only one researcher conducted this study. The researcher was born and grew up in Chinese culture and has lived in the United States for merely two years. His comprehension of American culture is restricted although he has received many valuable suggestions from his advisor and other committee members.
Suggestions for Future Study

More seasons of *American Idol* and *Super Girl* should be examined in future studies in order to obtain a more full understanding of American and Chinese cultures. More details of the two television shows can be revealed if future study can contain all seasons of these two shows. Some indications imply that the ratings of *American Idol* may be declining. As Wyatt (2008) reported:

>The 30 million viewers, on average, for each of its Tuesday and Wednesday shows make up an audience about 10 percent smaller than the 33 million who watched through the first two months of last season, and 5 percent smaller than the same period in 2006. (p. B8)

Future studies can explore the reasons of the decline of *American Idol* if this trend becomes obvious. By comparing the causes of recession of *American Idol* and *Super Girl*, further and deeper understanding of American and Chinese cultures may be enhanced. Meanwhile, future studies can also examine *Happy Boy*, the successor of *Super Girl*. Figuring out what elements are maintained and what elements are changed from *Super Girl* can help to examine the reasons which lead to the success and failure of *Super Girl*. These future studies can re-examine the findings of this study.

In addition, employing more Eastern culture theories and disciplines can help to balance future studies on cross-cultural communication, especially when comparing Western and Eastern cultures. Eastern communication theory may emerge out in the near future. Chesebro, Kim and Lee (2007) suggest that within two decades, China
itself may become the new and ideal model for assessing and evaluating effective communication. Future studies might pay more attention to the development of Eastern disciplines of communication. Accordingly, a shift from Eurocentric disciplines may actually help to measure the power of some cultural system from a cross-cultural communication perspective.

In general, most people can only obtain the best understanding of their original culture. Hence, cooperation between Western and Eastern researchers would be a preferred option. This collaboration may maximize the insight of cross-cultural study, especially for a study crossing Western and Eastern culture.

Summary and Conclusion

American Idol and Super Girl are similar talent singing competition shows. They both partly derived from British show Pop Idol. Some people saw Super Girl as the Chinese version of American Idol. These two shows have some similarities. They also have some distinct differences due to their different cultural backgrounds, American and Chinese cultures. This study employed an eclectic approach including a combination of four research methods, content analysis, analog criticism, cross-cultural criticism, and fantasy theme analysis. Some similarities and differences were found through these analyses. This study also explored the cultural factors which lead these two shows to contrary results.

Because of the complexity of culture and the distinct differences between American and Chinese cultures, some limitations exist in this study. Future studies may involve more television shows and apply more Eastern orientation
communication discipline to overcome these limitations. It will help to gain more
details of these two cultures by examining more television shows. Combining
Western and Eastern communication disciplines may help to enrich cross-cultural
studies, which may increase understanding and appreciation of each culture.
Meanwhile, cooperation and collaboration between Western and Eastern researchers
should be considered as a good approach to conduct a cross-cultural study.
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Appendix A

Transcripts of Finale Show of *American Idol* 2005

Host-Ryan Seacrest: The results are in. The competition is over. The votes have been counted and your final decision has been made. The Kodak theatre is rocky today! We name the winner tonight! This is *American Idol*.

Eliminated singers perform together.

Voiceover: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Ryan Seacrest.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Your finale! Ladies and gentlemen! Let’s cheer one more time for! Tonight is really all about two people waiting in the wings, Carrie and Bo! One of them will be crowned as your next American Idol. It is Wednesday night, May 25, 2005, and we are live. An incredible show is coming on your way. So keep an eye on the Idol, we got Lynyrd Skynyrd with us tonight. George Benson! Kenny Wayne Shepherd! Kenny G! Billy Preston! Babyface is here. And Rascal Flatts! Plus the house is packed full of celebrities who shows Fox has to cancel the flight to turn out tonight. So thanks for coming tonight guys! We couldn’t do the Kodak without rolling out red carpet and the host, we want somebody with experience, somebody with class, somebody with innate charming to interview celebrities. We could not find anybody, so we want it with Mokena Gordon. Take a look.

Reporter-Mokena: Hey, you guys. We are here on the red carpet. So who would you think will win?

Fans: Bo!

Reporter-Mokena: Start with Kirstie Alley. Seriously, who do you want to win?

Kirstie Alley: First of all, I just want to say they are both stars, which is a good news.

Reporter-Mokena: You do not have to say you want which one to win. I completely understand. I mean it is completely okay.

Reporter-Mokena: Well, look at here. The two judges are here, and you look really amazing. Do you want to say anything?

Paula: You look beautiful and somebody is excited.

Reporter-Mokena: You heard I am so excited.
Reporter-Mokena: Do you want to say anything?

Simon: en

Reporter-Mokena: Thank you! It really just is amazing.

Reporter-Mokena: Who do you think will take the cake tonight?

Marg Helgenberger: I am waiting for Bo.

Reporter-Mokena: Bo is a rock star. Here comes Constantine. At the same time, let’s face so much famous foe. Ready? Go!

Constantine: (Silence.)

Reporter-Mokena: This is fabulous. They just cannot knock off me. Really, you guys just gonna stop. Look at my baby. And Bo. Bo, you guys are fabulous.

Carrie Underwood: You look so much … you look fabulous.

Reporter-Mokena: Well there is Mokena here. It is not about me. Back to you.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Thank you Mokena. We missed Constantine. It has been our biggest season so far. It has been really we see the best talent ever. Let’s take a look at the story of American Idol 2005.

Video: Flash back of this season.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Here is the journey so far. What is the future for Carrie and Bo? There will only be one winner. Your results are coming up. Stay with us. Bo and Carrie will perform plus it is gotten the emotional as the messages pull in live in their hometowns. It is the Idol. Hang on.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Let’s go back to the American Idol live back stage. Bo Bice is in the dressing room. How are you feeling today, man?

Bo: Feeling pretty good and excited.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You are very relaxed, aren’t you?

Bo: Man, it is all good. I just try to have fun. You know that I love what I do.
Host-Ryan Seacrest: Millions love Bo Bice. Matter of fact, we will go right now to Alabama. Let’s do a hometown check-in, check out these people screaming Bo Bice. Look at that. Isn’t that incredible?

Bo: Wow! It is incredible. Hi guys!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: They are counting a victory tonight.

Bo: That is incredible. I love you guys! Thank you all!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You recognize anybody?

Host-Ryan Seacrest: All right. I am gonna send you out to stage except for your song.

Bo: Great.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Thanks a lot. Victoria is right now live in Alabama in the chaos. Former idol contestants. Oh, look at you! What is going on?

Reporter-Victoria: I am in Birmingham, Alabama where they treat you as a southern royalty. Let me tell you. It is crazy out here. They love you, Bo. I have Bet Chatman, representing governor, Bob Rally of Alabama, here to present something for Bo Bice.

Bet Chatman: Yesterday, Governor Bob Rally declared Bo Bice’s Day in Alabama. We are pulling for Bo and we truly believe that after tonight everyday in Alabama would be Bo Bice’s Day. Go Bo, Go!

Reporter-Victoria: They love you, Bo. They are really for you. Do well. Back to you, Ryan.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Be careful. You look great. I have to stay outfit. Will it be a Bo Bice’s night in Hollywood. Stay tuned for the result right now. The Alabama boy on the stage doing vehicle live.

Bo performs.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Bo Bice. You got your own day now.

Bo: That is awesome. Thank you, Alabama. I love you Governor Rally.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, next we are hanging with Carrie. And these people think she has one in all. Are they right? Do not go anywhere, we will be back on Idol.
Host-Ryan Seacrest: Back now, the corner of Hollywood with Carrie Underwood on a very big night of her life. So did you sleep at all last night?

Carrie: I kept awake up thinking—it is the time to go yet, it is the time to go yet. I got thinking it.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Soon you will know, it is you or it is Bo the next American Idol. Let’s take a live shot back to Oklahoma. Back to your home, look at these people showing Carrie Underwood their love. Hey, guys. You are on TV. Isn’t it amazing? It is unbelievable. You have these fans all over the country, especially of course in Oklahoma. I will send you to the stage. You will sing in live just a second. Good luck! I will take care of this. And then if Matt Rogers is down there standing by amidst all tonight, set the scene in Oklahoma tonight.

Matt Rogers: I am standing here in the Muskogee Civic Center, just outside Checotah, Carrie Underwood’s hometown. It is unbelievable. There are over five thousand crazy obis from Scoubi. It is unbelievable. But first I am standing here with someone more or less crazy, a little bit more conservative. I am honored to be here with the first lady, Mrs. Kim Henry. How are you?

Kim Henry: I am doing just fine. How are you?

Matt Rogers: I am fantastic. And you look fabulous, by the way.

Kim Henry: Thank you.

Matt Rogers: Let me ask you a quick question real quick. What is something like this do for the state of Oklahoma to have a huge star like Carrie Underwood, representing your state.

Kim Henry: We are so excited to have someone who is talented, genuine, and hard working as Carrie Underwood represents state of Oklahoma. It is very exciting.

Matt Rogers: Great. It can tell. Let me ask, is there any doubt that Carrie Underwood can win tonight?

Kim Henry: No doubt at all. Carrie Underwood will win.

Matt Rogers: Well baby. And will you get crazy with me when she wins for Oklahoma? All right baby, it is back to you, Ryan. It is off the hook Baby.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Matt Rogers is picking up on the first lady of Oklahoma tonight.
He is hitting on her. And it has been the containing bet I think too. All right Oklahoma, here is your girl with angel’s bravi here, Carrie Underwood.

Carrie performs.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Is this your next American Idol? Ladies and gentlemen, we will know shortly. You look great tonight. Hurry up. We will chat with the judges and I am going to bring you to shocking truth about Simon Cowell. You will not believe it. Hang on this Idol.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Oh, it is sew in? Welcome back to American Idol back stage here. By the judge’s dressing room. This is about the 20:50. Randy Jackson is inside. Check out the foot wear. Look at the shoes.

Randy Jackson: Show guys the white shoes is right? Come on.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Your pink laces off.

Randy Jackson: Come on. This is me. Man.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: How are you doing tonight?

Randy Jackson: I am cheering. Are you ready?

Host-Ryan Seacrest: I am ready. Yes, I am excited.

Randy Jackson: Oh, I do not know. I am nervous. Who is gonna be?

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Let me ask you. After you watched the show back last night on the television, who would be you thought?

Randy Jackson: I think it will be and really be honest and keep it real. I think Carrie will probably win tonight. She is emotional, passionate.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You think it was a changed momentum last night?

Randy Jackson: I think she shifted a little bit last night. That is why I gave her a dog standing over because it was the first time I gave it in all season. But she deserved it. The last song, she really… I have never seen her connected emotionally with a song like that.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You are a judge of American Idol. Let’s judge the relationship between Simon and Paula this season.
Randy Jackson: You mean Paula is doing something to him?

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Yes, they have been through a lot, a rollercoaster of emotions.

Randy Jackson: Yes, you are right, these stuff…

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You think they are better or worse in terms of their clothes?

Randy Jackson: Let’s see. They fought all the time.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Let’s watch this. Check it out Randy.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Look at it. Oh, yes, you have to look at it Paula. It is the whole memory, isn’t it?

Paula Abdul: Yes, probably.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: I hear it is on Tells us. Is that true?

Paula Abdul: I got strawberries on his cheeks.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Seriously, you guys love each other, hate each other, love and hate each other. Open up it to me, Paula.

