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Abstract

William Gudykunst's Anxiety and Uncertainty Management Theory seeks to understand the factors that influence the effectiveness of intercultural communication. This study examines AUM theory in the context of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic interaction by assessing levels of anxiety, uncertainty, intercultural interaction confidence and intercultural willingness to communicate experienced by Non-Hispanic students in regards to communicating with Hispanic individuals. Anxiety's correlation with confidence and willingness to communicate suggests that intercultural communication across Hispanic-Non-Hispanic barriers may be more influenced by emotional factors than cognitive.

Testing Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory across Hispanic-non-Hispanic Barriers

Nearly three decades of extensive research by William Gudykunst and his associates has produced valuable insight on the field of intercultural communication in the form of Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory. In a general sense, the theory postulates that management of uncertainty and anxiety in intercultural interactions is necessary for participants to adapt and communicate effectively. While several studies have contributed to the theory's development since its initial configuration in the 1980s, there is very little research that actually tests the axioms and theorems of AUM within the boundaries of specific intercultural situations and interactions (Hammer & Wiseman, 1998). Furthermore, many of the studies that conduct empirical tests of the theory's components have tested AUM in terms of intercultural communication in a general sense rather than focusing on communication patterns between specific cultural groups. For example, Ann Neville Miller and Jennifer Samp (2007) conducted a study that tested the predictions of AUM in general intercultural and intracultural settings. They chose to look at AUM from a broad perspective rather than from a lens particular to a specified cultural group or barrier. While much of the existing research related to AUM theory parallels this model, a few studies have been devoted to testing the theory in specific intercultural contexts.

Many of the studies that test AUM theory's postulates across specific cultural barriers deal exclusively with communication between cultures in Japan and the United States. Gudykunst himself spent many years studying the factors that influence intercultural communication across Anglo-Asian barriers. For example, Gudykunst, Nishida and Schmidt (1989) investigated the cultural variations in uncertainty reduction

as related to the guidelines of AUM between participants in Japan and the United States (1989). This research contributes to the small pool of applications of AUM on specific cultural groups.

Substantial research that tests AUM across a diverse range of cultural barriers is needed to discover how AUM applies to a variety of specific intercultural situations. Research is also needed to test whether or not the theory is true for communication across all cultural barriers rather than just a select few. One intercultural context worth investigating in this way involves interaction across Hispanic-Non-Hispanic barriers because of its highly practical value and implications.

The Hispanic population in the United States is one of the fastest growing demographics in the country. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population in the United States is expected to nearly triple from 46.7 million to 132.8 million between the years 2008-2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2008). By mid-century the U.S. Census Bureau projects that nearly one in three of all U.S. residents will be Hispanic. The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the U.S. has enormous implications for the importance of understanding communication barriers between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics as logic would indicate that intercultural interactions between the groups will most likely increase in frequency. For this reason, testing AUM theory across Hispanic and Non-Hispanic barriers is a valuable action, as it will produce insight that may be beneficial to the greater understanding of communication between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics.

Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM)

Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM) is the result of decades of research conducted by William Gudykunst and his associates in the field of intercultural communication. Gudykunst began his ground-breaking study at a time when very little theoretical research on intercultural communication existed (Gudykunst, 2005a). He chose to incorporate similar concepts in the communication field, such as Berger & Calabrese's 1975 work on the Uncertainty Reduction Theory and Stephan & Stephan's collective work on anxiety, in order to build a theoretical foundation for what would become AUM (Gudykunst, 2005a). The integration of uncertainty and anxiety in AUM approaches intercultural communication from both a cognitive perspective (uncertainty) and an emotional perspective (anxiety) (Hammer, et al., 1998). This study discusses AUM in terms of its content and conclusions by addressing uncertainty and anxiety separately followed by how the concept of mindfulness binds the theory together.

