

Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the different discussion styles of three cultures: Mainland China, Hong Kong and USA. Participants were asked to discuss a hypothetical shipwreck scenario and rank the 15 survival items according to their potential for facilitating survival. A coding system was devised that included both verbal and non-verbal behavior and tested whether these behaviors varies across the three cultures. Verbal behavior included group interruption, group questions, speaking time, total group discussion time, simultaneous speech and group pauses. Non-verbal behavior included laughter, gazing and body movement. Results showed that cultural effects can only be found in group discussion time and group questions between the China and US group. The group discussion time was higher in China group whereas group questions were greater in the US group. Implications of these findings were discussed.