Paula Abdul: It is the combination of the two, right? You know that. You see it all the time happen.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: What do you think Simon is a biggest flaw?

Paula Abdul: Capital f, l, a, w. You know Simon is wonderful. He really, he is wonderful, you know.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Some days.

Paula Abdul: He looks like fungus, you know.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Have you spent more time with him? This season is getting to know you are becoming close friends.

Paula Abdul: We have. Kind of. Sort of. You know. I think probably by the year 2008, we will kind of…
Host-Ryan Seacrest: More ego or less ego this year?

Paula Abdul: Oh, definitely more ego.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: That is what I thought.

Paula Abdul: When he says “thank you for America for finally listening to me,” please!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: All right. It is a big night. We will take a break and come back. Thank you very much Paula. George Benson is here.

Paula Abdul: Yes!


Paula Abdul: A big show.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: We will be right back.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Welcome back to the show. Live on Simon Cowell.

Simon Cowell: How are you?

Host-Ryan Seacrest: I am fine, thank you. Doing well. And you?

Simon Cowell: I am the meat on the roll.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You are wrong.

Simon Cowell: Okay, okay.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Just relax. Are you nervous?

Simon Cowell: I am totally fine.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: I want to ask you. We are talking about this season tonight. Actually we thought about last night’s show. Let me ask you at what point do you think you began to grow during the season and involved a little more time?

Simon Cowell: Someone says this has been my best season.
Host-Ryan Seacrest: Someone said?

Simon Cowell: I am not, but…

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Someone in your house?

Simon Cowell: Like I will always say all of you play a little part on this show as well. And you have done well this season.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: What would you say is some of the parts or not.

Simon Cowell: No, no, no. It is very very important that the people played a part as well and you have played your part this year.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Can I thank you for the acknowledgement?

Simon Cowell: It may not sincerely.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Let me ask you about the show last night. You always say it is a little different when you look it back on television. What was your thought when you watched on TV?

Simon Cowell: Not that much different last night. Bo, the most comfortable… I have seen him…

Host-Ryan Seacrest: What do you think?

Simon Cowell: It is just like, you know like you took him out of the comfort zone where he has been for ten weeks where we normally take the show. Put them on a huge stage. You look uncomfortable. Carrie actually handled it a lot better. And I stand by what I said from day one. She will win the competition. Do you think that Americans are listening to me this year? I think we kind of forge a relationship that lasts.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You think everyone…

Simon Cowell: Yes, I do.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You think everybody here always listens to you.

Simon Cowell: No, America may… We forge relationship this year. I feel good about that.
Host-Ryan Seacrest: It is about time.

Simon Cowell: Mutual love.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Yes, of course. Now what we want to do…

Simon Cowell: I do want to talk about. Mike is doing a great job. I want to suggest we bring back an enjoying host.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: And I would like to suggest we bring back some more judges next season.

Simon Cowell: No, no. Let’s not deflate this.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: No, no, Come on!

Simon Cowell: He is a bit taller than you. But he is funny.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: He is great.

Simon Cowell: He is.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Let’s call some new talents. First we will go to Latoya London No., I believe it is in Alabama.

Simon Cowell: What are you wearing in Latoya?

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Let’s see Latoya London right now. Is she up in Alabama? They have questioned your songs. Go ahead Latoya!

Simon Cowell: Do we have technical problem?

Latoya London: I am sitting with two Bo’s close friends. But Simon, we have a question for you. What am I wearing? They treated me like a south Royalty.

Simon Cowell: You drunk. You sound drunk.

Latoya London: Simon, we have a question for you by one of Alabama’s finest.

A boy: Why do you use ver psychology on Bo?

Simon Cowell: How old are you?
Host-Ryan Seacrest: He is very young.

Latoya London: I am sorry.

Simon Cowell: It depends on how old he is. He is not very happy. I don’t use ver psychology. I heard it for the first time.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Thank you very much. Let’s go Oklahoma!

Simon Cowell: This is working.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You met Mat Rogers standing by Oklahoma. Man, take it away. We are counting on you. Check out the outfit! Have we found Mat?

Mat Rogers: I am standing here for Underwood with all these fans. I dress the same as Simon Cowell this time. I am standing here with papa Baby. I feel I am already at home. Let me ask you papa. Since I have been here, you are an Oklahoma icon. You have women throwing themselves at you. How’s that feel?

Grandpa Carl: It is good. I have women all over me.

Mat Rogers: Ok, we have Carrie’s oldest fan. I also have her youngest, smallest fan here Hollywood Pose. This dog is the fewest thing I have ever seen. It is awesome. I have the oldest fan, her youngest fan. Ryan, who you’ve got over there? I can’t tell.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Thank you man.
Simon Cowell: You are doing a great job. Hopefully we will see you on the show next year.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: We are going to take back here in Hollywood. Now a man with no emotions. But lots of emotions young American Idols have. Take a look at this.

Spot: Top emotional moments

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Someday emotion will run back to Simon. Sit down please. Coming up the Idols perform with all star band. It is gonna be incredible, but not as incredible as the shocking truth about ego. Stay with us.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Welcome back to the show. It is the most important night in the life of Carrie Underwood and Bo Bice. And it is a special night for all of us. Ladies and gentlemen, would you please welcome back by popular demand from the first show of this season singing your national Anthem. Lyan Jackson.
Host-Ryan Seacrest: Always great to see Lyan. Hello again America! Welcome back to the Kodak Theatre and the result finale. Either Carrie or Bo will walk away with the title tonight plus a recording contract. But which one is going to be entitled? Let’s officially say hello to our judges, Randy, Paula and Simon!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: the competition put them against each other. Now the competition is over, and we put them back together. They are sharing the stage for the first time singing *Up where we belong*. Please welcome Carrie Underwood and Bo Bice.

Carrie Underwood and Bo Bice perform.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Bo and Carrie. Come back guys. So you guys are very very tight, right?

Carrie Underwood: Yes.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Good friends through this. Do you give each other advice?

Carrie Underwood: If I ask Bo, he will tell me the truth, you know.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Bo, Claire is a huge fan. Claire Davis is looking forward to making a record with you. Carrie, Simon said you will actually sign more records than any other idol. That is fantastic news. So congratulations to both of you on this very special night. Carrie, here is one little surprise I have for the two of you. See these keys?

Carrie Underwood: I take both of them.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: No, you take one. Bo, you take the other. And take a look at your brand new cars. Both of you have one of these.

Carrie Underwood: Oh, my gosh!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Carrie, you get one. Bo, you get one.

Bo Bice: Anybody wants to go for a ride?

Host-Ryan Seacrest: You can drive away in those new cars tonight after the show.

Bo Bice: Awesome!

Carrie Underwood: Mom, you stand away!
Host-Ryan Seacrest: Ladies and gentlemen, is boy vs. girl? Let’s see how this stacks out. Watch this.

Videos of Carrie and Bo.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Who is taking that title? Your result is coming up plus the idols’ idols perform and a shocking crime time revelation about Simon Cowell. After the break.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Welcome back to American Idol, live in Hollywood! It is crime time. The website is waiting for you, the details of all the American Idols merchandise. So you can log on idolonfox.com. You can also get details on a live summer tour. It sells fast. We are adding more dates, plus the cherry single has been No. 1 for over a month. And the show stop results debuted at the No. 6. They are some of the best singers in the country. Unlike some can test in this year. Take a look at this.

Video of the Top 10 worst.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Can you dig it? If you think you can do better than them, prove it. We are in audition in the summer for season five. Look at Austin, Denver, Memphis, Boston, and Atlanta, San Diego and Chicago. We are coming your way. Maybe we will find someone talented as Adam and Dirk.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Say hello to Adam and Dirk. Ladies and Gentlemen! There they are. Hey, guys. And Dirk. We can make your dream come true as well here in the American Idol. There is an empty seat beside you. Can we fill out that seat? Let you judge, can we fill that? Ok, so have a seat. We will take a break. More will come on Idol. Simon counts on darkest secret reviewed, and an especial explorse plus George Benson, Billy Preston, Baby Face, Kenny G, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Rascal Flatts, Lynyrd Skynyrd. Of course Hasselhoff is here. Result is on the way coming up!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Welcome back to American Idol live in the Kodak. I am sure all of you know I do not have any result without certain degree of controversy of this season. And I am afraid it is only getting worse. You won’t believe what you are about to see. Take a look.

Video of Bad judgment.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: We know it. Hope you guys happy together.

Simon Cowell: We are very happy.
Host-Ryan Seacrest: Thanks to the wonderful editing by Randy Jackson and Paula Abdul. A man with secret world. Friends stay with us because after the break, we bring up the finalists with their very own idols, the all star group takes stage after this. Hang on.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Back with the Idol live. This Sunday on Fox, it is the Coke’s 600 in Charlotte Carolina. I will be there with some idols hanging out. Make sure you tune in. We are minutes away from the results. But we put the word out to the industry that the finalists want to perform with their own idols. We were overwhelmed with the response. What you about to see is pure chemistry. Give it up for your finalists with the all star medalists starting with Carrie and Rascal Flatts.

Carrie and Rascal Flatts perform.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Next give it up for Anthony and Edward with Mr. Kenny G

Anthony, Edward and Kenny G perform.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Ladies and gentlemen,Constantine, Jessica, Nadia, and Kenny Wayne Shepherd!

Constantine, Jessica, Nadia, and Kenny Wayne Shepherd perform.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Next, please welcome Scott Savol and Nikko Smith with George Benson!

Scott Savol, and Nikko Smith and George Benson perform.


Vonzell Solomon and Billy Preston perform.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Now Lindsey Cardinale and Mikalah Gordon joined by Baby Face!

Lindsey Cardinale, Mikalah Gordon and Baby Face perform.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: And finally please welcome Bo Bice with who else but Lynyrd Skynyrd!

Bo Bice and Lynyrd Skynyrd perform.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Awesome guys! Awesome! Thank you all for being here!
Fantastic and incredible! We will be enjoying that! Pretty cool, ah? You get that Bice. Bo Bice: It is awesome.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Coming up is the moment we have all been waiting for. Who is your next American Idol? Results after this break live!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Welcome back to the show live in the Hollywood. It is the moment this season has been building to. Just a remainder, what stays care. The record contract, a whole group of new friends, and here is something else amazing. Waiting for the winner is this, Marquis Jet card! It will get the lucky winner access to the own personal private jet. It is coming for one of you in just a moment. Now before the result, judges, final thought, last word. Randy Jackson, go ahead!

Randy Jackson: Good lucky to both of you, Man. I am just so pride that you guys are standing there in the most amazing season for us. To me, and we say this all the time, both of you guys are definitely winners. Great job! Great competition! Good luck!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Paula, I know you love them both. Go ahead.

Paula Abdul: I do. I love you both very much. You made my job such a pleasure one. I love sitting in my seat, ruling the two of you on. I can not wait to be the first one get your record, also buy a ticket to see your performance.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: And the closer, Simon Cowell.

Simon Cowell: I would like to hold this rally. I would like to congratulate America once again to getting the absolute right here.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Now, the results are kept very secretly. Let me introduce Edward Boddington, the president of Telescope, the voting management company that ministers the largest phone voting system in the world. Here is Edward, ladies and gentlemen. And Edward, I believe you broke the record this season. Is that right?

Edward Boddington: Yes indeed, we have run for this season we received over five hundred million votes. That is a staggering record of four billion.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Incredible support. You have the results?

Edward Boddington: I do indeed.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Can I have the envelop, please? Thank you. Carrie, Bo, let me slide in. Congratulations to the both of you for being here on the stage right now. One of you is about to make television history. Here we go. The winner of American Idol
2005 is Carrie Underwood!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Congratulations, Carrie. You win!

