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Young Adults' Perceptions of Intergenerational Communication: Mongolian and American Data

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Abstract
This study examines Mongolian and American young adults' perceptions of intergenerational communication, specifically with respect to age stereotypes, norms of respect, communication behavior, and communication satisfaction. Using the Communication Predicament of Aging Model as a theoretical framework, the relationships between these variables are investigated using regression analyses. Young adults from both cultural contexts were asked to evaluate prior interactions with both middle-aged and older adults. The findings indicate a difference between how each generation is perceived, and the unique role of the middle-aged generation in Mongolia is evident.

Key Words: Age stereotypes, Age norms, Vitality, Benevolence, Politeness, Deference, Respect, Avoidance, Communication satisfaction, Communication enjoyment, Middle-Age, Older adult, Mongolia

INTRODUCTION

The population of older individuals has increased significantly in the past decade. This, coupled with increasing longevity, offers more opportunities for young adults to have contact with older individuals. Research in Western societies has indicated that young people construe communication with non-family older adults as often dissatisfactory and problematic (see Hummert, 2010; Williams & Giles, 1996). Consequently, younger interlocutors are often conversationally avoidant of older adults but, nonetheless, report it necessary to be respectful (Gallois et al., 1999; Ryan, Kwong See, Meneer, & Trovato,

1992). This profile is cross-culturally resilient to the extent that it spans an array of different cultures having disparate religious and social traditions (e.g., McCann, Ota, Giles, & Caraker, 2003; Ota, Giles, & Somera, 2007).

The current study also aims to examine communicative behaviors that occur between generations. While the interaction between younger and older adults has been given a considerable amount of attention, there has been little, if any, examination of the encounters between young adults and middle-aged adults. This study will contribute

to this line of research by investigating how young adults perceive interactions across the lifespan, with middle-aged and older adults.

Due to a programmatic commitment to understanding intergenerational dynamics across cultural contexts, the current study compares Mongolia - a country with a recent history rich in political, economic, and social change – to the USA, applying a model of attitudinal and behavioral factors in intergenerational communication. In Mongolia, the development of a recent democracy has replaced an older foreign system of government. This has created a shift toward the revitalization of traditional Mongolian values, particularly with regard to how each generation is perceived, along with role adjustments for the different generations today. The evident cultural difference of Mongolia, as compared to the USA, is also a reason to investigate this context. The unique upbringing of Mongolian young adults should affect the intergenerational interactions with other generations (Nomintushig, 2011). Interestingly, little communication data has emerged from this nation, let alone as it relates to intergenerational exchanges.

COMMUNICATION PREDICAMENT OF AGING MODEL

The communication predicament of aging model (CPAM: Harwood, Giles, Fox, Ryan, & Williams, 1993; Ryan, Giles, Bartolucci, & Henwood, 1986) offers a theoretical perspective on communicative behaviors that can be found in intergenerational interactions. The CPAM (see Figure 1) proposes that when a young adult interacts with an older adult, a negative stereotype may be triggered by age cues associated with the latter. The physical and communicative characteristics of the older adult target (e.g., physiognomy, hair color, and voice quality) and the context of the interaction (that can make age salient and/or highlight a particular age subtype) will influence the stereotyping process (Hummert, 2010), and have personal implications for the older individual (e.g. self-esteem). Once these typecasts are triggered, the speech of the younger adult is adjusted in a way to accommodate the relational partner's assumed deficiencies (Hummert & Ryan, 1996). The communicative behaviors seen in this interaction are best explained by communication accommodation theory (CAT: e.g., Giles, Coupland, & Coupland 1991; Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005). CAT explores
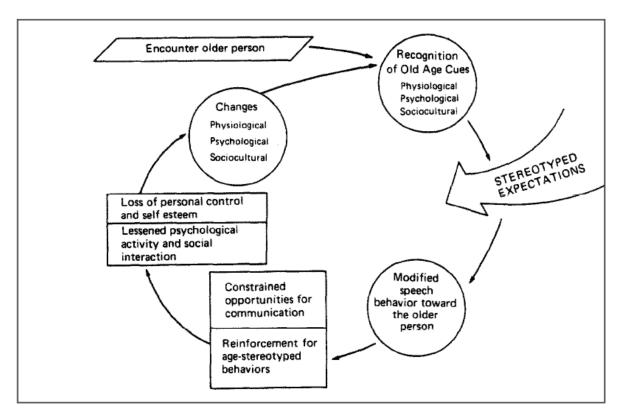

Figure 1. Communication Predicament of Aging Model (CPAM) (Ryan et al., 1986). Reprinted with permission from Elsevier Publishers.

the ways in which individuals vary their communicative behavior to accommodate others given where they believe others to be, their motivations for so doing, and the social consequences arising.