Uncertainty is one of the two fundamental variables in AUM. According to Gudykunst, uncertainty is "a cognitive phenomenon" that affects the way we think about people we do not know or that are different from us, often described as members of our "outgroups" or "strangers" (2005b). Gudykunst goes on to suggest that uncertainty in the context of AUM is the inability "to predict strangers' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, values and behavior" (2005a, p.282). We try to reduce our uncertainty when interacting with strangers by trying to predict how they will behave and react to us (Hammer & Wiseman, 1998). Furthermore, we experience uncertainty more often when we communicate with people who are different than us rather than we communicate with people who are similar to us (Gudykunst, 2005a; Gudykunst, 1985). Logically, uncertainty is often experienced in intercultural interactions as it involves communicating with members of our outgroups.

Whenever we communicate with someone, we experience a certain degree of uncertainty. This level of uncertainty can be measured by comparing it to two innate standards we each possess: our maximum and minimum thresholds of uncertainty. Gudykunst claims that we each have our own maximum and minimum thresholds that help us to gauge our levels of uncertainty in a given communication situation and ultimately influence how we communicate with others (1985; 1991; 2005a). One's maximum threshold, according to Gudykunst, is the highest amount of uncertainty one can have and still feel confident in being able to predict a stranger's behavior "sufficiently to feel comfortable enough to interact with them" (2005a, p. 286). Gudykunst describes one's minimum threshold as "the lowest amount of uncertainty we can have and not feel bored or overconfident about our predictions of stranger's behaviors" (2005b, p. 422). Our maximum and minimum thresholds are fundamental aspects of AUM as they serve as guidelines for interaction.

AUM claims that maintaining a level of uncertainty between one's maximum and minimum thresholds is crucial to effective intercultural communication. When our uncertainty is above our maximum threshold, we no longer feel confident in being able to predict our counterpart's behavior or reactions and will most likely choose to avoid interaction (Gudykunst, 1991; Gudykunst, 2005a). If our uncertainty is below our minimum threshold, we become too sure of ourselves and rule out the possibility of misinterpreting a stranger's message (Gudykunst, 2005b). Gudykunst suggests that effective intercultural communication results from maintaining levels of uncertainty between our thresholds so that we are comfortable enough to engage in interaction but not over-confident in our predictions of other's behavior (2005a; 2005b).

Anxiety is the second of the two key variables employed by AUM to be indicators of effective intercultural communication. Gudykunst defines anxiety as "the emotional equivalent of uncertainty" (2005a, p.287). Like with uncertainty, we experience some level of anxiety whenever we interact with others. In regards to AUM, anxiety is an emotional feeling of disequilibrium that is often associated with feeling worried, uneasy, or apprehensive about what might happen in a communication situation (Gudykunst, 2005b). High levels of anxiety often are experienced when one is afraid of not receiving the reaction one wants from others. Gudykunst stresses that high levels of anxiety occur more often when we interact with strangers, or outgroups, because we feel vulnerable and are afraid of being perceived as prejudiced or incompetent (1985; 2005a).Gudykunst also suggests that uncertainty and anxiety tend to co-travel with each other in this way (2005a). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed for communication across Hispanic and Non-Hispanic barriers:

H1: Measures of uncertainty reported by Non-Hispanics in regards to communication with Hispanics are positively correlated with measures of anxiety reported by Non-Hispanics in reference to communication with Hispanics.

AUM suggests all have maximum and minimum thresholds of anxiety that function just as our thresholds of uncertainty do. One's maximum threshold is the highest amount of anxiety one can have and still feel comfortable communicating with strangers. Similarly, one's minimum threshold is the lowest level of anxiety one can experience and still care about one's interactions with strangers (Gudykunst, 2005a; Gudykunst, 2005b).

As with uncertainty, effective communication stems from one's ability to maintain a level of anxiety that is between one's maximum and minimum thresholds.