Carrie Underwood: Thank you so much!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: Ladies and gentlemen, Bo Bice!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: How are you? Are you okay?

Carrie Underwood: I am… Thank you!

Host-Ryan Seacrest: That is it, America. Carrie Underwood is your new American Idol. Ladies and gentlemen, we have three for you right now. This is the single should be released on June 14. Can you do it?

Carrie Underwood: I do not know.

Host-Ryan Seacrest: They really want to hear you do it. Inside Your Heaven, here she is, your idol, Carrie Underwood.

Carrie Underwood performs.

Carrie Underwood: Thank you America!
Appendix B

Transcripts of Finale Show of Super Girl 2005

Opening: The theme song, Sing when wanting to sing, by the three finalists-Li Yuchun, Zhou Bichang, Zhang Liangying

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you, thank you. Thank three final candidates. Thank our young friends. Thank you.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you for the hard work.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you for the hard work. Thank you.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Dear audience, you are watching Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl Final Contest in live. I’m the hostess Li Xiang.

Host-Wang Han: Hello everyone! I am not an ordinary host.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Why are you special?

Host-Wang Han: I am schoolboy Wang Han. Hello everyone!

Hostess-Li Xiang: It is a happy day as all are paying attention to this contest for the annual 3 finalists.

Host-Wang Han: To be honest, after several months contest, these girls on the stage truly continue exceeding themselves.

Hostess-Li Xiang: That is right; continue to exceed their voices, singing techniques. I feel the most important is they can feel the affection of the thousands of audience in front of the TV sets.

Host-Wang Han: You are right. The passion of the television audience is extraordinary. The extent arouses our envy.

Hostess-Li Xiang: We are proud of them, aren’t we?

Host-Wang Han: Therefore they will present their best to thank the friends on spot.
Hostess-Li Xiang: Right. Let’s review this year’s Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl previous contests.

Programme Review

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thanks. Thank all super girls. Thank all girls who participated in the contest. With your excellent performance, the Super Girl Programme has attracted so much attention.

Host-Wang Han: Yes, now it is time for the last contest. To Li Xiang and me, it is not important to find out who will the champion, runner-up and the third place. What is the important is to take such an opportunity to thank every spectator who is supporting us.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes, the finalists will send out more and more beautiful music in the last contest to all the people who like you very much. I assume you three on tonight’s stage, must want to share your innermost thoughts and feelings with all. Let’s welcome Liangying first.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Actually I have never thought that I could stay on at this stage till today. I know every girl participating in the Super Girl has a dream at heart. They try their best for their dreams. I know the one who can win must do their best, so I believe all the girls have done their best, even those who were great but left the stage. Please support all the super girls.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. Zhou Bichang.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: It is not easy to stand on this stage. It is not 3 of us standing here but many super girls together. We should applaud to encourage them and my fans. I would like to say what I have said before “I love you!”

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thanks, Zhou Bichang. Li Yuchun, Chunchun.

Host-Wang Han: Li Yuchun

Singer-Li Yuchun: I think the previous two are both beautiful. It is so easy for me to stand here today. It is my fortune to sing for you. I have made many friends who will also be most valuable friends. God-given. Thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank our three super girls. Meanwhile we would like to encourage the audience friends who are watching the programme to vote to support your favorite super girl. Thank the three super girls again. Please take a rest and be prepared. Thanks.
Host-Wang Han: Thanks. The reason why the Super Girls stage is so flowery and charming is not only because the three super girls, but also because so many lovely girls who once blossomed on this stage and are present today.

Hostess-Li Xiang: You are right. They are the representatives from the five audition regions. We welcome you.

Host-Wang Han: Welcome.

Hostess-Li Xiang: What beautiful scenery! They will cheer up for our three contestants later. We also have with us today the judges from the five audition regions who are beloved by our audience and our director. Welcome!

Host-Wang Han: Welcome you! It will be the last judge.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes. It is a get-together. Shall we ask the judge representative to speak? First of all, Mr. He. Would you please?

Judge: He Jiong: I am here. It is not easy to find me such a small guy as there are so many people. I would like to say to our three young friends not to be influenced by the big scene. Today is the last competition. The stage will become bigger and you will face more people in the future. We are here to listen to your marvelous voice. Friends present today, let’s cheer them up with our highest zest, don’t we? Thank you all.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you Mr. He. Mr. Chang Kuan?

Judge-Chang Kuan: I am late and only have one chance, this last chance to listen to their music. I hope they three share a same goal which to spurt to the championship! I support all three.

Host-Wang Han: Thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Mr. Xia!

Judge-Xia Qing: All the wishes have been said. I hope they can all perform gracefully. I would also like to wish them a big success in their first concert in Chengdu on October 1.

Hostess-Li Xiang: It will be a success! Thanks. Mr. Hu?

Judge-Hu Mage: It seems like I am attending their commencement. It is very
ceremonious. Each super girl graduates with an excellent performance. I hope they could produce more CDs, good CDs in the future. Thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thanks. The judges will give each of them comments shortly. There are two director of this program, Wang Ping and Ye Hua. Let’s give them more applause, alright? They work very hard.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. We also would like to thank the greffiers from Changsha Public Notary Office who will notarize the whole process.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you for notarization.

Hostess-Li Xiang: We also set up a special arrangement-request programme.

Host-Wang Han: It is a very interesting interactive programme. Audience in front of TV sets can send us text messages to request the super girl you support to sing songs.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Right. For instance, if you like Zhang Liangying, we can select three fans to talk with Zhang Liangying directly who can also ask Zhang Liangying to sing songs. It applies to Zhou Bichang and Li Yuchun. So send your messages to support them now.

Host-Wang Han: I want to send messages!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Next, let’s listen to the beautiful music to be brought by our super girls. First of all, Li Yuchun please!

Li Yuchun sings *Folk song is as beautiful as the river in Spring*.

Zhang Liangying sings *Pick areca nuts*.

Zhou Bichang sings *Youth Dance*.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thanks. Thank for the orphean folk music brought by three contestants.

Host-Wang Han: Yes. If you are moved by their music, please change into action and vote for them.

Hostess-Li Xiang: That’s right. Our decisions today on the first place, second place and the third place will be made by the voting from off-spot audience. Please make best use of your time to send a vote to support your favorite contestant.
Host-Wang Han: The number of votes is important and time is short.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let us take a break. See you after the advertisement.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Welcome back. You are watching live broadcasting Happy China 2005 Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl Finale.

Host-Wang Han: Yes, behind us are very lovely super girls from several audition regions.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Right. They will not experience to be judged by the public as in the past. Today you can feel relaxed. Come and support your favorite super girls.

Host-Wang Han: Let us interview them. To tell you the truth, when we interviewed those super girls, many people said we had plotted it in advance. Today to show you that it is not pre-arranged, let’s specially select one who is now holding a microphone.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hahaha… Please let us know which audition region you are from.

Losing Super Girl Xia Ying: Hello Everyone! I am a Chongqing girl from Zhengzhou audition area. I am Xia Ying.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Today we have three finalists. Who would you like to support?

Xia Ying: I would like to present doggerel for Chunchun. Hope her can make good performance tonight.

Xia Ying: Sing out loud when you want to sing; Chun from Chongqing is the only one in the world; Chun is the Odyssey on top of the Forbidden City.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Good! After hearing your doggerel, I believe many audience in front of the TV will pick up their cell phones and send out messages to Li Yuchun. Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let’s call another one.

Host-Wang Han: See if this one is also poetic.

Losing super girl Sun Yixi: Hello Everyone! I am Sun Yixi from Guangzhou Audition Area.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Who would you like to support?
Sun Yixi: Of course, my favorite Bibi.

Hostess-Li Xiang: It is Zhou Bichang. How will you cheer for her?

Sun Yixi: As Bibi is from Guangzhou Audition Area, I especially prepare the wishes in Cantonese.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Ah, using Cantonese!

Host-Wang Han: Also my show time too.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Alright, would you please translate it?

Host-Wang Han: No problem for sure.
(Sun Yixi speaks in Cantonese.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. Let’s invite Mr. Wang to translate it.

Host-Wang Han: Dear friends, the paragraph in Cantonese can be simply translated as beside Zhou Bichang sings better, the hosts she likes best are two of us.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Eh??

Host-Wang Han: You and I play a great role in her life. The reason for her to like us is also because we are very handy on the stage.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Stop! Stop! Stop!

Host-Wang Han: Why?

Hostess-Li Xiang: It is not as you translated. She actually linked all the names of the songs Zhou Bichang has sung to express her wishes and hope everyone could support her.

Host-Wang Han: Sounds like you do understand Cantonese.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Actually I asked her before hand about how she was going to support Bibi. Anyway, we shall thank you.

Host-Wang Han: Thank Sun Yixi for her wishes.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Why not we invite another one?
Host-Wang Han: Let’s welcome Dingding from Hangzhou Area.

Dingding: Hello Everyone!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Dingding, who would you like to support?

Dingding: I would like to support Zhang Liangying.

Hostess-Li Xiang: In what way?

Dingding: The only sentence I would like to say to her is nothing can stop you, nothing can stop us (in English). I would also like to sing a small piece.

Dingding sings *You make us more wonderful*.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Beautiful. Thank you. We also hope these three contestants make an extra effort as so many people are supporting you.

Host-Wang Han: For that, let us leave this stage to them so they can sing from the bottom of their heart to thank everyone.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, first of all, let’s invite Zhang Liangying to perform.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Sing English song *What’s up*. (Fans present dolls)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you Zhang Liangying. Isn’t it beautiful?
Fans: Bravo!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let’s invite her fans to canvass for her. Who would like to come?

A young man: I would like to do it.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Come, handsome young man. Stand besides Zhang Liangying. Let me ask you. What is your name?

The Young man: My surname is Zhang, the same as Zhang Liangying.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhang as Zhang Liangying?

The young man: Yes, Zhang Yi.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhang Yi. You are really a family. Well, let me ask you what you think of Zhang Liangying?
The fan: I think Liangying is a warm and kind-hearted girl. One night last week, a fan from Heilongjiang celebrated his birthday. I sent Liangying a message secretly. She didn’t reply at that time. I thought she was too busy. However, half an hour later, the doorbell rang. When I opened the door, Liangying showed up with a big birthday cake singing *happy birthday*.

Hostess-Li Xiang: She gave you a big surprise.

The fan: Yes, we were all moved. Liangying often says to us that she felt happy to have us as her fans. Here we would like to say to her that we feel happier to have you.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Thank you!

Hostess-Li Xiang: When they just spoke, I found a detail that their eyes were all clouding.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: very touching!

The fan: I would like to suggest to all the fans of Liangying that we shout together that “Liangying is the treasure in our hearts.” (All fans followed.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thanks. Then how are you going to motivate the audience in front of the TV to vote for her?

The fan: I know many friends before TV appreciate Liangying silently. They haven’t really voted for her. I think it is the time to show our affection. We would like to antiphonally sing *The Warm Dessert* with Liangying.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Great! Let’s welcome.

(The fan and Zhang Liangying sing.)

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Thank you!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you! Take a good rest. Let’s remind the audience before the TV. Please seize time to vote for Zhang Liangying. We also hope Zhang Liangying can present more beautiful music to those who adore you so much, all right?

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Yes.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Next, let’s welcome Zhou Bichang to sing for us.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Sing *Black Humor*. 
(Fans present flowers.)

