# Communicating Identity

Name

Institution Affiliation

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**How has the Selected Aspect of your Identity been Shaped by Social and/or Biological Factors?**

Gender identity implies the extent to which an individual relates to a specific gender. It is the personal experience and sense of being a female or male or another gender. The gender of a person is usually influenced in the early stages of life and includes the acceptance or non-acceptance of an individual's affiliation to a gender category. This can be explained by the concept of majority identity which, in the second stage, elucidates on how difficult it is to ignore the societal hierarchy that shapes both majority and minority development due to its inescapable, systemic, and intertwining quality (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

In my view, possessing the identity of a Chinese woman is significantly influenced by a range of social factors. For instance, in our culture, the female is the central figure in the domestic setting while the male performs a more dominant role in the business industry. Moreover, it is true that in the production of silk, which was essential to diplomacy and trade of China, women were the one that provided the physical labor needed to plant the mulberry trees, nurturing the worms, extracting the silk, and spinning it into cloth. Therefore, from the early history of our culture, the female identity is characterized by the submissive woman who performs domestic roles.

On the other hand, biological factors such as genetic makeup have also played a role in shaping my gender identity. Superficially, the determination of gender in the Chinese society is straightforward: if you are conceived with two X chromosomes, you will possess female genitalia (thus, you are a girl). If you are born with an X and Y chromosome, you will have male genitalia (thus, you are a girl). The explanation behind this is that testosterone and a gene on the

Y chromosome begin their production in the male fetus. By the 12th week of pregnancy (around the period of a female's first ultrasound), the occurrence of the hormone will have shaped the infant's genitalia into either ovaries or testes.

**How does this Aspect of your Identity Affect your Thinking, Perception, Behavior, or Interactions with Homogeneous or Heterogeneous Others?**

Indeed, being a Chinese woman, certain behaviors are inherent in the way I communicate. A large part of the way I express myself is in the form of nonverbal communication which includes eye contact, tone of voice, facial expression, and gestures. These communication styles have a vital role in the Chinese culture and are sometimes greater than verbal interaction. There is a range of gestures with different meanings. Also, different regions of China have specific emotions and gestures. Still, because of the diverse culture and background, even similar emotions and gestures have different connotations for different people in some settings.

Communication style is a mixture of nonverbal communication and language. It is the underlying meaning that scrutinizes the way listeners are supposed to hear and understand verbal messages. The main way through which cultural groups exhibit differences in communication styles is in the inclination towards high versus low-context communication. Our Chinese culture demonstrates high-context communication where a large part of the information conveyed is in the form of physical context or reflected in the individual (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). This style of communication focuses on comprehending messages without direct verbal communication.

On the other hand, the United Sates exhibits low-context communication where much of the information and meaning is the form of verbal code. This type of communication that focuses

on explicit verbal messages is of great importance to the American culture. Interactive communication course books usually highlight that it is not effective to depend on nonverbal, contextual information. Rather, they emphasize on the significance of being clear and to the point and avoiding ambiguity (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Nonetheless, most cultural groups around the globe recognize the importance of high-context communication. Adults and children are encouraged to be attentive towards body cues and not just the words conveyed in a dialogue.

**How is your identity enacted/performed/negotiated in different cultural contexts? Remember that contexts are multi-layered.** My gender identity is performed in different ways depending on the cultural context. For example, when I am volunteering at the clinic on the weekends, I have to assume a caring and active character when handling the patients. This is essential because the hospital setting requires me to add hope to the lives of those that are in suffering. In contrast, when I am at home trying to make my siblings share the house chores, I must have an authoritative voice to persuade them into making sure that everything is organized and clean.

This can be explained by the theory of impression management which pertains to the way individuals present themselves and how they shape the perception that others have of them (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Properly managing impression not only helps in giving a good impression to those we interact with but is also aids in achieving required outcomes efficiently. Impression management has real repercussions in many facets of daily life where we have the need to present to others our general impression as superb. This is an essential part of the development of personality

When taking into account the ways impression management results to the growth of character, it is vital to consider self-concept which is linked to self-esteem. When an individual

sees that he/she is not being taken in the way anticipated, he/she starts to consider if something better should have been enacted to manage the impression in a better way. This could guide a person to self-development and could aid in creating certain methods to develop a good impression on others. It is important to realize that if one is ready to leave a good impression on others, he/she should not undervalue the significance of sustaining a healthy personality every time. Maintaining a healthy nature is centered on behavior that viewed as appropriate and acceptable in the society.

# References

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2013). *Intercultural Communication in Contexts* (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.