Gudykunst suggests that when anxiety is above our maximum threshold, we are so worried about the interaction that we choose to avoid it altogether (2005b). We may not know what the source of our anxiety is but its "unknown" characteristic scares us enough to deter us from interaction (Gudykunst, 2005a). If our anxiety is below our minimum threshold, we lack the curiosity and adrenaline that cause us to care enough about what might happen that we make an effort to communicate effectively (Gudykunst, 1985; Gudykunst, 2005a; Gudykunst, 2005b). Essentially, we need a high enough level of anxiety to motivate us to communicate effectively but a low enough level to allow us to feel comfortable about the interaction.

The fundamental suggestion made by AUM is that in order to effectively communicate with others, we must balance our amounts of uncertainty and anxiety by using our maximum and minimum thresholds as guidelines. Gudykunst and other proponents of AUM often use the term "mindfulness" as a means for managing our levels of uncertainty and anxiety. . According to Langer (1989) to be mindful is to be open to new information, to be aware of more than one perspective and to be willing to create new categories of ideas when communicating with others. Gudykunst suggests that being mindful, and therefore being open and aware to new perspectives and information, allows us to effectively manage our levels of uncertainty and anxiety in an effort to improve our intercultural communication experiences (2005a).

In order to further investigate the relationship between anxiety and uncertainty, as well as the roles they play in intercultural settings, this study integrates additional variables. By simultaneously measuring Intercultural Interaction Confidence (IIC) and Intercultural Willingness to Communicate (IWTC) with anxiety and uncertainty, this

study seeks to discover if the predictions of AUM extend to other similar intercultural factors.

AUM and Intercultural Interaction Confidence

As one of the five subcomponents of intercultural sensitivity, IIC refers to the affective or emotional factors that influence intercultural communication. Chen and Starosta (1997) define the overarching concept of intercultural sensitivity as one's "ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication" (p. 5). The authors further describe intercultural interaction confidence as "how confident participants are in an intercultural setting" (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 9). Chen and Starosta suggest that individuals that exhibit high levels of interaction confidence often feel stronger senses of self-worth and self-esteem in intercultural contexts and thus have a greater ability to deal with "feelings of alienation, frustration and stress caused by ambiguity in intercultural communication" (2000, p. 4). This claim closely parallels suggestions made by Gudykunst regarding how moderately low levels of anxiety and uncertainty often result in moderately high levels of confidence, which leads to effective intercultural communication.

Intercultural interaction confidence in regards to AUM is most closely related to anxiety because of their projected negative correlation. The role of anxiety as a variable in AUM serves as an indicator of how sure we are of ourselves in being able to interact with people of different cultures. Based on the theoretical suggestions of AUM, one would assume that moderately low levels of anxiety in intercultural exchanges would be associated with higher levels of intercultural interaction confidence as developed by Chen

and Starosta (2000). But is anxiety the ultimate determinant of interaction confidence?

Can one experience very low levels of anxiety but still lack significant amounts of

personal confidence? This study will attempt to use measures of anxiety as predictors of

intercultural interaction confidence by means of the theoretical contentions of AUM. The

same procedure also will be conducted using uncertainty. Based on the assumptions made

by AUM, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Non-Hispanic participants who report greater levels of anxiety will report lower

scores of intercultural interaction confidence regarding communication across Hispanic-

non-Hispanic barriers.

H3: Non-Hispanic participants who report greater levels of uncertainty will report lower

scores of intercultural interaction confidence regarding communication across Hispanic

and Non-Hispanic barriers.

AUM and Willingness to Communicate

Measures of anxiety and uncertainty in AUM function as indicators of the

likelihood of whether or not an individual will engage in effective communication with

someone from a different culture or race. However, these variables may not necessarily

measure whether or not an individual, in this case a non-Hispanic respondent, actually is

willing to even engage in conversation with a Hispanic individual. Logically, if

respondents are unwilling to engage in communication across Hispanic and Non-

Hispanic barriers for reasons not predicted by levels of anxiety or uncertainty, then AUM

may not be the most accurate illustrator of how the intercultural encounter will unfold.