Host-Wang Han: Robot Cat No. 1 and 2 met. Let me hold this for you. She is Robot Cat No. 3. We just had many fans to cheer up for Liangying. Now we would like to introduce a fan of Bichang. How are you? What is your surname?
A male fan: My surname is Yi.

Host-Wang Han: Why not Zhou? Would you like to consider it? (Asking Zhou Bichang) Do you know him?

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Not very much.

Host-Wang Han: Looks familiar but can’t remember?

(Singer-Zhou Bichang shakes her head.)

Host-Wang Han: She doesn’t remember you. Now you should let us know. How did you know Zhou Bichang?

The male fan: Actually we knew each other when we were very little.

Host-Wang Han: Think hard...many years ago…

The fan: Your face was round and you had two pigtails.

Host-Wang Han: Her face was round then. She doesn’t have pointed chin now. Then?

The fan: Her skin was bit dark.

Host-Wang Han: What is more?

The fan: She liked to follow me all the time.

Host-Wang Han: You still can’t remember such a person? Think again!

The fan: However, she liked to cry. Then I caught some cicadas, crickets for her. She would smile seeing them.

Host-Wang Han: He once caught you crickets and sang songs with you. You still can’t remember him?

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Yes, a bit impression.
Host-Wang Han: What is his name? Don’t disappoint me.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Eh…

The fan: I bring you a katydid today. Hope you like it as you did when you were little.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Ah…Thank you.

Host-Wang Han: Has it reminded you of him? Which brother? Say it aloud bravely, tell us his name is. Whatever you call him, we can change his real name accordingly. Which brother?

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Brother Feifei.

Host-Wang Han: Brother Feifei. It is him!

Host-Wang Han: now you remember the play pal of your childhood, don’t you?

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Eh…

Host-Wang Han: You never thought he would come.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: We haven’t seen each other for many years.

Host-Wang Han: Not seeing him for many years, you find his chin becomes pointed?

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Haha…

Host-Wang Han: He had a round face then. You saw that Qianying and her fans sang songs together. Let’s call for more votes for Bichang in our own ways, don’t we, Brother Feifei?

The fan: I bring a song today to help Bichang to win more supporters.

Host-Wang Han: Great!

The fan: Sing, if you like Bichang. Please clap your hands…

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Thank you.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you, Brother Feifei. Thank you also for lovely Bichang’s wonderful performance. Next, let us invite Li Yuchun. Please.
Singer-Li Yuchun: Sing Maria. (The fans presents her flowers.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you Li Yuchun. Ah… flowers.

Singer-Li Yuchun: Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let me especially introduce the microphone stand to you.

Host-Wang Han: I am holding this stand to make us three look more harmonious while standing side by side.

Hostess-Li Xiang: This stand has a very special meaning.

Singer-Li Yuchun: It is given by my sister. Usually the stand is a tripod. However, it is not very convenient for me to play. So she visited many shops in Changsha.

Host-Wang Han: Finally she went to the weightlifting team and got a barbell. She took off the weight at one end then brought the remaining part here as microphone stand.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Your sister also hopes you could perform well today.

Host-Wang Han: Right.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Next, let’s invite a representative from the fans group of Li Yuchun. Who would like to come? A grandma.

Host-Wang Han: How are you? Please come here, among us.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Grandma, may I ask how old you are?

The fan: I am 74.

Hostess-Li Xiang: You look like in your 40s, very young.

Host-Wang Han: Grandma, where are you from?

The fan: Shanghai.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Grandma, what is your name?

The Fan: My surname is Xia, like summer. My given name is Wu, like arms.
Hostess-Li Xiang: I would like to ask why you like Li Yuchun, Grandma Xia?

The fan: I took 10:40 am flight to come here this morning as I would like to see her, my favorite Yuchun as she is in a good taste and looks very natural. And she looks like sunshine, very young, handsome, and terrific.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Grandma Xia, can you sing Yuchun’s song?

The fan: a little bit.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Why don’t you sing for us, alright?

Host-Wang Han: Sing as you wish.

The fan: I would like to sing *there is only you in my heart*. Let’s sing together.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you Grandma. What is in your hand?

The fan: a gift. The Zongzi (Chinese sticky rice food) I made.

Hostess-Li Xiang: The Zongzi you made. Let’s take a look. Thank you very much.

Host-Wang Han: Grandma, do you have any wishes for Yuchun?

The fan: I would like her to call me Grandma.

Host-Wang Han: Well, let’s count, One, Two, Three

Singer-Li Yuchun: Grandma!

Host-Wang Han: Grandma! To add another pleasure, I would like to call you Grandma!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Grandma! Thank you! Let’s give another hand to thank Grandma for her support to Li Yuchun. Thank you Grandma! Please take a rest.

Host-Wang Han: See you later.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, we would also want to thank all the audience before TV for their support to Yuchun. Please seize your time to send messages to support her. Thank Li Yuchun again. Let’s take a rest.
Host-Wang Han: You have worked very hard. Please take some Zongzi.

Host-Wang Han: The hall is full of warmth and happiness.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes. It is because of the excellence performance of these super girls that our programme has attracted so much attention from the general public and becomes a hot topic at their leisure.

Host-Wang Han: Lots of people chat about our programme.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes. Let’s take a look at what they are discussing now.

(Promotional spot of audience amateurs’ performance: the fans one by one expressed their support to their favorite singers and this show.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thanks. The super girls sing as they wish. We would like to thank all the audience watching our show on TV. With your care and support, our programme shall be such meaningful.

Host-Wang Han: Every time when I watch the replay of these short promotions, I always feel sweet and warm. All work on the stage and behind the scene becomes so worth doing.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Worthwhile. We also invite the super girl from last competition to sing and cheer the three finalists up.

Host-Wang Han: Let’s give Zhang Hanyun a big hand. Please.

2004 super girl Zhang Hanyun: Good evening! Thank you for coming to the finale of the Super Girl. Hope you had a happy day and they had awesome performance. Thanks.

Singer-Zhang Hanyun: Perform *Sour and Sweet is me*.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you lovely Hanyun.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. Cheer up! Next, let’s draw big prizes for the audience not present here. Let the big screen roll first.

Host-Wang Han: Let’s see who will win. Three, two, one, Stop!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Stop!
Host-Wang Han: Ahya, it is a friend from Shanghai, the same city where Grandma comes. Cell phone starts with 136 and ending with 5611. Another winner is a friend from Jilin, 135 ending with 0972.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Congratulations! Thank you for all your support for all super girls. Well, let’s take a rest. More beautiful music is waiting for you shortly. See you later.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Welcome back. You are watching live broadcasting Happy China 2005 Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl Finale.

Host-Wang Han: Just now we had the finalists and their fans to interact very well, which makes us feel the affection between them are getting deeper every day.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Today, beside the relative groups coming to support, we also have two old artists to be present and cheer our contestants up.

Host-Wang Han: Let’s give a big hand to the two famous old artists. Master Ma Yutao and Master Huang Wanqiu please.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Welcome. Hello Master Ma and Master Huang. Please step forward. Let’s first talk with Master Ma. We have three contestants today for the Super Girl Finale. Do you have any wishes for them?

Guest Ma Yutao: I wish them hit the book and make the progress everyday! Perform well.

Host-Wang Han: Our Master Huang brings embroidered balls. Who are you going to throw the balls to?

Guest Huang Wanqiu: I am very happy to attend today’s Super Girl show. The programme is very popular and will have great impact. I would like to present these embroidered balls to our three contestants. I wish them good performance.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Good!

Host-Wang Han: In this circumstance, let’s invite the three contestants to the stage, alright?

Huang Wanqiu put the embroidered balls on each girl. (Fans cheer for the contestants.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. We would like to give three contestants a learning opportunity. Learn to sing from the two masters. Isn’t it good?
Host-Wang Han: Yes, the music which made them famous.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, the first song is Master Ma’s *Horses, you walk slowly*. This song won universal praise. Many people can sing. What was the situation then? Would you like to introduce it to us?

Guest Ma Yutao: The song was composed for a gentleman at the first. He was a baritone and couldn’t sing the alt. Our director asked me to try. I sang and completed the whole music. The first time I performed this song in Zhongshan Music Hall, I remember audience applauded right after I finished the first sentence. I was shocked so I sang a wrong world. So audience liked the music right away till now. It was 1960s.

Host-Wang Han: It has been performed for over 40 years and is still young.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes. Today our three contestants shall learn from Master Ma.

Host-Wang Han: Get ready.

Hostess-Li Xiang: First of all, please perform this song together.

Ma Yutao and three contestants sing together.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you Master Ma.

Host-Wang Han: Master Ma, a good sword never gets dull.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Absolutely, you can hear the applause from the beginning of her singing.

Host-Wang Han: It hasn’t been changed over the years that applauses follow whenever you open your mouth. Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: There are flowers.

Host-Wang Han: Master Huang’s gorgeous performance in the movie *Liu Sanjie* attracted audience the most. People at that time looked for girlfriends just like the image of Liu Sanjie.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Master Huang, you still look so young and charming.

Host-Wang Han: Correct. Generally, after so many good words, the embroidered ball will come to my neck automatically. Don’t you believe?
Host-Wang Han: (Look down) Master Huang put a ball around his neck.

Hostess-Li Xiang: She meant to send the balls to the audience.

Host-Wang Han: Is it the case? The famous music brought by Master Huang called “only folk songs for relatives” is well-known by every family. Please sing with Master Huang.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Please learn together.

Guest Huang and three contestants sing Only folk songs for relatives.

Host-Wang Han: Master Huang, let’s send the embroidered balls your brought from far away to the audience, shouldn’t we?

Master Huang: Throw balls to audience.

Host-Wang Han: After listening to the famous music, I really feel “Yesterday once more,” which is really good.

Hostess-Li Xiang: We feel specially gratitude for two masters to come to the present and cheer for our contestants. Many seniors and experts have also sent their wishes although they can not come. Let’s take a look together.

Short clip entitled super girls in old artists’ eyes show praises from Deng Yuhua, Qiao Yu, Meng Qingyun, Hu Songhua, Wang Kun, Li Guangxi, Zang Yunfei.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. Super Girls, sing as you wish. Thank you for all the seniors, all the old famous artists. I believe your words will be recorded in every super girl’s heart, encouraging them to be super girls in real sense.

Host-Wang Han: We will share these words from old artists with all the super girls, our colleagues working before and behind the scenes. We will contribute to better programmers on this stage to return to the love and support our numerous friends have given us.

Hostess-Li Xiang: You are right. Next, let’s invite the three super girls to sing Half of the moon climbing up. Please.

Three singers perform Half of the moon climbing up.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank our three lovely super girls. Flowers are coming. Be careful.
Host-Wang Han: No place for more flowers. They can be put on me.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Half of our programme has passed. We would like to give three contestants another chance to speak to the audience to gain support. Hope the audience before the TV will give more support. Come, Liangying comes first.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Actually I would like to repeat my words. All girls participating in the Super Girls contest are great. There are more girls who can’t participate are trying their best to realize their dreams. Support should go to all who do their best. I would like to sing a song mentioned by Brother Wang Han Yesterday once more. Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Excellent. Next, Zhou Bichang.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: I would also like to repeat my previous comments. Although I am not the best, I will continue to sing with my heart, now and in future.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Would you like to sing a few sentences?

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Sing? Alright. I would like to sing I am willing to do for you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Bravo. Next Li Yuchun.

Singer-Li Yuchun: I have put up with a lot since the beginning of the contest. I always remember what Judge Chang Kuan said to me-stick to your primary dream. I will like to sing out my dream to you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Great!