Accommodative communication fosters a climate where conversational partners listen to one another, take the other's views into account, desire to understand their conversational partner's unique situation, and explain things in ways that "sit right" with their partner. An accommodative climate also features pleasantness, politeness, and respect and is predictably more positively perceived by the interactants involved (as well as third-party observers) than nonaccommodative messages (e.g., Myers, Giles, Reid, & Nabi, 2008). Nonaccommodative communication can occur when the differences between the communicators are accentuated. The goals or motivations of this communication style include signaling disapproval or emphasizing social distance, which has the potential to make communication problematic (see Coupland, Wiemann, & Giles, 1991).

PREDICTOR VARIABLES OF INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION

Using CPAM as a guiding theoretical framework, a program of research across different cultures has emerged to investigate intergenerational interactions further, and to determine the predictors (for young people) of the communication behavior within and how they, in turn, predict perceived satisfaction when talking with older adults (Giles, Dailey, Sarkar, & Makoni, 2007; Giles, Hajek, Stoitsova, & Choi, 2010; Giles, Makoni, & Dailey, 2005).

More specifically, intergenerational conversations are first regulated by the existing stereotypes of vitality and benevolence (Hummert, Garstka, Shaner, & Strahm, 1994), and the general norms of politeness and deference attributed to the various age groups (McCann, Dailey, Giles, & Ota, 2005). These perceptions work as a psychological starting point, and then determine whether young adults will either communicatively show respect or decide to avoid such contact. Subsequently, these communication behaviors produce the varying levels of fulfillment and satisfaction in these kinds of encounters (Harwood et al., 1993). What will follow is a description of each of these concepts, how they fit within the theoretical model of CPAM, and how they also work together to influence the overall success of an intergenerational interaction.

Age stereotypes: personality and benevolence. Young adults have certain impressions about the physical ability and health of other age groups, and as the target age groups become older, this leads to attributions of decreased personal vitality. In contrast often, stereotypes of

benevolence that include attributed wisdom, kindness, and generosity of a particular target age group correspondingly increase as the target age group becomes older (Harwood et al., 1996; see also Hummert et al. 1994; Zhang, Hummert, & Gartska, 2002).

Filial piety. This is a cultural norm that prescribes looking after and respecting older family members, as well as older individuals in general (Barker, Giles, & Harwood, 2004). While this type of respect is shared across different cultures, the extent of its influence has been seen to vary (see Gallois et al., 1999). The concept – its recent erosion notwithstanding (Giles, McCann, Ota, & Noels, 2002), has traditionally been associated with East Asian (and other) cultures (e.g., Ho, 1994; Sung, 1995) such as the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan. McCann et al. (2005) found that young adults would subscribe more to norms of politeness and deference toward older adults than their same-aged peers, and that these norms acted as predictors of communicative behaviors with non-family older adults.

Communicative behaviors. A key aspect of an intergenerational interaction is the communicative respect conveyed during conversation, and this can be understood from a CAT perspective (see above). The level of accommodation that a speaker demonstrates through his/her communication can reflect the degree of respect apparent in the interaction. Communicating respect is an outcome variable that can determine the success of an intergenerational exchange (Giles & Gasiorek, 2011). The CPAM (see Figure 1) underscores the importance of this behavior particularly for the older adult. The amount of respect conveyed in a young adult's communicative behavior affects the self-concept of the older individual. Specifically, the accommodating communication of a young adult (if perceived as authentic) counteracts the vicious cycle inherent in CPAM. The amount of appropriate accommodation used in such interchanges has also been proposed as one reason the outcome can be perceived as either communicatively satisfying or dissatisfying (Barker et al., 2004).

A contrastive set of behaviors relate to decisions to avoid intergenerational encounters. Avoidance is a broad concept that includes not only staying away from an interaction, but also finding ways to exit conversation or avoiding saying what one wants to say (Cai, Giles, & Noels, 1998). Ryan et al. (1992) conducted a study where young adults would engage in or avoid an interaction with an older adult based on impressions of physical ability. The resulting negative communicative output (i.e., under- or overaccommodating communication) led to negative impressions of these interactions. Even with more positive attempts, a younger adult may not feel appreciated for

their accommodating efforts, or an older person may feel incompetent by the overaccommodating efforts. In these situations, both parties can feel discouraged. Consequently, interlocutors may be deterred from seeking out these types of intergenerational encounters, and may avoid them altogether (Giles & Gasiorek, 2011).

When predicting the overall satisfaction experienced by young adults in these intergenerational encounters, this line of research has, as mentioned above, been pursued in South Africa and Ghana (Giles et al., 2005), India (Giles et al., 2007) and, most recently, in Bulgaria (Giles et al., 2010). Each of these cultural contexts offers variations on what predicts positive evaluations. For instance, in the USA, communicative respect and avoidance predict intergenerational satisfaction whereas, in India, age stereotypes are stronger predictors of this outcome variable (Giles et al., 2007). The following section will offer a background to the Mongolian context and its unique intergenerational context.

MONGOLIA: CULTURAL PARAMETERS

Like many of the other cultural contexts previously analyzed, Mongolia has also endured societal changes and political shifts that have had a significant impact on intergenerational relationships. Over the last 100 years, Mongolians have been influenced by different strands of social thought: the native nomadic way of life; Buddhism; the Communist state; the more recent democratic government; and the ongoing modernization of the country that is underlined throughout all of these systems (Brunn, 2006). These changes and political shifts have had a significant impact on the Mongolian culture as a whole and, in particular, the way various generations communicate with one another. These transformations have resulted in large-scale value and experiential differences between younger, middle-aged, and older generations; new social identities in regard to generational characteristics are being forged together with some desire to break with tradition (de la Sablonniere, Tougas, & Lortie-Lussier, 2010).

Over the centuries in Mongolia, age came with a certain amount of prestige and respect. As people grew older, they would increase their ability to gather wealth and status in their communities. However, the influence of communism began essentially to separate the connection between age and wealth (Pedersen, 2006). The more recent onset of democracy and capitalism similarly deteriorated this traditional connection. As a result, there is a growing tendency, especially in more urban parts of Mongolia, to demonstrate less reverence toward older adults (Cheng, Chan, & Phillips, 2008). The rise in more individualistic ideologies is apparent and older generations are expressing

a growing concern for the future of these traditional practices (Stol & Adiya, 2010).

Additionally and in more urban contexts, older adults are not as much of a presence in the family unit. Many older adults are choosing to stay in the countryside while their children's families are moving into larger urban areas. This adds a unique dynamic to the intergenerational relationship in Mongolia. Urban adolescents seem to be growing more disrespectful toward this older generation, partly due to a lack of contact with older adults and, instead, it is the middle generation that is more often revered and constantly looked upon for leadership (Pedersen & Hojer, 2008).

In regard then to the middle-aged, Mongolia provides a unique setting where the middle-aged, in comparison to other age groups, has been given a significant amount of authority and status. Due to the extreme political and economic changes that have occurred since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the middle generation has, arguably, been forced to adapt to these changes the most over any other generation, and has also been viewed as the most influential and authoritative generation during this transition toward capitalism (Stol & Adiya, 2010). Specifically, it is the increased group vitality of those who are middle-aged, and the limited exposure young adults have with older adults that create a unique status for this particular generation.

In light of all the cultural changes experienced by the Mongolian people, there now seems to be the growth of a conflicting paradigm, and a rise in efforts to re-establish the status afforded the older generation. The eldest men of a community are explicitly associated with the past, and there is a growing belief that the past before both communism and democracy was a morally superior age in comparison. As a result, modern Mongolians are attempting to balance a revival of cultural tradition with the recent memory of two influential political structures in an efficient communist government and a potentially lucrative democracy. The tension begins with the idea of recapturing a culture and tradition that has been lost as a result of foreign government, followed by an understanding that communism provided quality in education and consistency in annual monetary earnings and, finally, that modernization through democracy provides an opportunity for a more promising future (Brunn, 2006). There seems to be a split in sentiment toward the desire to become modernized and the value of Mongolian traditionalism. The aim of this investigation is to identify evidence of these trends and to attain a better understanding of the intergenerational communication found in Mongolia.

Predicting Behavior: Communicative Respect and Avoidance

In the USA, young adults' stereotypes of older adults' personal vitality do, in fact, predict the reported avoidance of encounters with older adults (McCann et al., 2005). Findings have indicated that the more stereotypical benevolence and personal vitality (i.e., positive perceptions) young people attribute to older individuals, the more these older adults are respected and not avoided. In various cultural contexts described above, the existing norms of politeness and deference have also been seen to predict communicative respect for older individuals (Giles et al., 2010).

According to the CPAM (see Figure 1), the existing stereotypes and norms of behavior should function as predictor variables for the communicative behavior found in intergenerational encounters. In addition, the cultural norms of intergenerational politeness and deference that exist in a given context should predict the communicative respect exhibited by a young adult toward middle-aged or older target age groups (McCann et al., 2005). Hence, the following is predicted:

> H1: When young Americans communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, communicative respect will be predicted by normative politeness and deference, while communicative avoidance will be predicted by normative deference and negatively by stereotypical personal vitality.

Returning to the Mongolian context, due to current changes in political and economic infrastructure, the middle generation continues to grow as an influential age group leading Mongolia in this Post-Soviet era. The stronger group vitality of the middle-aged (see Giles et al., 2000) in comparison to other age groups in the current Mongolian context should have an impact on the predictor variables that have emerged in previous research. Specifically, a different pattern of predictive relationship might be expected to emerge between age stereotypes, age norms, and communication behavior. In order to identify what patterns emerge when middle-aged targets with high group vitality are inserted into the evaluative frame, the following research question is proposed:

> RQ1: When young Mongolians communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, will age stereotypes and age norms predict communicative respect and avoidance?

Predicting Communication Satisfaction

As stated earlier, CAT offers insight into the overall satisfaction that may be perceived within an intergenerational interaction (Barker et al., 2004). As a young adult accommodates a middle-aged or older adult, this communicative respect may lead to a satisfying encounter for both parties involved. On the other hand, nonaccommodative behavior (i.e., underaccommodation or overaccommodation) should be negatively associated with communication satisfaction.

Regarding the predictive power of avoidance (i.e., nonaccommodation) in these previously found interactions, high communicative avoidance was found to be responsible for dissatisfaction in all settings, whereas communicative respect was potent only in Africa (Giles et al., 2005). With consideration of this significant nuance, the stability of communicative avoidance's impact and the effect of communicative respect should be considered. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> H2: When young Americans communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, intergenerational satisfaction will be predicted by communicative respect (and negatively by) communicative avoidance.

With regard to intergenerational encounters in Mongolia, prior research in this area offers some indication of the predictor variables that may be influential in intergenerational satisfaction (i.e., communicative behavior). It is unclear, however, how young adults might communicate with other generations in Mongolia, and the role of both communicative respect and avoidance on the overall satisfaction in this interaction. Therefore:

> RQ2: When young Mongolians communicate with either middle-aged or older adults, will communicative respect and avoidance predict communication satisfaction?

Method

To test the hypotheses about intra- and inter-generational communication perceptions, individuals from the two nations (USA and Mongolia) offered self-assessed reports across three different target ages. Using a within-subjects design, questionnaires asked participants to indicate their interaction experiences with non-family members or non-close friends regarding middle-aged, and older adults. This design allowed for the analysis of more observations and an increase in statistical power. Two orders of these age targets were presented for half the sample respectively: middle-aged, and older adults in contrast to older, and middle-aged adults. Order effects were not apparent and these data were subsequently collapsed.

Participants

Undergraduate students (N = 409) from universities in Mongolia and the United States participated in the study. The Mongolian sample (n = 181; 93 females) was comprised entirely of ethnic Mongolians, who ranged in age from 17 to 29, with a mean reported age of 20.12 (SD = 2.00). The participants were all volunteer undergraduate students from the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The United States sample (n = 228; 100 females) was drawn entirely from communication undergraduates at a Western university who received extra course credit for their participation. The majority of these participants were Caucasian (53.5%), the remainder being of Latino/a (12.8%), Asian/Pacific Island (10.2%), East Indian (2.6%), Middle Eastern (2.2%), African-American (.9%), and "Other American" (2.2%) descent. Their ages ranged from 18 to 34, with a mean reported age of 20.22 (SD = 1.85). The respondents were not asked to specify their citizenship or residential status.

PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

For each target age, the questionnaires included measures of perceived stereotypes of the age group, norms of respect (i.e., how they believe they should generally interact with the age group), communication behaviors (i.e., how they actually behave during interactions with the target age), and communication satisfaction with the age group. Participants were allowed to self-define these age ranges (i.e., middle-age adulthood, and older adulthood). Respondents were allowed to self-define the age range(s) of the specified targets (e.g., middle-age adulthood begins at X years and ends at Y years), as opposed to working from pre-specified target age ranges. The perceptions of "middle-aged" and "older," were evaluated from relative standpoints using a within-subjects design.[1]

The scales were translated into Mongolian and then back-translated into English for validation. All items (7-point Likert format) for these scales (as well as their original sources) are provided in McCann et al. (2005). Separate analyses were conducted for the Mongolian and American samples. Confirmatory factor analyses revealed the same factors and general loading invariance between the two nations, and the same factors across target ages, for age stereotypes, norms of respect, and communication behaviors, and these were, indeed identical to the factors revealed in past studies and described above (e.g., Giles et al. 2005). For the data collected in this study (both the USA and Mongolia samples), the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) for the factors by each target were calculated (see below).

Age stereotypes. Participants' stereotypes regarding each age group were assessed (e.g., Harwood et al., 1996) through a nine-item semantic differential scale: personal vitality (α = .67) and benevolence (α = .61). The personal vitality factor included six items about the physical ability and vitality of members from the target age group (e.g., strong vs. weak), and the benevolence factor included three items regarding the personality characteristics associated with a target age group (i.e., generous-ungenerous).

Norms of Respect. Participants' beliefs about how they should act with each age group were assessed through seven items (Gallois et al., 1999). The politeness factor (α = .88) refers to norms people feel they should enact during interactions with the target age group and included three items (e.g., "I should speak politely to them"). The deference factor (α = .75) refers to a restraint of behaviors during interactions and included four items (e.g., "I should restrain myself from arguing with them").

Communication behaviors. Communication behaviors during interactions with the three target ages were assessed through two dimensions: respect and avoidance across the nations and target ages. The respect factor (α = .74) included six items (e.g., "I accommodated to them"), and the avoidance factor (α = .72) included three items (e.g., "I did not know what to say").

Communication satisfaction. This was assessed with each age using two items: "I enjoyed my conversation with them" and "I was not satisfied with my conversation with them." The second item was reverse-coded so that greater scores indicated greater satisfaction and enjoyment. Although these items were correlated in the American data from moderate to high degrees (r = .389 to .599, p < .01), not surprisingly, the correlations were much weaker in the Mongolian data set (r = .198 to .279, p < .01). The entire data set, which included both the Mongolian and the USA sample, showed too low of a correlation (r = .277 to .393, p < .01). Previous use of this scale in Ghana and South Africa (Giles et al., 2005) separated the two items when the reported correlations were too low (for older targets, r = .25 for Ghana, and the correlation was non-significant for South Africa). Since the correlations in the Mongolian sample were similarly low, and the reliability coefficients were inadequate, these items were assessed separately in the analyses (as communication satisfaction and communication enjoyment).

RESULTS

Predictors of Communicative Respect and Avoidance

In line with McCann et al. (2005) and Giles et al. (2007), separate regression analyses were used to determine whether the two stereotypes and two normative factors

Table 1   Regression Results for USA Data (Older Adult Targets)

	B	*F*	*df*	R^2
Respect		12.68**	(5, 183)	.26
Vitality	-.091			
Benevolence	.035			
Politeness	.205*			
Deference	.344**			
Avoidance		10.80**	(5, 185)	.23
Vitality	-.145*			
Benevolence	-.141*			
Politeness	-.042			
Deference	.435**			
Communication Satisfaction		7.50**	(7, 182)	.23
Respect	.054			
Avoid	-.498**			
Vitality	.005			
Benevolence	.007			
Politeness	.120			
Deference	.132			
Communication Enjoyment		8.31**	(7, 183)	.25
Respect	.235*			
Avoid	-.421**			
Vitality	.091			
Benevolence	.073			
Politeness	.162*			
Deference	-.021			

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

predicted the extent to which communicative respect and avoidance were reportedly enacted with middle-aged and older adults. H1 found only partial support. Specifically, the predictors of communication toward older adults confirmed the hypothesis; however, when communicating with the middle-aged group, young adults reported some differences. The Mongolian data also revealed some similarities and differences (RQ1) across the two nations (Table 1-4) that will be reported next.

Older adult targets. Both politeness and deference significantly predicted respect toward older adults in the American data: self-reported displays of respect increased as participants' beliefs regarding politeness and deference about older adults increased (Table 1). The politeness finding was reflected, even more so, in the Mongolian data (Table 2). However, for Mongolians, deference did not predict respect.

When predicting avoidance of older adults, the stereotypes of personal vitality and the norm of deference were significant for the American data. That is, as participants' views of older adults decreased in vitality, avoidance during interactions with older adults increased; avoidance also increased as the norm of deference increased. In

contrast to the American participants, vitality and deference did not predict avoidance in the Mongolian sample. In sum, and as one might expect, age stereotypes and norms are important predictors of intergenerational communicative outcomes, albeit less so for the Mongolian participants.

Middle-aged adult targets. In the USA data set, norms of politeness about middle-aged adults significantly predicted respect toward the middle-aged: self-reported displays of communicative respect increased as participants' beliefs regarding politeness when interacting with middle-aged adults increased (Table 3). The norm of deference, however, did not predict communicative respect as predicted. From the Mongolia data, it was norms of politeness, which was the only significant predictor of communicative respect (Table 4).