Therefore, this study will also measure respondents' willingness to communicate with

Hispanics in an effort to provide an additional perspective on the factors that influence and contribute to communication across Hispanic-Non-Hispanic barriers.

The concept of intercultural willingness to communicate (IWTC) as developed by Kassing has been used by several scholars to measure one's motivation and likelihood to interact with people outside of their native cultures (Lin, et.al, 2005). Kassing defines IWTC as "one's predisposition to initiate intercultural communication encounters" (1997). Similar to McCroskey and Richmond's (1990) development of the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) variable, IWTC refers to one's tendency to engage in communication with others when presented with the freedom to choose whether to interact or not (Kassing, 1997). However, the concept of "others" differs between the two concepts. WTC addresses communication encounters between friends, acquaintances and strangers in all types of contexts while IWTC specifically refers to one's willingness to initiate communication in interactions with people of different races and cultures (Kassing, 1997).

AUM suggests that individuals with uncertainty and anxiety levels that are between their maximum and minimum thresholds in any given intercultural communication situation are more likely to engage in effective communication with their counterpart than those with levels outside of their thresholds (Gudykunst, 2005a; Gudykunst, 2005b). One could then assume that based on Gudykunst's predictions in AUM and Kassing's work with IWTC, individuals with lower levels of uncertainty and anxiety levels regarding intercultural interaction will experience a greater amount of intercultural willingness to communicate and will therefore engage in that interaction. Therefore, the following hypotheses are presumed:

H4: Mid-range scores of anxiety (measures equal to or less than one standard deviation from the mean) in Non-Hispanic respondents will report greater scores of intercultural willingness to communicate than those reporting anxiety scores higher or lower than one standard deviation from the mean.

H5: Non-Hispanic respondents reporting mid-range scores of uncertainty (measures equal to or less than one standard deviation from the mean) in intercultural communication with Hispanics will report greater scores of intercultural willingness to communicate than those Non-Hispanics reporting uncertainty scores higher or lower than one standard deviation from the mean.

Finally, in order to conduct a second assessment of the proposed correlations between anxiety and uncertainty, intercultural interaction confidence will be compared to willingness to communicate as substitutes for the inverse of anxiety and uncertainty. This can be seen in the following hypothesis:

H6: Non-Hispanic participants who report higher scores of intercultural interaction confidence with Hispanic individuals will also report higher scores of intercultural willingness to communicate than those reporting lower scores of IIC.

Method

Data Collection

Participants included 50 undergraduate students recruited via convenience sampling in classrooms and public areas at the University of Portland. The sample was comprised of 39 females and 11 males. Forty-five of the respondents described their racial background as Caucasian while three students identified themselves as Asian-Pacific Islander and two were undisclosed. Similarly, forty-four of the respondents

classified their parents' racial background as Caucasian, three as Asian Pacific Islander, one as African-American and two were undisclosed.

Procedure

A brief questionnaire was distributed to willing participants in both classrooms and public areas at the University of Portland campus. First, the researcher generally explained the purpose of the study as an investigation of intercultural communication across Hispanic- Non-Hispanic barriers. The researcher then asked if the students would be willing to participate and provided willing respondents with an implied consent form. After agreeing to participate, the respondents were instructed to complete the questionnaire as thoroughly and honestly as possible. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaires separately from any surrounding influences and to refrain from any collaboration.

Measures

Anxiety. Anxiety was measured by an adapted version of the intergroup anxiety instrument developed by Stephan and Stephan (1985). The scale consists of 10 items. For each item, the following question was asked: " If you were the only member of your ethnic group and you were interacting with people from a Hispanic background (e.g., talking with them, working on a project with them), how would you feel compared to occasions when you are interacting with people from your own ethnic group?" The items employed 10-point scales to determine if they would feel more or less certain, awkward, self-conscious, happy, accepted, confident, irritated, impatient, defensive, suspicious, and careful when interacting with Hispanics (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Stephan and Stephan (1985) report a Cronbach's alpha of .86. This study yields an alpha of .90.