Host-Wang Han: Great!

Li Yuchun performs I am bitter but tender....

Hostess-Li Xiang: Again, vote for your favorite.

(Fans call the names of their favorite singers respectively.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Alright! Alright! Thank you! Be quiet. Let me speak out what is in your mind. Support Zhang Liangying! Support our Bibi! Support our Li Yuchun!

Host-Wang Han: Vote for them.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Vote for them. Next, let’s take a break. After the commercial, we
will come back. See you later.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Welcome back. You are watching live broadcasting Happy China 2005 Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl Finale. I believe the audience before the TV is anxiously waiting. Next we will have more interaction.

Host-Wang Han: We will find 3 audience before the TV to select songs for three contestants to perform.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Every supporting group will have 3 quotes. For instance, all fans of Zhang Liangying will have 3 representatives.

Host-Wang Han: Really?

Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhou Bichang will have 3 supporters, as well as Li Yuchun. They can come and ask them to sing specific songs so we can have enough music to enjoy.

Host-Wang Han: Therefore we will no longer wait everybody’s time.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let’s first draw three lucky audience from Zhang Liangying’s fans. Zhang Liangying, tell us when to stop.

Host-Wang Han: Stop.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, well, well…

Host-Wang Han: The first is from Jiangsu whose cell phone number starts with 138 and ends with 9450.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let’s dial this friend’s number to listen to her voice. Hello? How are you?

The Fan Miss Li: How are you?

Hostess-Li Xiang: What’s your surname please?

The Fan Miss Li: My surname is Li. I am watching your programme.

Hostess-Li Xiang: What would you like to talk to Zhang Liangying?

The fan: I would like to tell Yingying “I like you so much and I support you.”

Hostess-Li Xiang: Support you. What would you like Zhang Liangying to sing for
you on the stage?

The fan: How many songs can she sing? Can she sing more?

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, this question we shall ask Zhang Liangying. Would you like to sing more songs for them?

The fan: The song I like most is Don’t cry for me Argentina. Would you like to sing it for me? For all the fans?

Host-Wang Han: Good!

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Fine.

Zhang Liangying performs Don’t cry for me Argentina! in English.

The Fan Miss Li: Wonderful!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you! Thank you!

Host-Wang Han: The reaction she had after the song made me believe she stepped on the cat’s tail. Screaming!

The fan: I like it so much. I will support you forever. I will always stand on your side.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you Miss Li. Let’s dial the second friend. Hello! How are you? This is Super Girl show. Are you a supporter of Zhang Liangying?

A male fan: Yes, I am very happy as today is my 30th birthday.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Happy Birthday!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Happy Birthday!

Host-Wang Han: What a coincident!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, would you like to say something to Zhang Liangying? It is not easy to get you.

The fan: I have a big bunch of friends gathering for my birthday. I specially support Zhang Liangying. We also wish she could win tonight.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Excellent!
The Fan: Could I make a wish?

Hostess-Li Xiang: What song would you like Zhang Liangying to sing for you now?

The fan: Since today is my birthday, I hope Zhang Liangying would sing the most popular song.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, Come! Zhang Liangying!

The fan: Thank you.

(As the hostess didn’t hear the name of the song, she requested it again.)

Host-Wang Han: Did you get it? Well, ready, begin…

Hostess-Li Xiang: Not exactly. Haha…

(Zhang Liangying performs the episode of an English song.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. Now we will have the third friend. Let’s seize time to listen to her voice.

The fan from Jiangxi: Hello?

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hello! How are you? I am Li Xiang.

The fan: Hello! Are you Wang Han?

Host-Wang Han: Yes, I am her partner. How are you?

Hostess-Li Xiang: Would you like to say something to Zhang Liangying?

The fan: Liangying, I am your fan from Jiangxi.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Fan from Jiangxi.

The fan: My line is connected?

Host-Wang Han: Yes!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes, what song would you like to order?

The fan: I like many of her songs. What can I do?
Hostess-Li Xiang: You can only ask for one song.

The fan: I would like her to sing *I still believe*.

Host-Wang Han: Come on! Ready? Begin.

Zhang Liangying performs *I still believe* in English.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Beautiful. Thank you.

The fan: Liangying, could I also speak to you?

Hostess-Li Xiang: What would you like to say?

The fan: I would like to wish her a great success. Liangying Liangying, I wish you become as outstanding as the brightest star tonight just as your name indicates. (Fans present flowers.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. It was this friend who presented flowers some time ago. Let’s give her a chance to say a few words.

The fan: Here are 99 blue roses delivered by air from Kunming during last evening. They represent the eternal love of our fans to Liangying. Please support No. 1 contestant Zhang Liangying.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you. Next is Zhou Bichang’s turn. Let’s roll the numbers. Please.

Host-Wang Han: Please say stop.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Please.

Host-Wang Han: Hubei, Guizhou and Hainan Provinces.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Please let’s dial the friend from Hubei.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hello, how are you?

Host-Wang Han: Hello, how are you?
Hostess-Li Xiang: What’s your surname please?

The fan: My name is Liang.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hello Miss Liang. What would you like to talk to Zhou Bichang?

The fan: I have lots of words I want to tell.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Please just a few words as we have limited time. Thank you.

The fan: My family and I like them very much. My cousin, my younger aunt and I are watching your programme. They also want to say something.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Everyone wants to say a word. Let’s do this. You find a representative.

Host-Wang Han: You might want to represent. Let’s count One, Two, Three.

The fan’s cousin: Let me say a few words. I am her cousin.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Her cousin is online.

Host-Wang Han: We are talking to her cousin now.

The fan’s cousin: I would like to tell Bichang, no matter the results of today’s contest, I believe her road to music will never end. I will support her forever.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Thank you.

Host-Wang Han: Well, you are given a chance to invite Bichang to sing a song for you.

The fan’s cousin: I really love Bibi’s music. I like many of her songs. Today I hope she could sing *Melody* for all her fans, including my family and my sister.

Zhou Bichang performs *Melody*.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Wonderful. Next, let’s connect the second friend.

Host-Wang Han: From Shanghai.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hello, how are you?
The fan: How are you hostess?

Hostess-Li Xiang: What would you like to say to Bibi?

The fan: First of all, I am from Guiyang, Guizhou Province.

Host-Wang Han: Guiyang Guizhou, then Hainan.

The fan: I would like to tell Bibi I have no way to dislike you as you sing in such a relaxing and casual way while grasping the essence of the pieces. Most important is I respect your comprehension of the music. Your singing completely touches me.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: Thank you.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you. At this moment, what would you like Zhou Bichang to sing for you?

The fan: Could I call the music I can sing if I can?

Hostess-Li Xiang: You sing?

The fan: Yes, I sing.

Hostess-Li Xiang: You would like to sing? Fine, let him sing.

The fan performs *I appreciate*.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhou Bichang sings with him.

(Zhou Bichang does so.)

Host-Wang Han: His voice is beautiful.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Ya…

Host-Wang Han: I doubt if we made a wrong call to Tao Zhe. It is really good.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Sing as you wish.

Host-Wang Han: Next is a friend from Hainan.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let’s connect him.
The fan: Hello? How are you?

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hello?

The fan from Hainan: Is it really our family? It was a pity last time.

Host-Wang Han: What did you say last time?

The fan: I told you our two year old son likes Zhou Bichang very much. He is asleep. However, we have recorded the whole programme. I have a small special request.

Host-Wang Han: What request?

The fan: Before ordering the music, I would like to sing on my son’s behalf if I may.

The Fan performs *Count ducks*.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hahaha… You sang very well.

The fan: I would like to tell you, you are the best. All Hainan fans support you forever. I would like to hear *Relief* or *Ordinary friends*.

Host-Wang Han: Relief. Good, ready, start.

Zhou Bichang performs *Relief*.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Great. Thank you.

The fan: Bibi, when you visit Haikou, would you please come to our home?

Host-Wang Han: Fine. She will.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Next, let’s talk to the next friend.

Hostess-Li Xiang: How are you?

Host-Wang Han: Now let’s connect Yuchun’s fans as we just finished connecting Bichang’s three fans.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Good.

Host-Wang Han: Please roll the big screen. Yuchuan, you call stop when you are ready.
Singer-Li Yuchun: Three, Two, One. Stop.

Host-Wang Han: Stop. They are from Human, Chongqing and Guangdong.

Hostess-Li Xiang: First of all, let’s listen to the friend from Human.

The fan: Hello?

Hostess-Li Xiang: How are you? What’s your name?

The fan from Hunan: How are you? My name is Zhang.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Miss Zhang, what would you like to say to Yuchun?

The fan: I am so happy so glad.

Hostess-Li Xiang: We all feel that.

The fan: I am so nervous and trembling.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Take it easy.

The fan: You look so handsome tonight!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Very handsome!

The Host-Wang Han: Yes, she is.

The fan: Her handsomeness is very pure and heart-killing.

Host-Wang Han: You are right. Don’t worry and don’t be thrilled. You can talk while leaning on the wall. Ok, what would you like her to sing for you?

The fan: I like many of her music for instance the song she sang in Chengdu Area.

(The host asked Li Yuchun which song. Li Yuchun said *Eyes like yours.*)

The fan: Eyes like yours is my favorite. I like the *Women's heart* too.

Host-Wang Han: Wait, we will present the song from Chengdu Area to her.

Li Yuchun performs *Eyes like yours* in English.
Hostess-Li Xiang: Terrific. Thank you. Let’s talk to the second.

Host-Wang Han: The second friend is from Chongqing.

The fan: I am from Chongqing.

Hostess-Li Xiang: You are connected well.

The fan: I am on.

Hostess-Li Xiang: How are you? What would you like to say to Yuchun?

Host-Wang Han: What would you like to say? (Speak in Sichuan dialect).

The fan: Yuchun, from the mass selection at the beginning to now, I am familiar with every piece of your music. I would like to tell you in particular that stick to your music dream as you said. In the hearts of your fans, you are always the best.

Singer-Li Yuchun: Thanks.

Host-Wang Han: Would you like her to sing?

Hostess-Li Xiang: What music?

The fan: I would like to hear Zombie which Yuchun sang at the 7 out of 10 contest in Chengdu Area.

Host-Wang Han: You remembered so clearly.

The fan: Nobody knows better than I.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Alright, Let’s listen to it.

Host-Wang Han: Ready?

Li Yuchun performs Zombie in English.

The fan: So pleasant!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you! Thank you!

Host-Wang Han: Next let’s dial the last number which is from Guangdong.
The fan from Shenzhen: Hello, I am from Shenzhen.

Host-Wang Han: Hello friend from Shenzhen.

Hostess-Li Xiang: What would you like to say to Yuchun?

The fan: First of all, I would like to say “How are you Yuchun?”

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you.

The fan: I am too excited.

Host-Wang Han: We are too.

The fan: I even doubt about my own voice.

Hostess-Li Xiang: It is your voice. We hear it clearly.

The fan: Hello! I would like to say to Chunchun that the Super Girl stage becomes attractive because of your voice and vivid because of your dance…because you are…I haven’t finished.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Not finished yet. Well, please keep quiet my friends.

The fan: You are the one whose smile is brightest and voice loudest.

Singer-Li Yuchun: Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: What song would you like to hear from Yuchun?

The fan: I would like to hear Come on over Baby, blue Sky, and there is only you in my heart. However, the most I would like to hear is Women’s heart.

Host-Wang Han: Yuchun will bring it to you.

Li Yuchun performs Women’s heart in English.

(Fans step on the stage to present Li Yuchun various gifts.)