Regarding communication avoidance, while Americans reported that the norms of deference were a significant predictor, stereotypes of vitality did not seem to influence communicative avoidance. In Mongolia, neither the reports of stereotypes nor the norms of politeness had any impact on avoidant communication.

Table 2   Regression Results for Mongolia Data (Older Adult Targets)

	B	F	df	R²
Respect		15.90**	(5, 141)	.37
Vitality	.066			
Benevolence	.106			
Politeness	.466**			
Deference	.115			
Avoidance		1.28	(5, 143)	.04
Vitality	.163			
Benevolence	-.030			
Politeness	-.036			
Deference	.133			
Communication Satisfaction		4.42**	(7, 140)	.19
Respect	.151			
Avoid	-.377**			
Vitality	-.065			
Benevolence	-.075			
Politeness	.196			
Deference	-.071			
Communication Enjoyment		10.07**	(7, 138)	.35
Respect	.642**			
Avoid	-.198*			
Vitality	.049			
Benevolence	.054			
Politeness	-.077			
Deference	-.006			

Note. $*p < .05, **p < .001.$

Predictors of Communication Satisfaction and Enjoyment

In line with previous work in this arena, separate multiple regressions were conducted to determine the predictors of communication satisfaction and enjoyment with older and middle aged adults for each nation. H2 received partial support and the findings pertaining to RQ2 offered additional insight into how Mongolian young adults interact differently with the middle-aged in comparison to older adults.

Older adult targets. When the communication behaviors were used to predict communication satisfaction and communication enjoyment with older adults in the American sample (Table 1), only avoidance was significantly related to satisfaction, while both respect and avoidance predicted communication enjoyment. Therefore, H2 was partially supported. The same predictors were found in the Mongolian sample (Table 2). An increase in both satisfaction and enjoyment was related to a decrease in avoidance, and there was a significant relationship between communicative respect and overall enjoyment.

Middle-aged adult targets. In the American sample (Table 3), identical to the evaluation of older adult targets, the predictors of communicative respect and avoidance impacted the overall evaluation of these encounters. Communicative avoidance negatively predicted communication satisfaction: As avoidance decreased, the levels of communication satisfaction increased. For enjoyment, both respect and avoidance were found to be predictors.

In the Mongolian sample (Table 4) avoidance similarly predicted satisfaction, however it was only respect that predicted enjoyment. Unlike the USA sample, communicative avoidance did not predict the evaluation of enjoyment. When speaking with middle-aged adults, Mongolians reported that a decrease in avoidance predicted an increase in satisfaction, but a decrease in avoidance did not predict overall enjoyment.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the variables that influence the communication and the perceptions that young adults have about previous intergenerational encounters. When evaluating past interactions with various target age groups (i.e., middle-aged adults and older adults), the perceived

Table 3   Regression Results for USA Data (Middle-Aged Adults)

	B	F	df	R^2
Respect		15.86**	(5, 183)	.31
Vitality	-.060			
Benevolence	.194*			
Politeness	.403**			
Deference	.122			
Avoidance		2.44*	(5, 184)	.06
Vitality	-.103			
Benevolence	.061			
Politeness	-.080			
Deference	.216*			
Communication Satisfaction		8.09**	(7, 183)	.24
Respect	-.031			
Avoid	-.417**			
Vitality	-.069			
Benevolence	-.026			
Politeness	.245*			
Deference	-.072			
Communication Enjoyment		5.93**	(7, 183)	.19
Respect	.270*			
Avoid	-.351**			
Vitality	.101			
Benevolence	-.033			
Politeness	.102			
Deference	.023			

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

Table 4   Regression Results for Mongolia Data (Middle-Aged Adults)

	B	F	df	R^2
Respect		7.18**	(5, 142)	.21
Vitality	.139			
Benevolence	-.165			
Politeness	.472**			
Deference	-.046			
Avoidance		1.33	(5, 140)	.05
Vitality	-.081			
Benevolence	.044			
Politeness	-.081			
Deference	.165			
Communication Satisfaction		2.78*	(7, 139)	.13
Respect	.068			
Avoid	-.281*			
Vitality	.023			
Benevolence	-.147			
Politeness	.010			
Deference	-.104			
Communication Enjoyment		3.37*	(7, 138)	.15
Respect	.203*			
Avoid	-.090			
Vitality	.124			
Benevolence	.026			
Politeness	.132			
Deference	.094			

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

stereotypes of each age group, the norms of how members from each group should be treated, the perceptual reports of the communication behaviors that occur, and the overall reported outcome of these interactions varied by the cultural context. The evaluations of these concepts identified predictor variables for communicative behaviors and evaluations of satisfaction and enjoyment when speaking with target age groups.

CPAM (Figure 1) describes how the negative stereotypes, which are initially triggered by age cues, determine the communicative behaviors within an intergenerational encounter (Hummert, 2010). The findings in this study demonstrate and support this phenomenon, but also indicate a difference in cultural behavior regarding how each generation is perceived. These data indicate the importance of cultural influences in any given context, demonstrate a need for more analysis of the predictor variables found within intergenerational encounters, and finally provide further insight into the patterns of behavior described in CPAM.

American young adults seem to adhere more to a norm of

deference toward an older generation, but in Mongolia, young adults reported that a norm of deference did not contribute to their efforts in creating an accommodating climate for the same target age group. The findings also described the unique status of the middle-aged generation in Mongolia when compared to the same target age group in the USA. Nonaccommodative communication predicted negative evaluations for all other intergenerational encounters in both contexts; however, even with the presence of this negative communication behavior, Mongolians still reported that their interactions with the middle-aged group were enjoyable. The group vitality and position of this middle-age group in Mongolia seems to outweigh nonaccommodating behavior.

In a post-hoc analysis[2], Mongolians showed the same level of respect in their communication to the middle-aged group as they would a member of their own target age group. Similarly, the findings showed only a minimal increase in avoidance between young adults and the middle-aged in comparison to the more drastic increase seen in the U.S. sample. Middle-aged adults tend to hold a significantly higher level of group vitality within a society (Giles et al., 2000, Ota, McCann, & Honeycutt, 2012),

and this appears evident in the cultural and historical characteristics of Mongolia. This intergenerational quality seems to influence the communicative dynamic with the middle-age generation.

The hypotheses and research questions of this analysis were generally supported. The predictor variables were found to be wide-ranging in both contexts for the communication behavior, evaluation of satisfaction, and perceptions of enjoyment. When comparing the USA and Mongolian findings, these data proved to be helpful in more comprehensively understanding the impact of culture and historical influences within these interactions. Additionally, the analyses of intergenerational communication offered insight into the array of influences that produce such interactions. Let us now turn to discussing findings for each culture separately and as they relate to reported between-age group interactions.

USA Sample: Intergenerational Communication

The first two hypotheses in this study pertained to the USA sample, and both were partially supported. Similar to a previous analysis (McCann et al., 2005), both stereotypes and norms were seen to be predictors of the communication behavior found within an intergenerational encounter (H1). Within the USA intergenerational setting the expected norms of politeness and deference determined an adjustment in communication by young adults toward communicative respect, thereby creating an accommodative climate. Unfortunately, as also predicted, the same age cues also led a young adult to be more avoidant of these interactions (Gallois et al., 1999). Specifically, the stereotypes of personal vitality toward this older generation predicted nonaccommodative communication with older adults. Just as the CPAM proposes, when the stereotypes toward a particular age group become more negative, there is an increase in detrimental and avoidant communication behavior.

When predicting the perceived satisfaction and enjoyment of an intergenerational encounter, this analysis looked at the communicative behavior as predictors (H2). For the current USA sample, identical patterns were reported when American young adults communicated with the middle-aged group. The findings indicate that a positive communicative adjustment, or accommodative communication, led to the overall enjoyment of these intergenerational encounters. CPAM identifies the benefits of an accommodative climate for the older interlocutor, but being respectful seems to contribute also to the enjoyment experienced by the young adult as well. As for communicative avoidance, this variable clearly predicted both satisfaction and enjoyment. As the stereotypes,

driven by age cues, triggered more nonaccommodating behavior, young adults seem to experience a reduced sense of overall satisfaction. Cautiously applied, value may be obtained from these findings as they pertain directly to making intergenerational encounters more pleasant for both parties.

Mongolia Sample: Intergenerational Communication

In the Mongolian sample, RQ1 and RQ2 address how Mongolian participants evaluated interactions with middle-aged and older adults. The political and economic transformation of this context has resulted in a large-scale shift in values over the past several decades, and interactions with older adults have increasingly been evaluated as negative in Mongolia (Pedersen, 2006). As in the USA, and according to CPAM, the findings show that the norms of politeness predict communicative respect toward both middle-aged and older adults. Within an intergenerational encounter a young adult is reminded of the cultural and/or contextual expectation of how an older adult should be treated (i.e. norms of politeness), and as a result a communicative adjustment toward accommodativeness occurs. However, even though norms of politeness were reported in these reflections upon intergenerational communication, a norm of deference seemed to have no impact on communicative behaviors in the Mongolian sample.