Uncertainty. Uncertainty was measured using the 12-item uncertainty scale developed by Gudykunst and Nishida (1986). Respondents are asked to think of someone they know distantly (i.e. not family members, friends, significant others) that is of Hispanic descent. For each item, respondents are asked to indicate their ability to predict selected aspects of the behavior of this person on a scale of 0-100, with 0 equal to total uncertainty of the person's behavior and 100 representing absolute certainty of how the person would behave. Higher collective scores for this scale suggest a lower degree of uncertainty. The instrument yields a Cronbach's alpha of .92 (1986). The current study reports an alpha of .91.

Intercultural interaction confidence. Intercultural interaction confidence was assessed using the Intercultural Interaction Confidence subscale of Guo-Ming Chen's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (2000). The 5-item instrument consists of declarative statements like "I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with Hispanic people" and "I find it very hard to talk in front of Hispanic people." Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree with each statement by using a 5-point rating scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Higher overall scores indicate higher levels of intercultural interaction confidence in the respondent, taking into consideration the questions that are reverse coded (Chen, 2000). Chen (1990) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .86 for the scale. The current study yields an alpha of .88.

Intercultural Willingness to Communicate. The Intercultural Willingness to Communicate scale (Kassing, 1997) is a 5-item scale describing six situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not communicate with another person. Examples of situations include "Talk with someone I perceive to be different than me" and "Talk

with someone from a different race than mine" (Kassing, 1997). Respondents were asked to indicate what percentage of the time they would choose to communicate in the given situation with 0% = never and 100% = always. The higher the total score, the higher degree of the respondent's intercultural willingness to communicate. Kassing (1997) reported a Cronbach's Alpha of .91 for the scale. The current study yields an alpha of .90.

Results

Hypothesis one predicted a positive relationship between anxiety and uncertainty in Hispanic-Non-Hispanic intercultural interactions. Anxiety, Uncertainty, IIC and IWTC are all continuous variables, rather than nominal, and may therefore be tested using a correlation method. The most widely used method of this kind is the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) which "provides an index of the extent to which ordered pairs of measurements share variance, (Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, 2003, p.353). Hocking, Stacks and McDermott (2003, p. 353) describe the purpose of the correlation analysis to be used as a means for telling the researcher "if and to what degree individual scores on two variables are related." For example, if the r value reported is equal to 1.00 then there is a perfect positive correlation. Similarly, if r = -1.00 then the data reports a perfect negative correlation. Finally, if $-.5 < r < .50$ (or r = 0), the data suggests weak or no correlation between the variables (Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, 2003, p. 352) Therefore, any relation shown by the correlation analysis using the value of the Pearson r was used to determine if the correlations proposed in the hypotheses are supported. Two-way correlation tests revealed that anxiety was negatively correlated with *certainty*, $r = -.38, p < .02$. This indicates a positive correlation with *uncertainty* as predicted by H1.

Hypothesis two proposed that non-Hispanic participants that report greater levels of anxiety would report lower scores of intercultural interaction confidence in regards to communication across Hispanic-non-Hispanic barriers. A two-way correlation test showed that intercultural interaction confidence had a significant negative correlation with anxiety as suggested by $r = -.66, p < .01$.

Hypothesis three predicted a similar negative relationship between uncertainty and Intercultural Interaction Confidence. However, the two-way correlation test of IIC and certainty (and inversely uncertainty) did not yield a significant correlation in either direction ($r = .27, p < .03$). Hypothesis three was not supported.

Hypothesis four predicted that non-Hispanics reporting mid-range scores of intercultural anxiety would also report the greatest IWTC scores. In order to address the minimum and maximum thresholds that apply to anxiety and uncertainty in H4 and H5, some additional data analysis techniques were employed. First, the anxiety and uncertainty variables were recoded using the values of 1, 2 and 3 to represent each of the 3 score segments reported by respondents. For example, a value of 1 was given to all respondents with low scores of uncertainty. Similarly, a value of 2 was assigned to mid-range scores while high range scores were labeled with a value of 3. In order to determine the numeric constraints of these segments, the data were split using 1 standard deviation below and 1 standard deviation above the mean of the scores as segment determinants. These values therefore rendered all responses less than 1 standard deviation from the mean as the low scores (recoded as 1), all responses greater than 1 standard deviation from the mean as the high scores (recoded as 3) and all responses within 1 standard deviation above and below the mean as mid-range scores (recoded as 2). This new

variable, labeled "Uncertainty mean split", was then compared to IWTC as proposed by H5 using a one-way ANOVA test. The same procedure was conducted for anxiety. The anxiety mean-split variable yields a mean of 1.92 and standard deviation of .64. However, a one-way ANOVA test between the anxiety mean split variable and IWTC suggests no significant difference between the means (F = 1.911, p = .159). Hypothesis four was not supported.

Similarly, hypothesis five proposed that non-Hispanics reporting mid-range scores of intercultural uncertainty would also report greater IWTC scores. The uncertainty mean split variable reports a mean value of 2.04 and standard deviation of .50. However, the one-way ANOVA comparison of IWTC and the uncertainty mean split variable yielded a non-significant difference level of .098, thus indicating that there is no distinct difference between the means, F = 2.45, p = .10.

Finally, hypothesis six predicted a positive relationship between IIC and IWTC. However, a two-way correlation test (r =.250, p = .08) showed that the two variables were not significantly related. Hypothesis six was not supported.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to test the fundamental principles of Anxiety and Uncertainty Management Theory in a specific intercultural context involving communication between Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations. Intercultural Interaction Confidence and Intercultural Willingness to Communicate were also integrated into the study to create a more dynamic investigation of intercultural interaction. Based on extensive research by Gudykunst and other scholars, it was hypothesized that this study

would reinforce the proposed relationships among the four variables of anxiety, uncertainty, IIC and IWTC.

Contrary to earlier predictions, the results of this study suggest that AUM theory, in conjunction with Intercultural Interaction Confidence and Intercultural Willingness to Communicate, does not necessarily hold true for interaction across Hispanic-Non-Hispanic barriers. In fact, only two of the six proposed relationships were supported by the data. This study found evidence that predominately reinforces the predicted relationships involving anxiety but not those involving uncertainty.

In accordance with Gudykunst's claims, the results of this study support many of the predicted relationships between anxiety and other variables. The results suggest that high levels of anxiety felt by non-Hispanic individuals in regards to communicating with Hispanics are related to high levels of uncertainty in the same situation. Gudykunst claims that high levels of anxiety are also associated with low levels of confidence and willingness to communicate (2005a). This study found evidence that supports this assertion in the context of communication across Hispanic and non-Hispanic barriers.

In the case of uncertainty, this study was unable to substantiate the relationships proposed by the research. Gudykunst argues that both our confidence and willingness to communicate with our outgroups decrease as our uncertainty rises (2005a). However, the lack of significant correlations between uncertainty and both IIC and IWTC in this study suggests that these relationships are not necessarily upheld in the context of Hispanic and non-Hispanic barriers within this study population.

Despite existing evidence that suggests mid-range scores of anxiety and uncertainty will produce the greatest scores of confidence and willingness to

communicate across cultural barriers, this study found little evidence to support this claim. The ANOVA tests indicate that the difference between the means of these variables was not significant enough to suggest a relationship. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the highest levels of confidence and IWTC are associated with levels of anxiety and uncertainty lying between Gudykunst's minimum and maximum thresholds. Perhaps one's confidence and willingness to engage in communication across Hispanic-Non-Hispanic barriers are more closely related to other intercultural factors outside of AUM theory's anxiety and uncertainty variables. Future research should be conducted to investigate factors related to IIC and IWTC in intercultural interactions.

Finally, this study was unable to support the positive relationship between IIC and IWTC predicted by the research. The absence of a strong correlation suggests that a significant difference exists between IIC and IWTC. Upon first glance, one might assume that one's confidence and willingness to communicate in intercultural situations would be very similar if not the same. They are hard to differentiate as abstract terms. However, this study suggests that the two concepts indeed may be quite different. One's intercultural interaction confidence may not necessarily be related to one's IWTC. Therefore, it may be possible for a non-Hispanic to feel confident about interacting with a Hispanic but not be willing to do so. Similarly, the results are open to the possibility that one may be willing to communicate across this intercultural barrier even when one's IIC may not be extremely high.

The predominant implication of these results is that there is a clear difference between anxiety and uncertainty felt by non-Hispanics about intercultural interaction. The results suggest that respondent's confidence and willingness to interact with

Hispanics is more associated with their feelings of worry or uneasiness in these situations than their ability to predict their counterpart's attitudes and beliefs. Perhaps the emotional factors associated with anxiety have a greater effect on non-Hispanic individuals in Hispanic interactions than the cognitive factors of uncertainty.

According to the relationships found between anxiety and both IIC and IWTC, the results suggest that non-Hispanic practitioners may increase their intercultural interaction confidence and intercultural willingness to communicate with Hispanics by lowering and managing their anxiety levels. Gudykunst would describe this process as maintaining a low enough level of anxiety that allows one to minimize feelings of worry and apprehension about intercultural interactions. This study suggests that anxiety management can be used to increase a non-Hispanic's intercultural confidence and desire to engage in communication with person of Hispanic descent.

Limitations of this study include social desirability, implications of convenience sampling and demographics. Due to its nature and content, a potential for social desirability is a limitation of the current study. According to Hocking, Stacks and McDermott (2003) social desirability refers to a participant's tendency to respond in accordance with his or her perception of societal ideologies about the topic. For example, a respondent may report a higher degree of intercultural willingness to communicate not because it is true for them but perhaps because of social pressures that encourage intercultural tolerance and acceptance. The respondent in this case may answer questions in a certain way because he or she does not want to appear to be intolerant or racist. The effects of social desirability can be problematic in studies because if participants are not

honest in their responses, the data may not accurately reflect the true perceptions of the sample.

Diversity in demographics and experiences may also be a limitation of this study. The instruments alone do not measure other factors that may influence one's anxiety, uncertainty, IWTC or IIC like personal backgrounds or exposure to Anglo-Hispanic barriers. For example, the data would most likely differ if all respondents were of Caucasian backgrounds with no exposure to Hispanic culture(s) versus a sample rich in participants with significant experiences with Anglo-Hispanic intercultural situations. The final portion of the questionnaire was designed to account for this limitation as it asks about respondents' backgrounds and experiences with Anglo-Hispanic barriers. Questions range from "How do you describe your racial background?" to "Describe any experience you have had with Hispanic people or Hispanic culture(s)?" The demographic and open-ended experiential questions were strategically placed at the end of the survey so as not to influence respondent's answers to the instruments' questions.

Future research is needed to investigate the backgrounds and experiences of respondents in ways this study did not, since those may relate to intercultural communication competence. What factors influence the anxiety, uncertainty, IIC and IWTC scores that respondents report? Perhaps a qualitative investigation could provide greater insight on why participants respond in the way they do. Future research also is needed in testing intercultural communication theories like AUM across additional cultural barriers beyond Hispanic and Non-Hispanic interactions. Perhaps AUM theory's principles of anxiety and uncertainty could be extended to other communication barriers like gender, sexual orientation and ability.

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