Singer-Li Yuchun: Thanks!

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you! Thank all the audience.
Host-Wang Han: Thanks. I have no words to say.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, we would like again to thank the audience who are not present here today, and our three super girls for so many beautiful music you provided us.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Besides the episode we had just now, we prepare another special episode. We the special task force departed. See where we send the music. Let’s watch together.

Aside: With Super Girl getting more and more attention, we increasingly receive letters and gifts. Audience’s passion, expectation and wishes are passed on through this kind of delivery. A particular letter attracted our attention among the piles of letters. A lead nurse introduced us a young patient named Pan Tiantian. She is a super fan of Super Girl who is fighting against the disease. Her strength, braveness and optimism deeply touch us. The lead nurse would like super girls to send this young patient a song. Therefore, we left for the hospital to visit Tiantian suffering from the pain and bring her surprise at the same time. We found the lead nurse who wrote to us in the hospital. Led by her, we came to the ward of Tiantian.

The lead nurse: Tiantian, come! come! Uncle comes to see you.

Aside: Tiantian is having her intravenous drip but happy to receive our interview. As introduced by the lead nurse, she is absolutely a Super Girl fan.

Tiantian: I like it very much, extremely addicted. I watch every contest. The Super Girl as a platform gives many girls chances to show their talents. As every girl likes to sing, I think Li Yuchun has her own style. Zhou Bichang sings well. She has every good capacity. Zhang Liangying sings very well. I can’t understand her English songs.

Aside: The camera entered Tiantian’s ward successfully while the Super Girl task force starts their action.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Close the door. Hello everyone! We are Super Girl task force.

Host-Wang Han: Hello! I am the team leader Wang Han.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hello! I am deputy leader Li Xiang.

Host-Wang Han: We came here today to bring a girl called Tiantian a big surprise.
Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes. However, I don’t think we disguise ourselves enough. We need extra make-up.

Host-Wang Han: to give her a surprise, we need dedicated make-up.

Aside: What will Li Xiang and Wang Han turn out to be?

Hostess-Li Xiang: Dr. Wang.

Host-Wang Han: Nurse Le.

Hostess-Li Xiang: You look more and more handsome.

Host-Wang Han: You are prettier too.

Hostess-Li Xiang: thank you.

Aside: The two hosts will pretend to be medical staff to give Tiantian a surprise. Let’s first go and see the performance of Nurse Li.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let’s take temperature first. Please unbutton your clothes, hold it tight. You are little bit sweating.

Tiantian: It is so boring staying here.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Drink more water. I will come back in 7 minutes.

Tiantian: Fine.

Aside: This nurse looks a little strange, is she…? Tiantian doesn’t dare to believe her eyes. Next, let’s see how Wang Han performs.

Doctor: Tiantian.

Tiantian: What?

Doctor: What’s up?

Tiantian: A little bit stomachache.

Doctor: Dr. Wang, please take her blood pressure.

Host-Wang Han: Okay.
Tiantian: Wang Han.

Aside: He is recognized so early. What a shame!

Host-Wang Han: What did you discover just now?

Tiantian: The person who just helped take my temperature was Li Xiang.

Host-Wang Han: Impossible.

Tiantian: I noticed just now.

Host-Wang Han: Did you?

Tiantian: Yes.

Host-Wang Han: She recognized us from the first sight.

Hostess-Li Xiang: What are you doing? Who is performing on earth?

Aside: I am so smart to recognize them.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, Let me see your temperature. Sister Li Xiang won’t make a mistake. I just learnt from the lead nurse.

Host-Wang Han: Are you taking temperature? She tries hard to move the bar up. I just learn from the nurse and won’t make a mistake. 32 Degree.

Aside: When the two hosts teased Tiantian, the three super girls sneaked into the ward preparing for a bigger surprise for Tiantian. They dedicatedly decorated a ward for Tiantian’s arrival.

Hostess-Li Xiang: The *Super Girl* has prepared a big gift for you. But it is too big to be brought here.

Host-Wang Han: It is a huge doll. We drove it here with great efforts.

Hostess-Li Xiang: We put it in the neighboring room. Want to take a look? Tiantian: Great!

Aside: What is the gift in hell? Tiantian’s mind is full of suspicion and expectation.
Tiantian: give me a hug. It is so touching.

Hostess-Li Xiang: I am very much moved.

Tiantian: I want to cry.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Don’t cry. Let’s give her a hug one by one.

Tiantian: I want to hug her first (Zhou Bichang).

Singer-Zhou Bichang: I don’t know what to say.

Tiantian: Li Yuchun!

Singer-Li Yuchun: It is me!

Tiantian: She is really taller than I.

Host-Wang Han: What music do you like best?

Tiantian: *Fairly Tale*.

Everyone sings *Fairly Tale*.

(Background music *Fairly Tale* is played.)

Aside: Seeing favorite people, listening to the favorite music, Tiantian feel enormous happiness. It is lonely to stay in the ward. But today there is no loneliness any more. We are the strongest back up of hers. We hope she will be happy everyday, content everyday. We wish she could win the battle against the disease and recover soon.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Hello Tiantian! We believe you are watching this show in front of the TV now to cheer for the three sisters. We would like to sincerely wish you to recover soon. Let's give her a big hand.

Host-Wang Han: For her.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Work hard, Tiantian!

Host-Wang Han: I believe the love of many friends in front of TV for the three super girls is as strong as tiantian’s. Please express your gratitude to all the dear audience in front of the TV.
Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhang Liangying, please.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: I know there are many friends who like Super Girl very much but are sick in the hospital like Tiantian. Except music which could help release their pain, I don’t think we have more important words to say. Hope my songs could ease your pain. Thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhou Bichang.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: I hope everyone is safe, joyful and happy. The people in hospitals are our friends. I wish you recover soon and check out soon.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Li Yuchun.

Singer-Li Yuchun: Thank everyone for your attention to Super Girl. No matter where you are, no matter what environment you are in, never give up your dream.

Host-Wang Han: Never give up!

Hostess-Li Xiang: You are right! Now, we would like to remind you, friends in front of the TV to send messages to support your favorite super girl. Well, let’s take a rest and come back after the commercials. See you later.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Welcome back. You are watching live broadcasting Happy China 2005 Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl Finale. Next, I would like to solemnly introduce a beauty standing besides me. She is An Youqi, the champion of last year. Let’s welcome her.

Singer-An Youqi: Thank you. Hello everyone! Hello every friend in this hall.

Hostess-Li Xiang: An Youqi, what are you busy with recently? Please share with us.

Singer-An Youqi: I am quite busy recently, mainly with new CD’s promotion as well as some TV commercials. Yes, I am busy preparing my second CD.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Great!

Host-Wang Han: continue to work hard. So although super girls don’t stand on this stage, they can make bright achievement through hard work.

Hostess-Li Xiang: I would like to ask An Youqi. As last year’s champion, what is the secret weapon of success would you like to share with us?
Singer-An Youqi: I believe you must have strength. Mentality is also important. You need to adjust your mentality to face every contest.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Good! What music will you bring to us today?

Singer-An Youqi: I bring a very meaningful song called *Dream*.

Host-Wang Han: Dream on this stage. Every dream will be realized through hard efforts. Let’s welcome An Youqi.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Please.

Singer-An Youqi: Thank everyone!

An Youqi performs *Dream*.

Host-Wang Han: Thanks lovely An Youqi.

Host-Wang Han: We truly feel that no matter where these super girls are, as long as they hold up this belief, they will do everything proactively.

Hostess-Li Xiang: I agree. The song An Youqi brought us is called Dream. In fact, every girl participating in *Super Girl* shares the common dream—a dream of music. To realize this dream you need your own endeavors and more important is the support from audience and friends in front of the TV. They will make their dream come true.

Host-Wang Han: Thanks. Let’s welcome He Jie, Yi Hui, Ji Minjia, as well as Huang Yali, Zhou Bichang, Liangying and Li Yuchun.

Hostess-Li Xiang: They will present all the friends who support them in front of the TV a song called *Love*. Hope you like it.

(Chorus *Love*)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you, all the friends in this hall. Today we have many previous contestants come back to this *Super Girl* stage. They have many ideas to share with friends in front of the TV. First of all, He Jie, would you like to say first?

He Jie: Yes. Thanks. I hope you can try your best to support your favorite super girls as I believe your support your shouting is the biggest encouragement and confidence you can give them. Let me hear again your encouraging applause to them.

Yi Hui: Many thanks. How should I start? It is not easy for us to stand on this stage. We tried hard. The most important is we are making progress gradually. We are conquering ourselves. I hope you could give these super girls the biggest hands.
Ji Minjia: Thank you. Because of your support, I come back to Super Girl. Due to your constant support, I sing until now. I would like to say thank you loudly. If you like, if only you like, we will sing till the end. Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Huang Yali, would you like your turn? Yali.

Huang Yali: I am really happy. You have seen our efforts. So today it is not a contest but a performance. You have enjoyed the carefully prepared performance by our three super girls. So please give them a big hand. Thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, Chunchun would like to say a few words.

Singer-Li Yuchun: I feel the singers who have left the stage and those who stand here are all excellent. What we expect is to sing well for you. As comparing with singing, ranking looks so chickenshit.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhang Liangying.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: Thanks. I don’t know what to say. Because of your support, I can continue to stand on this stage. I would like to express my gratitude through my way. (Sings the moon represents my love.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Zhou Bichang.

Host-Wang Han: Bichang.

Zhou Bichang: I would like to say, besides giving applause to our super girls, the super girls you like, don’t forget to give applause to yourselves. You are the best too.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Every super girl sings cannily. I believe she will touch the friends in front of the TV to support her. Besides the audience from home, we have also received greetings from friends abroad. Let’s take a look together.

(Play a video of overseas students supporting Super Girl.)

(Replay the beginning of the programme)

Zhang Liangying performs My homeland and I.

Li Yuchun performs Homeland’s Clouds.

Zhou Bichang performs The trails of a long journey are full of affection in Cantonese.
Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank our three contestants.

Host-Wang Han: I believe the overseas Chinese will feel very good after listening to their performance.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Very genial!

Host-Wang Han: The trails of a long journey fill with affection.

Hostess-Li Xiang: You are right!

Host-Wang Han: No matter how time and space try to prevent us, no matter how far we are from each other, I believe the only divide between us is the small screen, such a close distance. I believe the affection passed on must remind the overseas students of the kindness.

Hostess-Li Xiang: I think music is the bridge of communication. We use singing to deliver our feelings.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Now, let’s invite three contestants to stand on the center of the stage.

Host-Wang Han: Please.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Please be quiet.

Host-Wang Han: Let’s give them some time to change before they give us a prettier performance. The judges are escorting them all the time.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Yes, I believe they must have many wishes to give to our contestants.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Teacher Ke Yimin. Teacher Ke. We miss you so much.

Ke Yimin: I think it is correct for me to return today. I am very much moved especially when I heard them sing. Just one word: very good, very good.

Hostess and Host-Wang Han: Many thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: let us invite Teacher Dou Peng.
Dou Peng: It is a contest full of love. I should thank Hunan Satellite TV to invite me to this *Super Girl* singing movement. Besides the charms I feel from each contestant, the most I feel is love. I hope in their future music career, they can realize bigger dreams.

Hostess and Host-Wang Han: thank you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Teacher Liu.

Liu Xiaokang: *Super Girl*, sing as you wish. It is not easy to sing graciously. It is more difficult for the three finalists. I wish them well and hope audience in front of the TV to support them by sending text messages. Thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Lastly, let’s invite Teacher Hei.