This actually demonstrates a distinct cultural difference between the USA and Mongolia that may be caused by a rise in more individualistic ideologies throughout Mongolia's recent history (Stol & Adiya, 2010). Furthermore, the lack of relevance of deference toward older adults to communication behaviors in the Mongolian context is a surprisingly unique phenomenon in this cross-cultural line of research. Previously collected data in both the USA (McCann et al. 2005) and India (Giles et al. 2007) demonstrated that the norms of deference predicted accommodative behavior. However, this apparently is not the case in Mongolia, and these young adults reported that a norm of deference did not contribute to the efforts in creating an accommodative climate. As feared by older adults in Mongolia (Pedersen & Hojer, 2008), this finding offers evidence that young adults seem to be lacking in deference for this older generation.

Once again as elsewhere (i.e., USA, India, and South Africa), the most potent predictor of intergenerational communication satisfaction in Mongolia was communicative avoidance and, more importantly, the findings confirmed that communication behavior played a significant role in determining the perceived outcome

of these interactions. The regression analyses showed that there was much similarity between the USA and Mongolia in regard to what predicted both satisfaction and enjoyment, especially when older adults were the targets of evaluation. In answer to RQ2, the predictor variables were identical in the Mongolian sample as they were in the USA when evaluating communication with older adults. Communication avoidance was the only predictor of satisfaction, and communicative respect and avoidance appeared as predictors for communication enjoyment.

A difference, however, was reported when middle-aged adults became the target of communication. For the Mongolian sample, communicative avoidance did not act as a strong predictor of satisfaction, nor did it play a significant role in predicting enjoyment. In every other context reported (i.e., the USA, India, S. Africa, Ghana, Bulgaria, and when interactions with an older target age groups were evaluated) less avoidant communication, or underaccommodation, predicted more overall satisfaction and enjoyment. When young Mongolian adults reported on communication with the middle-aged target age group, this was not the case, and it is possible that this may be caused by the overall group vitality of the middle-aged generation (Giles et al., 2000).

The findings from the Mongolian sample seem to indicate that this middle-aged generation holds a unique position of authority in the social hierarchy of age groups. The group vitality of the middle-aged group in Mongolia seems to negate the impact of even nonaccommodative communication. Even with the presence of this negative communication behavior Mongolians still reported that their interactions with the middle-aged group were enjoyable. The status of the middle-aged target is so high in Mongolia that young adults report enjoyment from these interactions regardless of this negative communicative factor. This provides further evidence as to the differences between the two cultures, and specifically in regard to how this middle-aged group is perceived.

Limitations and Future Research

These findings should be interpreted in light of some limitations, not least of which is the reliance, as before, on student populations. The experience of urban living college students with higher levels of education should be considered to be a unique perspective on intergenerational communication. The amount of contact that college students in Mongolia have with the older generation may be significantly different than those who live in more rural areas. Relatedly, the amount of contact should be included as a moderating variable and/or controlled to determine its influence on the existing stereotypes and norms of behavior when young adults interact with other generations.

Another limitation of this study was that the existing political attitudes of participants in the sample were not independently assessed. Mongolia is unique in that the country has gone through considerable political and economic changes in just the past few decades. How young adults perceive communism and the Soviet Union may have an impact on their stereotypes of older generations who were contributors of this past political system. Negative attitudes toward communism and how those political ideologies affected Mongolian history, may be associated with older adults as an age group, and these negative impressions may have the potential to determine the evaluation of intergenerational encounters.

Despite these limitations, this study provided valuable data with an under-studied population in intergenerational communication research, and this Mongolian setting is deserving of more focal empirical and theoretical scrutiny. Yet again, this line of research has not been able to locate a cultural setting where the communication climate for older people holds any appreciable advantage for them. Clearly, there is a need to further investigate the factors that incline young people to avoid older individuals (as in the USA) – or where they are less deferent (as in Mongolia) - and what adverse outcomes arise as a consequence. Future work should continue to investigate all pertaining factors that work within these important intergenerational interactions.

Notes

1 Perceptions of "young" "middle-aged" and "older," were evaluated from relative standpoints using a within-subjects design. Further discussion of these data, as well as the age boundaries reported by participants can be obtained from the first author.

2 A univariate analyses showed that the interaction between target and nation was significant for respect ($F = 37.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .099$). Mongolians reported more respect for younger adults than did American participants (Mongolian $M = 5.01$; American $M = 4.16$). Mongolians and Americans reported similar levels of communicative respect for the middle-aged target (Mongolian $M = 5.03$; American $M = 5.06$). However, Americans reported more respect for older adults than did Mongolian participants (American $M = 5.95$; Mongolian $M = 5.37$).

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