Hei Nan: I believe to be a fan…

Hostess-Li Xiang: a fan?

Hei Nan: …is much happier than a judge. I am sitting here today, sing together with them and shout with other fans. I feel it is so cool to be an ordinary audience at present. So I would like to request every super girl to give me tickets of their concerts otherwise I will be very angry. Promise me?

Host-Wang Han: Yes. It is true you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank Teacher Hei. Next, we will deliver gifts for audience outside this hall. Let's draw the lucky ones.

Host-Wang Han: We shall have two. Let’s take a look.

Host-Wang Han: Three, Two, One. Stop. A friend from Fujian, beginning with 137 and ending with 0872. A friend from Hunan, ending with 1367.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Congratulations to these two friends! We would like to remind you again of voting for your favorite contestants. We will shut down the voting channel shortly.

Host-Wang Han: Don’t waste your time. Vote now. You will not be able to vote when voting channel is shut down.

Hostess-Li Xiang: take your chance. Well, let’s take a break and come back later. See
you.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you!

Host-Wang Han: Many thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Welcome back!

(Fans step on the stage to give gifts.)

Host-Wang Han: Let them finish first.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank all relative groups. Dear audience and friends, you are watching 2005 Happy China.

Host-Wang Han: Live broadcasting Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl Finale.

Hostess-Li Xiang: The finale!
Host-Wang Han: Live broadcasting!

Hostess-Li Xiang: You can see that our programme is approaching the end. The voting channel for the audience outside has been shut. We have the results behind us. We will announce the outcome shortly.

Host-Wang Han: I am so nervous. I actually think, the remaining time for our super girls and us hosts, for the audience friends in front of the TV are very valuable as with time passing, our 2005 Mengniu Yogurt Super Girl will ring down the curtain.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, we hope we can leave more time on this stage. Hope our contestants to say more and sing more.

Host-Wang Han: Sing more. Let me ask them.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Let's ask them what they would like to say to you at last.

Host-Wang Han: Liangying, you come first.

Singer-Zhang Liangying: The time for the whole contest is really long. Every time I want to share many ideas with you. I feel I have let you know all my thoughts. So I want to thank you.

Singer-Zhou Bichang: We don’t need to say more words. We would like to sing a song for you.
Singer-Li Yuchun: I believe everyone knows how to sing it. Let’s sing it together.

Host-Wang Han: Welcome band.

(All perform Applause arises.)

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you for your applause.

Host-Wang Han: I believe although leaving this stage, wherever and whenever the super girls are, we will hear applause.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Please give them applause again. Because of your applause, our super girls become so strong, confident and lovely. Now, it is time to know the result.

Host-Wang Han: Thank every judge. Thank you for so many insightful comments in such a long journey. You have given them so much support on their way to music. Let’s take a bow to all the judges. Thank you.

Hostess and Host-Wang Han: Many thanks.

Hostess-Li Xiang: It is time to announce the result. Let’s start from the last three digits. Liangying, you first. Let me help you.

Host-Wang Han: Don’t be too nervous.

Hostess-Li Xiang: (As the number is written in 4 digits. When Zhang Liangying unveiled the board, four digits appear.) Alright, let’s do the last four digits together… 3906.

Host-Wang Han: Zhou Bichang.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well, Zhou Bichang.

Host-Wang Han: Four digits together, 0840.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Li Yuchun. Let’s take a look.

Host-Wang Han: 8308.


Host-Wang Han: My heart beats so fast.
Hostess-Li Xiang: 7, 70840. Li Yuchun.

Host-Wang Han: Chunchun, 2, 28308.


Host-Wang Han: 270840. Chunchun.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Five. Take a deep breath. The last is the 7th digit. (face Zhang Liangying), great! 1353906. Congratulations to Zhang Liangying. Next Zhou Bichang.

Host-Wang Han: Three, Two, One, 3270804.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Well everyone. Please be quiet. Let’s take another deep breath.

Hostess-Li Xiang and Host-Wang Han: Five, four, three, two, one.

Hostess-Li Xiang: 3528308, Congratulations! Dear audience and friends, 2005 Super Girl Finale has its result. We congratulate No. 1 contestant Zhang Liangying who has won the third place, No. 7 Zhou Bichang who has won the second place and Congratulations to Li Yuchun.

Host-Wang Han: Congratulations to No. 8 Li Yuchun.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Who has won the first place.

Host-Wang Han: Champion.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Congratulations! Come to the front Li Yuchun.

Hostess-Li Xiang: Thank you! 2005 Super Girl is going to ring down the curtain. We would like to thank you again hundreds and thousands of the audience in front of the TV who strongly support us. At the end of the programme, we would like to wish all the girls who love to sing can sing as they wish. Wish you shake the music wings to fly higher.

Host-Wang Han: Thank you. Thanks!

Hostess-Li Xiang and Host-Wang Han: See you next time. See you!
Appendix C

Top-Level Meetings and Contacts between the United States and China Since 1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Top-level meetings and contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July &amp; October</td>
<td>American president’s national security adviser Henry Kissinger secretly visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1972</td>
<td>American President Richard Nixon visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1975</td>
<td>American President Gerald Ford visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1979</td>
<td>Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping visited the United States at the invitation of President Jimmy Carter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1979</td>
<td>American Vice President Mondale visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1982</td>
<td>American Vice President George Bush visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1984</td>
<td>American President Ronald Reagan visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1985</td>
<td>Chinese President Li Xiannian visited the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1989</td>
<td>American President George Bush visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1989</td>
<td>Chinese National People’s Congress Standing Committee Chairman Wan Li visited the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1993</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President Bill Clinton held a meeting during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Seattle, the U. S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1994</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President Bill Clinton held a meeting during the informal meeting of APEC in Indonesia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1995</td>
<td>In New York, American President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin held a meeting when they attended the 50th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the United Nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1996</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President Bill Clinton held a meeting when they attended the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Philippines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1997</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1997</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President Bill Clinton held an informal meeting during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1998</td>
<td>American President Bill Clinton visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1999</td>
<td>Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji visited the United States.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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9 Note: This table is based on the information edited by Yang of Xinhuanet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 1999</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President Bill Clinton held a meeting during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2000</td>
<td>American President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin held an informal meeting during the UN Millennium Summit in New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2000</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President Bill Clinton held a meeting during the APEC informal leadership meeting in Brunei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2001</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin immediately called American President Bush, expressed condolences to American government and people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2001</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President George W. Bush held talks during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Shanghai, China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2002</td>
<td>American President George W. Bush visited China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2002</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President George W. Bush exchanged letters and telegrams for congratulating the 30th anniversary of the “Sino-US Joint Communiqués.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2002</td>
<td>Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao visited the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2002</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin and American President George W. Bush talked about the international and regional situation as well as to further develop and strengthen the constructive and cooperative Sino-US relations and other issues on the phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2002</td>
<td>Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2003</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during attending the informal South-North leaders dialogue meeting in France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2003</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Thailand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2004</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Chile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2005</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during attending the dialogue between leaders of G8 and China, India, Brazil, South Africa, and Mexico in the United Kingdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during the United Nations 60th anniversary summit in New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2006</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao visited the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during the G-8 meeting with the leaders of developing countries in Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2006</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Vietnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during the G-8 meeting with the leaders of developing countries in Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao and American President George W. Bush held a meeting during the informal meeting of APEC leaders in Sydney, Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2007</td>
<td>Chinese President Hu Jintao talked with American President George W. Bush on the phone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D

Thirteen core value dimensions used to distinguish world cultures\(^\text{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Dimension</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Nature of the Human Being — Good, Evil, Neutral and/or Changeable or Unchangeable</strong></td>
<td>Do members of a culture believe that people are fundamentally trustworthy until they are proven otherwise? Christianity teaches that people are born with the stigma of original sin and thus are condemned unless saved (i.e., changed). In contrast, Shinto makes little distinction between deities and people. To the extent that one is culturally disposed toward one of these positions can affect one’s inclination to trust or distrust others, with obvious implications for one’s preferred leadership style and how one prefers to negotiate business. Whether one believes that people are changeable can affect how one attempts to motivate them and the importance one places on training.(^\text{i})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People and Fate — Controllable or Controlling</strong></td>
<td>Can people shape their surroundings and events, or must they submit to nature’s whims? Will history unfold as it will and chance drive results, or can people make a difference? People will be more optimistic, inventive, and aggressive to the extent they believe they can improve their situations as a result of their own actions and ideas, and they will be more interested in developing plans, goals, and budgets and behaving proactively. If not, they will tend toward passiveness and submissiveness, and they will be more inclined to accept whatever fate life deals them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People — Nature</strong></td>
<td>This value dimension suggests that world cultures can be distinguished by the degree to which they emphasize people or “nature” (the “environment” and/or the “supernatural”) as causal, an active force, or with the power to determine or control processes and outcomes. Additionally, this dimension has also focused on the kind of relationship that exists between people and nature/environment/supernatural.(^\text{ii}) This relationship could be characterized by the label control (in various ways), harmony, subordination (in various ways), and/or conflict(^\text{iii}) (of different kinds and types).(^\text{iv})</td>
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\(^\text{10}\) Note: This table was prepared by J. W. Chesebro on February 10, 2004 in Ball State University, Indiana, USA.
| **Purpose in Life — Doing or Being** | In a “being” culture, members of a culture that believe the current act one is engaged in doing should be the focus of one’s attention. In a “doing” culture, members of a culture focus on the future and current actions are perceived and judged in terms of their utility in achieving subsequent ends. If one values work in and by itself and takes pleasure in a job well done, there is little need to discipline, supervise, or motivate that person. All that is necessary is to teach the person how to perform the task and clarify expectations. The motivational challenge clearly is more difficult in “being” cultures. |
| **Time — Precious or Abundant; Past, Present, or Future; and, Short-Long Term Orientations** | In some cultures, time passage is enjoyed, while in others time is precious, people are punctual, make every moment count, and are task rather than people oriented. All cultures value the past, but some emphasize tradition ways of doing things, prize existing structures, decisions are incremental, and the future is an extension of the past. Some cultures are more flexible, adaptive, live for the moment, value short-term rather than long-term gratifications and developments. Future-oriented societies are highly competitive, growing people, building assets, improving skills, with immediate profits sacrificed for long-term. Some have used the distinction between short- and long-term orientations to distinguish Western and Eastern cultures. |
| **Societal Role — Individualistic or Collectivist** | In an individualistic culture, members prefer to work alone, maximize their individual wealth and well-being, view life as a highly competitive or zero-sum game, avoid dependence on others, and have their performances measured as individuals rather than as teammates. In a collectivist culture, members see relationships as win-win possibilities and their own potential maximized in cooperation with and contributions to group success. They feel more loyalty to group interests than to personal interests and consider it natural to share with group members. In individualistic cultures, individual sacrifice for the group is unusual. In such cultures, managers worry about the “free rider” problem (a member who does not pull his or her own weight) and how to get people to work together in teams. In collectivist cultures, self-sacrifice is the norm, and “free riders” are rare. |
| **High or Low Context** | Low context cultures employ complete, straightforward, and direct communication. The entire message is contained in words; it is precise and accurate in use of language, and pride is taken in saying exactly what is meant. In high context cultures, much of the message is indirect, subtle, incomplete; words are complemented by and perhaps even modified by facial expression, tone, and posture. In a high context culture, the receiver understands the message even though some of it is left unsaid or contradicted by the spoken words. In a high context culture, the ability to decode and understand is a result of common bonds and common experience. The more homogenous a culture, the more commonality of experience and values, the easier it becomes to communicate in a high context culture. |
| **Power Distance — Directional or Consultation** | Power distance represents the degree to which people accept unequal distribution of power. In a large-power-distance culture, people feel dependent on those in authority and expect direction from them. Those in authority exercise power in an autocratic or paternalistic manner. Subordinates avoid crossing the large power distance; they are less willing to challenge or even approach their bosses, because those in authority are assumed to be there because they have a right to it or because of superior expertise. Managers seeking the advice of subordinates in a large power culture are viewed as weak or inept. One researcher found a correlation between large power distance culture and larger populations, which could be associated with a need for some form of centralized government to maintain order. |
| **Masculinity/Femininity — Tough or Tender** | A masculine culture is tough, exhibiting aggressiveness, decisiveness, and competitiveness, and it places greater value on achievement outside of the home, power, grandeur, and well-defined gender roles. A feminine culture is tender, exhibiting modesty, reticence, caring for others, and concern for a favorable environment, and it places greater value on nurturing, harmony, and interchangeable gender roles, settle conflict by negotiation and compromise, and is relationship oriented. Masculinity has long been the dominant way of doing business, but relatively recent recognition of the value of cooperation, teamwork, and sustained relationships focuses attention on the feminine side of business and organizations. There are relatively few feminine cultures, and they are concentrated in Scandinavia and parts of Latin America. A lack of resources in Scandinavia forced males |
into trading and fishing industries and left women to take on more administrative responsibilities outside of the home. Additionally, trading required that men cultivate interpersonal skills. In Latin America, original Indian cultures appeared to have had stronger artistic, peaceful, and agrarian foundations (e.g., Inca and Maya). More warlike cultures in Latin America can be traced back to original Indian groups such as the more urbanized and militaristic Aztecs.

<p>| The Universal/The Particular — Absolute or Situational Ethics | Particularistic cultures more strongly emphasize the importance of adapting to specific circumstances, with existing relationships as more enduring than situations or contracts. For universalists, particularistic culture members cannot be trusted because they give benefits to their friends. The universalist view is strongest in Protestant cultures, the Anglo, Scandinavian, and Germanic countries. |
| Life as Holistic or Segmented — Specific and Diffuse | In diffuse cultures, everything is related to everything else. So, business is part of all social interactions and therefore affected by friendships, families, politics, and even sports. General principles and intention are more important than details. Accordingly, managers will take an interest in the personal life of their subordinates. Managers in specific cultures give more precise instructions, are more concerned about reaching goals, and continuous improvement. |
| Status as Ascription or Performance | Status by ascription occurs by virtue of some characteristic of a person’s state of being (title, position, age, family, school ties, social connections, and so forth). Alternatively, status by performance emphasizes what people have done, the results they have produced. In ascription cultures, adherence to role requirements may be more important than actual results—unfavorable results are attributed to external and uncontrollable causes. Form is important in ascription cultures, while content is central in performance cultures. |</p>
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<th>Uncertainty Avoidance — Structured or Unstructured</th>
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<td>Uncertainty avoidance is a measure of tolerance for ambiguity and the unfamiliar. Low uncertainty avoidance is associated with a preference for unstructured environments, more tolerant of experimentation and deviant ideas, while members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer structured situations, conformity to formal rules and established norms, tend to have higher levels of anxiety, often manifested in greater emotional expression and aggressiveness; and, they find it difficult to relax. In a high uncertainty avoidance workplace, roles must be specified, rules and procedures detailed and enforced, instructions precise, relationships clear, and conflict avoided. Novel situations will cause great stress and can paralyze this organization. Bureaucracies have their roots in high uncertainty avoidance. Security is a strong motivator relative to achievement or self-fulfillment. A steady paycheck is preferable to performance-based compensation. Countries with the longest ties to centralized authority (e.g., the laws of the Roman Empire versus the value of wisdom in ancient China) are more likely to be high uncertainty avoidance cultures.</td>
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Endnotes

i Ting-Toomey has argued, “While middle-class European Americans and African Americans tend to perceive human nature as neutral, many Native American groups tend to emphasize the inherent goodness of human nature (Sue & Sue, 1990). Many European Americans tend to believe in individual’s personal willpower to shape the development of human nature, whereas many African Americans tend to believe in the importance of the environment in shaping the nature of a person. For European Americans, human nature can be a mixture of good and evil, depending largely on the individual self-motivation effort. For African Americans, the environment (e.g., family or society) or good spiritual force (e.g., God) plays a critical role in the cultivation of goodness or evilness of human nature. For traditional African and African Americans, ‘God is believed to be the creator, the sustainer, and the ultimate controller of life. . . .This belief in God’s intervention and ultimate control of the affairs of humans can account for an apparent resignation to fate or to higher forces observed on the part of traditional African peoples (Pennington, 1990, pp. 127-128).


ii For example, Ting-Toomey has argued that while many middle-class European Americans believe in mastery and control over the natural environment, many ethnocultural groups (such as African, Asian, Latin, and Native American) in the United States tend to believe in living harmoniously with nature. See: Stella Ting-Toomey, Communicating Across Cultures (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999), p. 60.

iii The propensity as well as one’s self-perceived ability and motivation to control, seek harmony, create hierarchies, and/or employ conflict is itself regulated by one’s cultural training and conditioning. Each of these decisions can also be affected by pragmatic considerations (e.g., the ability to control the responses of others, the ability to control the pathway of processes, and the range of likely and probable outcomes). In addition, there are a

iv Trompenaars asked managers in 38 different countries to choose between the following two statements: “(A) What happens to me is my own doing,” or “(B) Sometimes I feel that I do not have enough control over the directions my life is taking.” He found that 89% of U.S. and 82% of German managers selected option A, whereas only 56% of Japanese and 35% of Chinese managers selected that same option. Overall, most European countries scored high on option A, whereas most African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries scored low on option A. People who believe in individuals as controllers of nature are “inner directed” or internally driven; people who believe in nature as the controllers of human nature are “outer directed” or externally driven. See: F. Trompenaars, Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business (Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin, 1994).

v Ting-Toomey has argued that, “While middle-class African Americans, Asian Americans, and European Americans focus on a ‘doing’ or an achievement-oriented solution, Latino/a Americans and Native Americans tend to focus on the ‘being-in-becoming’ mode (Sue & Sue, 1990). However, the ‘doing’ preference is manifested quite differently among European American, African American, and Asian American groups.

“For example, for the African American group, a ‘doing’ mode means to fight against adversity and to combat racism through social achievements and activism for the good of the community. Furthermore, traditional African and African Americans also display a ‘being’ as modes of living. They value ‘having a sense of aliveness, emotional vitality, and openness of feelings. . . .African American culture is infused with a spirit (a knowledge that there is more to life than sorrow, which will pass) and a renewal in sensuousness, joy, and laughter. This symbol has its roots in African culture and expresses the soul and rhythm of that culture in America’ (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993, pp. 102-103). Likewise, Latino/a Americans also mix a ‘being’ vitality solution with that of ‘being-in-becoming’ spiritual beliefs.


vi Ting-Toomey has argued that,
“Asian immigrants (e.g., Vietnamese Americans) and Native Americans tend to revere the past. African Americans tend to have a strong sense of both past and present references. Latino/a Americans tend to have a strong response to the present experience. European Americans tend to emphasize concern for the immediate future. More specifically, for example, many Vietnamese Americans believe in the Buddhist precepts of karma and rebirth. They believe that ‘an individual life is predetermined by good and bad deeds from a previous life. The goal is eventually to achieve spiritual liberation. . . .Ancestors are worshiped for four generations after death’ (Locke, 1992, pp. 105-106). Thus, for many Vietnamese American immigrants, their past profoundly influences their present identities.

“Many Mexican Americans, in contrast, prefer to experience life and people around them fully in the present. This outlook may be derived from the influence of a traditional cultural believe ‘in the concept of ‘limited good.’ In fact, this is the belief that there is only so much good in the world and therefore, only so much good is possible in any other person’s life’ (Locke, 1992, p. 140). Experiencing life with the fullness of the five senses is prized much higher than ‘work for the sake of work’ itself. Work should never be an end in life. Living life fully and helping families and friends through meaningful work makes more sense to many traditional-oriented Mexicans or Mexican Americans (Hecht, Sedano, & Ribeau, 1993).

“Furthermore, many Africans and African Americans tend to embrace a combination of past-present focus. For example, for many Africans and African Americans, people and activities in the present assume a higher priority than an external clock schedule (Asante & Asante, 1990). As Pennington (1990) observes, ‘Time for Africans does not exist in a vacuum as an entity which can be conceptually isolated. Time is conceived only as it is related to events, and it must be experienced in order to make sense or to become real. The mathematical division of time observed by Westerners has little relevance for Africans’ (p. 131). Locke (1992) similarly notes that Africans have a different concept of time from that found in cultures of the Western world: ‘[The] difference is that in traditional African societies, people [tend to] emphasize something is done only at the present moment. . . .In becoming African Americans, the Africans had to develop a new framework capable of holding their beliefs, values, and behavior’ (p. 26). For traditional Africans, the actual event that is happening forms the essence of temporal interaction. Furthermore, the past and the ancestors ‘were indispensable in giving meaning to one’s present experience. In regard to the historical . . . sense of time, events were filed as they happened. . . .[T]here was always a conscious awareness and respect for the causal factors linking events among traditional Africans’ (Pennington, 1990, p. 137).

“On a broader level of interpretation, our sense of developmental identity is closely fused with the temporal value orientation. Those who subscribe to the past-present focus tend to believe in the importance of understanding historical factors and background contexts that frame the ‘self.’ In order to understand the present self, it is important to understand the historical context that pave the way to it. Those who subscribe to the future focus (e.g., middle-class European Americans), however, tend to de-emphasize the past, move forward boldly to the immediate future, and strongly emphasize the importance of ‘futurism’ (e.g., the

vii The short-term and long-term value orientation has been, so far, employed in a relatively narrow framework from a global perspective. It has been predominantly used to explain some of the distinctive behavioral patterns in East Asian cultures that have been noted for their particularly unique long-term orientation. These East Asian cultures are China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. The primary characteristics of this long-term orientation include perseverance, ordering relationships by status, being thrift centered, having a sense of shame, and emphasizing collective face-saving. Ting-Toomey has reported that, “The value of tenacity in pursuing one’s goals (i.e., the perseverance value), together with the availability of capital for investment (i.e., the thrift value) help to shape the Five Dragons’ (i.e., Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, and—to a less degree right now—South Korea) economic growth in the Pacific Rim.” In comparison to the long-term orientation, members from cultures such as Pakistan, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Canada score low on this dimension. Some of the characteristics associated with short-term orientation include short- to medium-term planning, being spending centered, and emphasizing individual face-saving. See: Stella Ting-Toomey, Communicating Across Cultures (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999), p. 74.

viii Trompenaars (1994) asked international managers to read the scenario in which “two people were discussing ways in which individuals could improve the quality of life.” Respondents could choose either “(A) . . . It is obvious that if individuals have as much freedom as possible and the maximum opportunity to develop themselves, the quality of their lives will improve as a result,” or “(B) . . . If individuals are continuously taking care of their fellow human beings, the quality of life will improve for everyone, even if it obstructs individual freedom and individual development” (p. 51). Overall, Canadian, U.S., and Norwegian managers score highest on option A, and Egyptians, Kuwaiti, and Nepalese managers score lowest on option A. See: Trompenaars, F. (1994). Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business. Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin.