

## Displays of Status and Expressiveness in Professional Profile Pictures on LinkedIn and Corporate Websites: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of China and the United States

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**Displays of Status and Expressiveness in Professional Profile Pictures  
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**Abstract**

This research compares how Chinese and American professionals visually self-present with professional profile pictures. Three studies were conducted. In Study 1, we surveyed 310 professionals in China and 215 professionals in the United States about preferred profile picture backgrounds for professional sites, such as LinkedIn and corporate webpages. Generally, Americans opted first for grey backgrounds more so than Chinese, and Chinese opted for blue and white backgrounds more so than Americans. Chinese and Americans both preferred office pictures over outdoor settings, although Chinese were more likely to choose office settings without views. In Study 2, we evaluated CEO profile pictures on corporate webpages of 100 Chinese CEOs and 100 American CEOs. Generally, Chinese CEOs project more formal, status-driven signals whereas American CEOs are more likely to display expressiveness. In Study 3, we evaluated the LinkedIn profile pictures and banners of 900 early-career finance professionals, including 300 American finance professionals, 300 Chinese finance profiles with English-language LinkedIn profiles (also referred to as cosmopolitan Chinese professionals), and 300 Chinese finance profiles with Chinese-language LinkedIn profiles (also referred to as domestic Chinese professionals). American women and cosmopolitan Chinese women are significantly more expressiveness than nearly all other groups, closely followed by Chinese domestic women and American men. Cosmopolitan Chinese men and domestic Chinese men are the least expressive. As far as professional profile pictures, we found that Chinese and American professionals tend to cluster into the following types: friendly professionals, corporate leaders, expressive leaders, casual professionals, and independents. These typologies involve various combinations of expressiveness and status displays. Each of these typologies effectively serves as a visual rhetoric of professional identity.

*Keywords:* profile pictures, professional social networking, visual rhetoric, cross-cultural communication

## Introduction

While self-presentation with pictures has been explored extensively on public social networking sites, relatively little attention has been devoted to visual self-presentation on professional sites such as LinkedIn (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018). The purpose of this study is to explore self-presentation with professional profile pictures. Specifically, we focus on two aspects of visual self-presentation: (1) displays of individuality and emotional expressiveness (often stated simply as *expressiveness* in this article) and (2) displays of professionalism and status (often stated simply as *status* in this article). We compare professionals from the two largest economies in the world: China and the United States.

## Theoretical Background

Among the first academic articles about visual self-presentation with professional profile pictures is the work of Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018). They conducted a study of 480 LinkedIn portraits in a representative city in the United States. They found that two often opposing forces impact these professional profile portraits: norms to promote a business-like professional image and norms of self-expression to demonstrate uniqueness and attractiveness. While some non-academic, cross-cultural analysis of smiles exists (e.g., Khazan, 2016, 2017), our work is the first known scholarly comparison of professional profile pictures between Chinese and Americans. We primarily adopt Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz's (2018) theoretical orientation and approach to our research. Specifically, we adopt their theoretical distinction between two broad motivations or forces that drive composition of professional profiles. We refer to these two motivations as (1) displays of individuality and emotional expressiveness and (2) displays of professionalism and status. In this section, we briefly review some of the literature about displays of expressiveness and status in profile pictures. We also include a short description of prescribed practices for professional portraits on LinkedIn.

### **Expressiveness and Individuality: *To Smile or Not to Smile***

One of the key distinctions of emotional expressiveness that Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018) explore is that of smiling. They grounded their research in the view that women are more emotionally expressive for evolutionary reasons (see Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018 for detailed explanation). Further, they cited various studies that show women are typically more emotionally expressive on public social media. For example, women smile more than men in Facebook profile pictures (Haferkamp et al., 2012; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Otton et al., 2013; Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014).

Some research exists that makes cross-cultural comparisons of smiling. Research among Chinese suggests they may smile less and do so in less excited fashion to emphasize traits such as harmony, restraint, calmness, and tranquility (Ruby, Falk, Heine, Villa, & Silberstein, 2012). Tsai et al. (2016) conducted several studies comparing how Chinese and Americans perceive and

exhibit smiles. They found that American public leaders show more excited smiles than Chinese public leaders do.

Tsai et al. (2018) researched social judgments of smiles made by Hong Kong Chinese and European Americans. They examined contrasts between perceptions in dominance (assertiveness) and affiliation (warmth and agreeableness). In a series of studies, they considered how the Chinese and Americans interpreted *excited smiles* (those showing teeth) and *calm smiles* (those not showing teeth). Americans tended to rate people with excited smiles as more extraverted and agreeable. This resulted in overall higher judgments that people with excited smiles were affiliative. There were no significant differences as far as judgments of competence.

In perhaps the largest cross-cultural study of smiling, Kryszewski et al. (2016) asked respondents in 44 cultures to make evaluations of honesty and intelligence based on whether they were smiling or not smiling in photos. They found that in some cultures, smiling was associated with less honesty and less intelligence. Negative perceptions of smiling were typically correlated with countries low in uncertainty avoidance and high in corruption. The Chinese sample associated smiles with more intelligence and with more honesty. The American sample associated smiles with more honesty but not more or less intelligence.

Additional research about emotional expressiveness tends to show that women are more emotionally expressive. One sign of this expressiveness is head canting. Head canting is sometimes viewed as a sign of appeasement or submissiveness (Costa, Menzani, & Bitti, 2001; Halberstadt & Saitta, 1987; Ragan, 1982). Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018) also looked at head canting in their study of LinkedIn profiles and found that women engage in head canting more often than men do. Another common sign of emotional expressiveness is placing hands on one's face, which generally highlights the face and gives a more approachable look (Quiles, 2017).

### **Professionalism and Status: *Dressing for Success***

Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018) primarily looked at professionalism and status through attire. A variety of literature shows that characteristics such as status authoritativeness are projected by more formal business attire, while characteristics such as friendliness and approachability may be projected by more casual business attire (Cardon & Okoro, 2009; Hall, Karl, & Peluchette, 2013; Karl, Hall, & Peluchette, 2013; Peluchette & Karl, 2007; Peluchette, Karl, & Rust, 2006). Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018) found that men tend to dress more formally and project more status and authoritativeness. In some cases, accessories may be viewed as signs of power and status. For example, scarves for women have been considered a power accessory (Deihl, 2015).

Men are more likely to show emotional distance with their nonverbal behavior in social media. For example, Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2014) found that in Facebook photos, men are more likely to emphasize status and emotional distance. They display status with clothing or risk taking in outdoor settings. They display emotional distance by wearing dark glasses, making less

eye contact, and smiling less. Men are more likely to display a stern face, which often shows power and is the “antithesis of submissiveness” (Collett, 2017). Folding arms for pictures can have many meanings. It is most often seen as a power pose, particularly among men (Navaroo, 2014). Men can use beards as a sign of masculinity, attractiveness, and social dominance (Dixon, Sulikowski, Gouda-Vossos, Rantala, & Brooks, 2016), although clean-shaven appearances are generally considered better in choosing prospective managers (de Souza et al., 2003).

### **Popular Advice for LinkedIn Profiles**

Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018) summarized common popular advice in an American setting. Common advice suggests profile pictures should be current and professional looking. “Artsy” images are typically less influential. Ideally, it should be a high-resolution, professional portrait. Faces should take up to 60 percent of frame and should be cropped at the top of the shoulders. Backgrounds should be simple and avoid featuring pets, family members, or other people. For attire, professionals should dress in business casual or formal business dress. They should avoid casual clothing. They should wear solid and dark colors and avoid distracting accessories. They should smile to appear approachable, keep their heads straight and upright, and avoiding tilting that may show low self-confidence. Assymetric pictures are also recommended.

Popular advice for Chinese professionals is similar in many ways but varies in several ways. Similarly, Chinese professionals are encouraged to use a professional headshot and avoid the casual images from their social lives they would post to other public social networking sites. Smiles are encouraged to show they are optimistic, spirited, and reliable. Direct eye contact is encouraged to build trust. Folding arms or leaning one’s body to one side can express confidence and display ambitions and aspirations. They are encouraged to use simple backgrounds. White backgrounds are preferred over red and blue because they highlight the person better. In contrast, Chinese professionals are told to avoid their official ID photos, which may come across as too serious and too formal. Chinese professionals are encouraged to use a professional picture that compels others to want to know more about that person. Chinese professionals have even been encouraged to show themselves during a typical day at work so people easily relate to your professional industry (Career Tu, 2017; Wu, 2018).

For portrait-style photos, a variety of interpretations are possible for background colors. Blue is associated with soothing and relaxing feelings. In profile pictures, it is generally considered more masculine and is often associated with productivity and executives in large corporations. Grey or silver highlights people well and may be used to show sophistication. Red backgrounds are typically associated with passion, ambition, and love. Yellow is associated with cheerfulness and warmth. Green is associated with environmentalism, health, and money. Brown, beige, black, and white are generally considered neutral in meaning while also providing a stylish, classical look (Bhardway, 2017; Woods, 2013). Ultimately, we chose not to frame background color in terms of expressiveness or status because of some remaining ambiguity about how to classify various colors.

## Study 1: Survey of Profile Backgrounds

Our first study was developed prior to the final two studies. Originally, we intended to simply compare preferred portrait backgrounds. This initial study intrigued us enough in the topic of visual self-presentation to develop the final two studies.

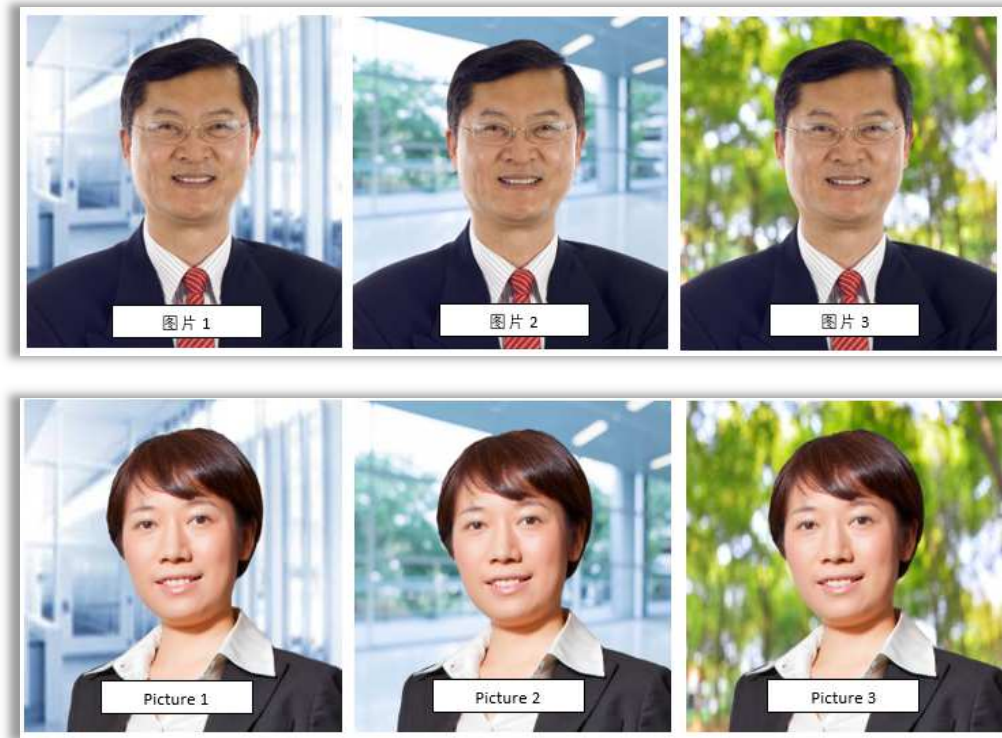
### Study 1 Methodology

We focused on two sets of backgrounds: (1) simple backgrounds of different colors; and (2) office versus nature backgrounds. We chose to examine the backgrounds with photos of men and women. The simple backgrounds were one of four colors: white, red, grey, and blue (see Figure 1). The office versus nature backgrounds consisted of an office background (referred to as *office* in the findings tables), an office with a view (referred to as *view* in the findings tables), and an outdoors shot with a background of trees (referred to as *outdoors* in the findings tables). While we were cautious from the outset to interpret the meaning of color backgrounds, we did view the office versus nature choices as distinctions between status and expressiveness. The office background focuses solely on the professional environment, whereas the outdoors background does not emphasize a professional environment at all. Rather, it shows more expressiveness on the part of the professional. The office with a view, to a certain extent, is a combination of these signals.

**Figure 1.** Choices for Simple Background.



**Figure 2.** Choices for Office versus Nature Backgrounds.



We surveyed full-time professionals in China and the United States. The Chinese sample included 310 respondents (136 men and 174 women). These respondents came from many age groups: 18 to 20 years old, 18 respondents; 21 to 25 years old, 45 respondents; 26 to 30 years old, 27 respondents; 31 to 40 years old, 104 respondents; 41 to 50, 108 respondents; 51 to 65 years old, 8 respondents. The American sample included 215 respondents (103 men and 112 women). These respondents came from the following age groups: 18 to 29 years old, 32 respondents; 30 to 44 years old, 75 respondents; 45 to 60 years old, 84 respondents; over 60 years old, 24 respondents.

The survey was administered online. It randomized each set of pictures. In other words, respondents only saw one version of the simple backgrounds (either with the man or with the woman in the pictures) and one version of the office versus nature backgrounds (either with the man or with the woman in the pictures).

### **Study 1 Findings**

For the simple backgrounds (see Tables 1 and 2 as well as Exhibits 1 and 2), American men preferred the grey backgrounds whether a man or a woman was in the picture. American women preferred the grey background when a man was in the picture but slightly preferred blue over grey when a woman was in the picture. Chinese men and women preferred blue as the background when and man or a woman was in the picture. Chinese were much more likely to prefer white backgrounds generally, particularly when a man was in the picture.

**Table 1.** Preferences for Background Colors with a Man in the Picture.

Color	<u>American Men</u>		<u>American Women</u>		<u>Chinese Men</u>		<u>Chinese Women</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	5	10.4%	7	14.9%	18	27.3%	31	35.6%	61	24.6%
Red	6	12.5%	2	4.3%	13	19.7%	6	6.9%	27	10.9%
Grey	20	41.7%	23	48.9%	8	12.1%	11	12.6%	62	25.0%
Blue	17	35.4%	15	31.9%	27	40.9%	39	44.8%	98	39.5%
Total	48	100%	47	100%	66	100%	87	100%	248	100%

Note. Chi-square = 45.6,  $p < .01^{**}$

**Table 2.** Preferences for Background Colors with a Woman in the Picture.

	<u>American Men</u>		<u>American Women</u>		<u>Chinese Men</u>		<u>Chinese Women</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	12	21.8%	13	19.7%	9	13.0%	24	27.6%	58	20.9%
Red	1	1.8%	1	1.5%	12	17.4%	12	13.8%	26	9.4%
Grey	18	32.7%	27	40.9%	13	18.8%	17	19.5%	75	27.1%
Blue	24	43.6%	25	37.9%	35	50.7%	34	39.1%	118	42.6%
Total	55	100%	66	100%	69	100%	87	100%	277	100%

Note. Chi-square = 28.7,  $p < .01^{**}$ .

For the office versus nature backgrounds (see Tables 3 and 4 as well as Exhibits 3 and 4), Chinese and Americans were least likely to choose the outdoors setting. American men and women clearly favored the office with a view, whereas Chinese men and women were nearly evenly split in their choices between an office without a view versus an office with a view.

**Table 3.** Preferences for Office versus Nature Backgrounds with a Man in the Picture.

	<u>American Men</u>		<u>American Women</u>		<u>Chinese Men</u>		<u>Chinese Women</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Office	17	27.9%	19	36.5%	32	48.5%	38	46.9%	106	40.8%
View	35	57.4%	30	57.7%	29	43.9%	40	49.4%	134	51.5%
Outdoors	9	14.8%	3	5.8%	5	7.6%	3	3.7%	20	7.7%
Total	61	100%	52	100%	66	100%	81	100%	260	100%

Note. Chi-square = 13.2,  $p = .04^*$ .

**Table 4.** Preferences for Office versus Nature Backgrounds with a Woman in the Picture.

	<u>American Men</u>		<u>American Women</u>		<u>Chinese Men</u>		<u>Chinese Women</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Office	12	28.6%	17	27.9%	34	48.6%	44	47.3%	107	40.2%
View	21	50.0%	37	60.7%	30	42.9%	39	41.9%	127	47.7%
Outdoors	9	21.4%	7	11.5%	6	8.6%	10	10.8%	32	12.0%
Total	42	100%	61	100%	70	100%	93	100%	266	100%

Note. Chi-square = 11.91,  $p = .06$ .



**Exhibit 1.** Preferences for Background Color with a Man in the Photo.

Preferences of American Men



**42%**

Preferences of American Women



**49%**

Preferences of Chinese Men



**41%**

Preferences of Chinese Women



**45%**



**36%**



**32%**



**27%**



**36%**



**13%**



**15%**



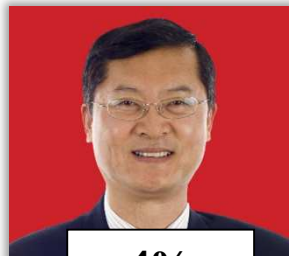
**20%**



**13%**



**10%**



**4%**



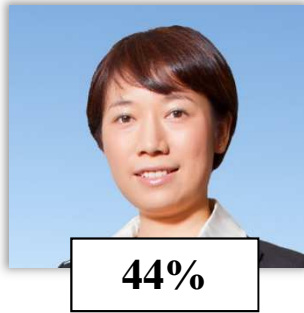
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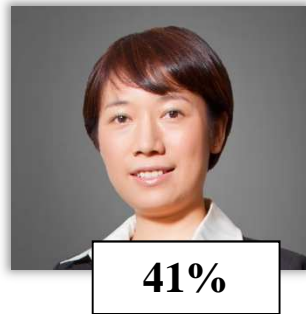
**7%**

**Exhibit 2.** Preferences for Background Color with a Woman in the Photo.

Preferences of American Men



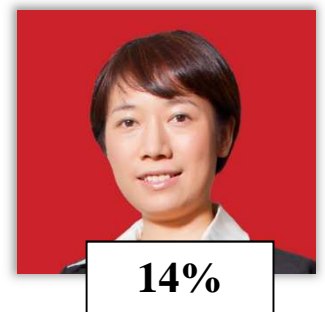
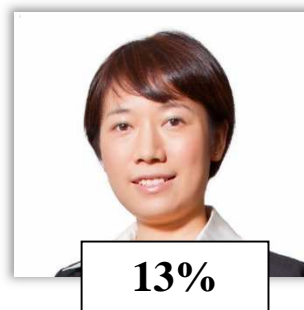
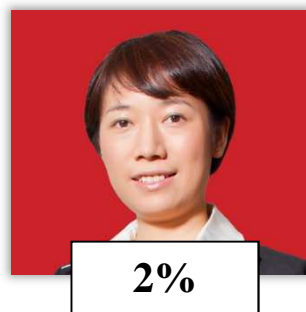
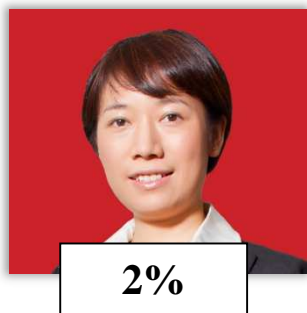
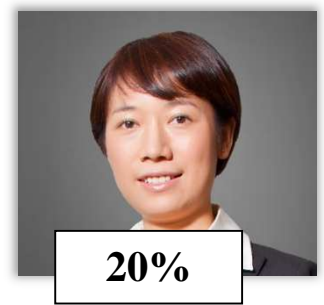
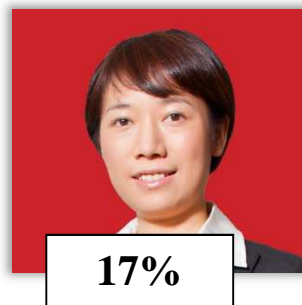
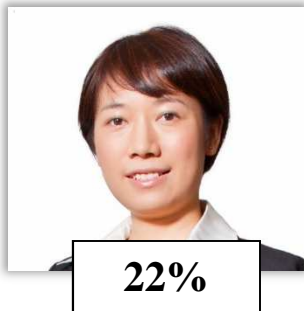
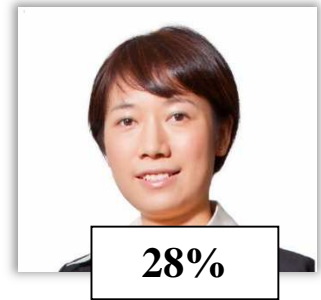
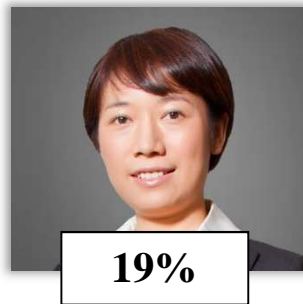
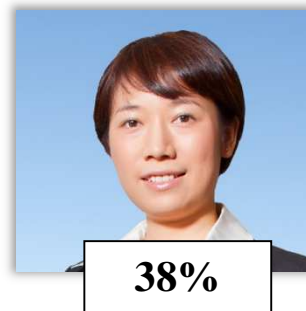
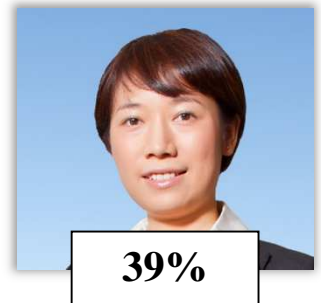
Preferences of American Women



Preferences of Chinese Men

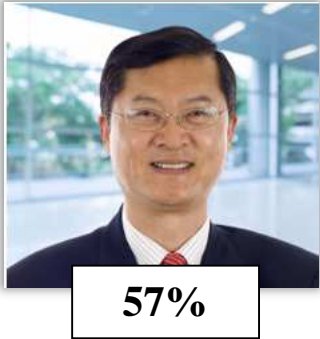


Preferences of Chinese Women

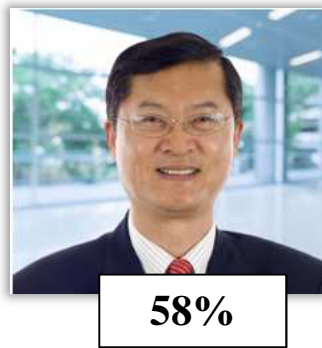


**Exhibit 3.** Preferences for Office versus Nature Backgrounds with a Man in the Photo.

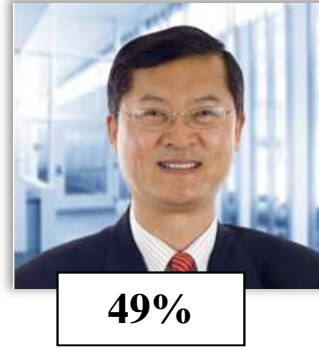
Preferences of American Men



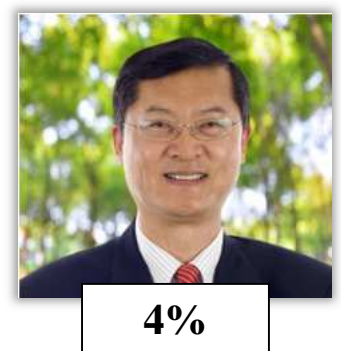
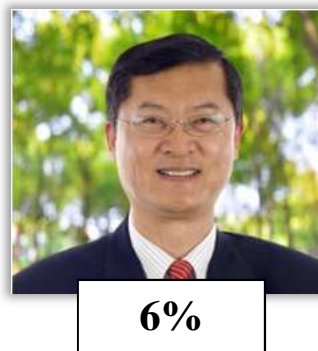
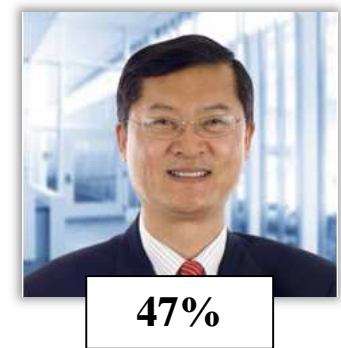
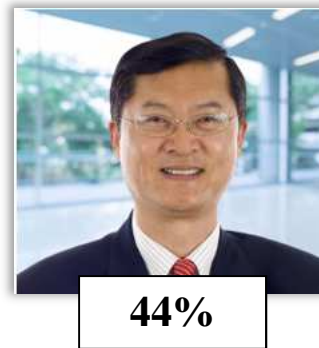
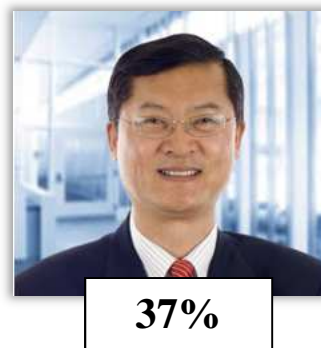
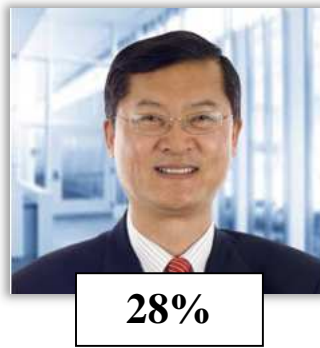
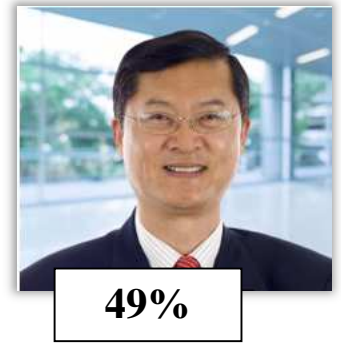
Preferences of American Women



Preferences of Chinese Men



Preferences of Chinese Women

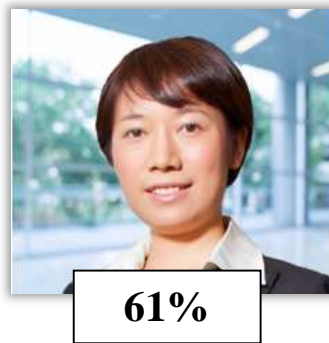


**Exhibit 4.** Preferences for Office versus Nature Backgrounds with a Woman in the Photo.

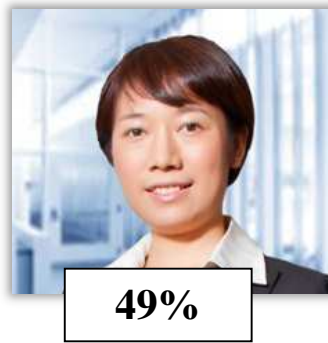
Preferences of American Men



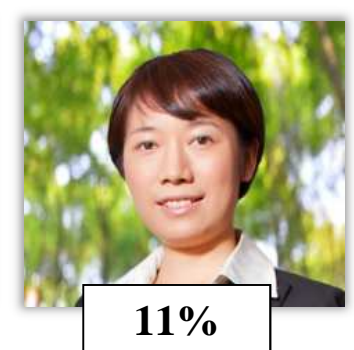
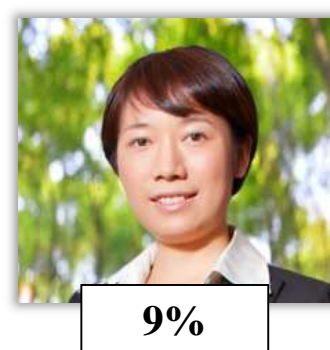
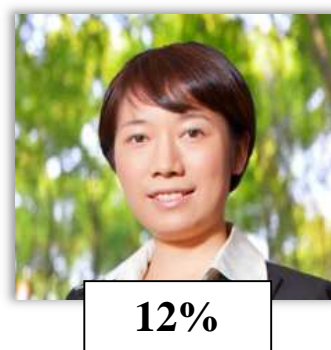
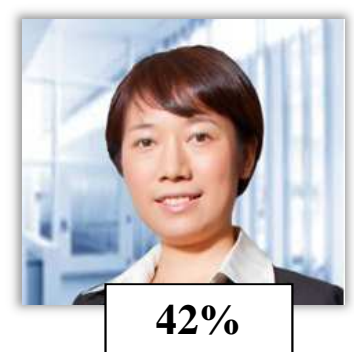
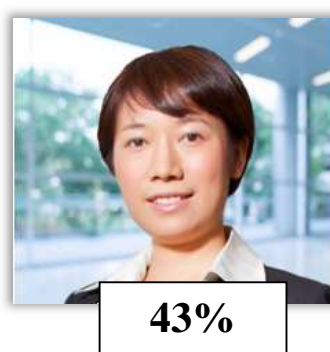
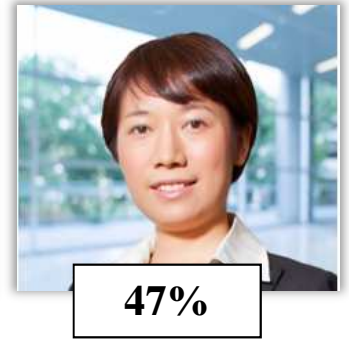
Preferences of American Women



Preferences of Chinese Men



Preferences of Chinese Women





## **Study 2: CEO Portraits on Corporate Websites**

In our next study, we wanted to understand how CEOs in China and the United States self-present on corporate webpages. Prior studies have compared Chinese and American leader photos but only looked the single dimension of smiles.

### **Study 2 Methodology**

We wanted to compare CEO profile pictures in China and the United States to compare signals of (a) professionalism and status and (b) individuality and expressiveness. We adopted Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz's (2018) approach to analyzing the profile pictures. We used their coding scheme for profile pictures with several minor modifications and several additions. The coding sheet is displayed in Figure 3. We evaluated 100 profile pictures of American CEOs and 100 profile pictures of Chinese CEOs. Each of these profile pictures provided were displayed as part of their official bios on their corporate webpages.

### **Study 2 Findings**

In nearly all aspects of comparison, there were significant differences between Chinese and American CEOs (see Table 5). Generally, Chinese CEOs project more formal, status-driven signals whereas American CEOs are more likely to display expressiveness. Chinese CEOs are more likely to dress in formal business attire and more likely to wear a dark suit with a white shirt. Interestingly, as we coded we recognized that many Chinese CEOs use shelves with books as backdrops and added this to the coding scheme. Ultimately, we found that about 1 in 8 Chinese CEOs use this signal of intellect whereas none of the American CEOs did. By contrast, American CEOs are more likely to dress in business casual or casual attire. American CEOs are much more likely to smile. Specifically, they're much more likely to display exited smiles. American CEOs are also more likely to engage in head canting.

**Figure 3.** Coding Sheet for Evaluation of CEO Profile Pictures.

<b>CODING SHEET</b>					
<b>Type of smile:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> no smile	<input type="checkbox"/> smile without teeth	<input type="checkbox"/> smile with teeth		
<b>Eye contact:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Head canting:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Body visible:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> face only	<input type="checkbox"/> shoulders and up	<input type="checkbox"/> chest up		
	<input type="checkbox"/> upper body	<input type="checkbox"/> full body			
<b>Dress style:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> casual	<input type="checkbox"/> business casual	<input type="checkbox"/> formal business		
<b>Dark top:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>White shirt:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Male hair style:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> short/bald	<input type="checkbox"/> to shoulders or below			
<b>Facial hair:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Female hair style:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> short	<input type="checkbox"/> tied back	<input type="checkbox"/> loose (for hair to shoulders or below)		
<b>Background color:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> no single color	<input type="checkbox"/> blue	<input type="checkbox"/> grey	<input type="checkbox"/> white	
	<input type="checkbox"/> black	<input type="checkbox"/> red	<input type="checkbox"/> brown	<input type="checkbox"/> green	<input type="checkbox"/> yellow <input type="checkbox"/> other
<b>Background setting:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> work	<input type="checkbox"/> leisure		
<b>Books in background:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Assymmetric:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			

*Note.* Coding was based on the Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz's (2018) coding scheme in their evaluation of LinkedIn profiles.

**Table 5.** Chi-Square Tests of Significance for CEO Profiles in China and the United States.

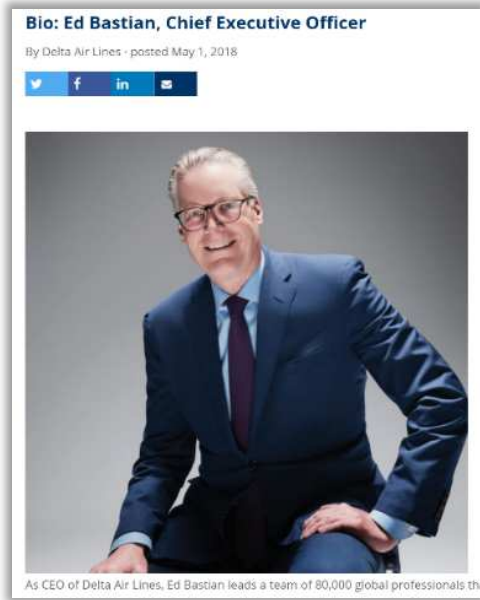
	<u>Country</u>		Chi-Square	<i>p</i>
	<u>China</u>	<u>United States</u>		
Type of smile			38.1	.00**
No smile	31% (31)	6% (6)		
Calm smile	41% (41)	25% (25)		
Excited smile	28% (28)	69% (69)		
Eye contact	95% (95)	98% (98)	1.33	.25
Head canting	10% (10)	27% (27)	9.58	.00**
Body visible			29.31	.00**
Face only	0% (0)	7% (7)		
Shoulders and up	65% (65)	39% (39)		
Chest up	12% (12)	38% (38)		
Upper body	22% (22)	14% (14)		
Full body	1% (1)	2% (2)		
Dress style			7.62	.02*
Casual	0% (0)	1% (1)		
Business casual	9% (9)	22% (22)		
Formal business	91% (91)	77% (77)		
White shirt	85% (85)	37% (37)	48.42	.00**
Dark top	97% (97)	86% (86)	7.78	.01*
Asymmetric	42% (42)	9% (9)	28.66	.00**
Facial hair	0% (0)	9.4% (9)	9.42	.00**
Simple background	80% (80)	87% (87)	2.29	.13
Background color			24.29	.00**
No single background color	17%	21%		
Blue	29%	7%		
Grey	22%	35%		
White	19%	14%		
Black	4%	10%		
Red	3%	2%		
Brown	3%	7%		
Green	2%	1%		
Yellow	0%	1%		
Other	0%	1%		
Hair style				
Short or bald	100% (99)	100% (95)		
Setting			0.98	0.61
None	77% (77)	77% (77)		
Work	22% (22)	23% (23)		
Leisure	1% (1)	0% (0)		
Books in background	12% (12)	0% (0)	12.77	.00**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Exhibit 5. American CEOs are More Emotionally Expressive.**



69 percent of American CEOs display excited smiles compared to 28 percent of Chinese



27 percent of American CEOs show head canting compared to 10 percent of Chinese CEOs.







## Study 3: Finance Professionals on LinkedIn

### Study 3 Methodology

We wanted to understand how early-career professionals in China and the United States use LinkedIn profile pictures to show (a) professionalism and status and (b) individuality and expressiveness. We adopted Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz's (2018) approach to analyzing the LinkedIn profiles. We used their coding scheme for profile pictures with several minor modifications and several additions (see Figure 4). We also included banner images in the study. LinkedIn allows users to place a rectangular banner image behind and adjacent to their profile pictures. When users do not select a banner image, LinkedIn provides a default, light-blue image.

Unlike Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2018), we chose to confine our study to a single professional function: finance professionals. As we were developing the parameters for our study, we recognized major deviations across various business functions. We also observed that searches for certain types of professionals yielded profiles for people with much different job functions. For example, we saw wide variance in the roles and responsibilities of professionals when we searched under terms such as “marketing specialist” and “data analyst.” We found much more uniform roles and responsibilities when we searched under “financial analyst” (search term in Chinese was “金融分析师”). We thought these more uniform roles and responsibilities were more appropriate for the purpose of cross-cultural comparisons.

We explored three sets of professionals: (1) Chinese professionals with LinkedIn profiles in Chinese (referred to in many cases as *domestic Chinese*); (2) Chinese professionals with English profiles (referred to in many cases as *cosmopolitan Chinese*); and (3) American professionals. As a measure of early-career professionals, we confined our samples to professionals with under ten years of work experience. We chose the two sets of Chinese professionals because we believed they likely self-present differently based on whether they use a Chinese-language or English-language profile. Research about code-switching demonstrates that multi-lingual individuals often adopt different norms and rules and engagement based on the language they use (Auer, 1998). Further, we believed that Chinese who opt for English-language profiles are most likely seeking professional opportunities with international business persons. They are likely self-presenting in ways they perceive as appropriate for Western and other non-Chinese audiences. For each set of professionals, we used the first 300 profiles (not including 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level connections to avoid those within our own professional networks) based on a search for “financial analyst.” We sought some geographic diversity in each sample. In each Chinese sample, we selected 100 financial professionals from Beijing, 100 from Shanghai, and 100 from Guangzhou/Shenzhen. In the American sample, we chose 100 financial professionals from New York City, 100 from Los Angeles, and 100 from Chicago. Overall, the Americans had 4.6 years of work experience, the cosmopolitan Chinese had 6.1 years of work experience, and the domestic Chinese had 4.3 years of work experience. Ultimately, we ended with the following breakdowns: 177 American men (4.5 years of experience), 123 American women (4.7 years of work experience), 99 cosmopolitan Chinese (5.4 years of work experience), 201 Chinese cosmopolitan women (6.4 years of work experience), 199 domestic Chinese men (4.5 years of work experience), and 101 domestic Chinese (3.8 years of work experience).

**Figure 4.** Coding Sheet for Evaluation of Finance Professionals' LinkedIn Profile Pictures.

<b>CODING SHEET</b>					
<b>Type of smile:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> no smile	<input type="checkbox"/> smile without teeth	<input type="checkbox"/> smile with teeth		
<b>Eye contact:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Eye glasses:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Dark glasses:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Head canting:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Hands on face:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Folding arms:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Body visible:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> face only	<input type="checkbox"/> shoulders and up	<input type="checkbox"/> chest up		
	<input type="checkbox"/> upper body	<input type="checkbox"/> full body			
<b>Dress style:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> not visible	<input type="checkbox"/> casual	<input type="checkbox"/> business casual	<input type="checkbox"/> formal business	
<b>Dark top:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>White shirt:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Stylish or colorful:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Tie:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Scarf:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Jewelry:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Male hair style:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> short/bald	<input type="checkbox"/> to shoulders or below			
<b>Facial hair:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Female hair style:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> short	<input type="checkbox"/> tied back	<input type="checkbox"/> loose (for hair to shoulders or below)		
<b>Studio-style portrait:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Selfie:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Background color:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> no single color	<input type="checkbox"/> blue	<input type="checkbox"/> grey	<input type="checkbox"/> white	<input type="checkbox"/> black
	<input type="checkbox"/> red	<input type="checkbox"/> brown	<input type="checkbox"/> green	<input type="checkbox"/> yellow	<input type="checkbox"/> other
<b>Background setting:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> work	<input type="checkbox"/> leisure		
<b>Assymmetric:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Outdoors:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Multiple people in photo:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Color photo:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Company name or logo:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>University name of logo:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no			
<b>Setting of profile pic:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> work	<input type="checkbox"/> personal		
<b>Art or props:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> work	<input type="checkbox"/> personal		
<b>Activity in photo:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> work	<input type="checkbox"/> personal		
<b>Banner picture:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> work	<input type="checkbox"/> personal		

*Note.* Coding was based on the Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz's (2018) coding scheme in their evaluation of LinkedIn profiles.

### Study 3 Findings

In Tables 6, 7, and 8 and Exhibits 7 through 18, we display many of the findings. One of the significant findings is that across many aspects of the profile pictures, there are significant differences based on culture and gender. Across groups, there are many differences, with Chinese with English-language profiles (we'll refer to this group as *cosmopolitan Chinese* hereafter) a distinct group that often lies between Americans and Chinese with Chinese-language profiles (we'll refer to this group simply as *domestic Chinese* hereafter). For example, Americans are much more likely to display excited smiles compared to domestic Chinese, with cosmopolitan Chinese in between the two groups. Domestic Chinese are much more likely to display no smile than Americans, with cosmopolitan Chinese in between the two groups. Similarly, Americans are more likely to wear formal business attire than domestic Chinese, with cosmopolitan Chinese in between the two groups.

Interestingly, gender within each group follows fairly consistent patterns as well. Among domestic Chinese, cosmopolitan Chinese, and Americans, women are more likely to display excited plays, engage in head canting, place hands on their faces, dress in business casual, take selfies, and display personal-related props. Among the three groups groups, men are more likely to not smile, to wear formal business attire, to wear dark tops, and to wear white shirts.

Interestingly, the domestic Chinese women and cosmopolitan Chinese women are much more likely than their male counterparts to wear eyeglasses. Whereas roughly the same percentage of American men and women wear eyeglasses, the differential in the percentage of men and women who wears glasses in the two Chinese groups ranges from between roughly 35 and 50 percentage points.

**Table 6.** Facial expressions and nonverbal communication in professional profile pictures among Chinese and American professionals.

	<u>Americans</u>				<u>Chinese with English Profiles</u>				<u>Chinese with Chinese Profiles</u>				<u>All</u>		<i>p</i>
	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		#	%	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Type of smile															<.01**
No smile	23	13.0%	4	3.3%	51	51.5%	37	18.4%	149	74.9%	28	27.7%	292	32.5%	
Calm smile	19	10.7%	13	10.7%	26	26.3%	75	37.3%	33	16.6%	41	40.6%	207	23.0%	
Excited smile	135	76.3%	105	86.1%	22	22.2%	89	44.3%	17	8.5%	32	31.7%	400	44.5%	
Eye contact	171	96.6%	120	97.6%	92	92.9%	193	96.0%	179	89.9%	93	92.1%	848	94.2%	.02*
Eye glasses	12	6.8%	8	6.5%	56	56.6%	37	18.4%	105	52.8%	21	20.8%	239	26.6%	<.01**
Dark glasses	3	1.7%	1	0.8%	1	1.0%	4	2.0%	7	3.5%	1	1.0%	17	1.9%	.05*
Amount of body shown															<.01**
Face only	8	4.5%	6	4.9%	5	5.1%	33	16.5%	20	10.1%	17	16.8%	89	9.9%	
Shoulders and up	44	24.9%	24	19.5%	29	29.3%	43	21.5%	69	34.7%	36	35.6%	245	27.3%	
Chest and up	75	42.4%	56	45.5%	24	24.2%	60	30.0%	44	22.1%	28	27.7%	287	31.9%	
Upper body	45	25.4%	35	28.5%	38	38.4%	45	22.5%	39	19.6%	15	14.9%	217	24.1%	
Full body	5	2.8%	2	1.6%	3	3.0%	19	9.5%	27	13.6%	5	5.0%	61	6.8%	
Bare arms	0	0.0%	15	12.2%	0	0.0%	13	6.5%	0	0.0%	5	5.0%	33	3.7%	<.01**
Hands on face	0	0.0%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%	7	3.5%	4	2.0%	4	4.0%	16	1.8%	.04*
Folding arms	0	0.0%	2	1.6%	6	6.1%	6	3.0%	7	3.5%	1	1.0%	22	2.4%	.03*
Head canting	45	25.4%	66	53.7%	20	20.2%	87	43.3%	41	20.6%	37	36.6%	296	32.9%	<.01**
Female hair style															<.01**
Short			2	1.6%			4	2.0%			2	2.0%	8	1.9%	
Loose			118	96.7%			163	81.9%			89	89.0%	371	87.9%	
Tied back			2	1.6%			32	16.1%			9	9.0%	43	10.2%	
Male hair style															0.79
Short	175	99.4%			98	100.0%			197	100.0%			470	99.8%	
To or below shoulders	1	0.6%			0	0.0%			0	0.0%			1	0.2%	
Male facial hair															<.01**
Clean shaven	147	83.1%			97	98.0%			194	99.0%			439	92.8%	
Facial hair	30	16.9%			2	2.0%			2	1.0%			34	7.2%	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 7.** Background composition of professional profile pictures among Chinese and American professionals.

	<u>Americans</u>				<u>Chinese with English Profiles</u>				<u>Chinese with Chinese Profiles</u>				<u>All</u>		<i>p</i>
	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		#	%	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Studio-style portrait	63	35.6%	34	27.6%	58	58.6%	89	44.3%	99	49.7%	55	54.5%	398	44.2%	<.01**
Selfie	3	1.7%	11	8.9%	4	4.0%	50	24.9%	35	17.6%	29	28.7%	132	14.7%	<.01**
Background color															<.01**
no single background color	83	46.9%	67	54.5%	33	33.3%	95	47.3%	89	44.7%	40	39.6%	407	45.2%	
white	23	13.0%	20	16.3%	25	25.3%	52	25.9%	53	26.6%	31	30.7%	204	22.7%	
grey	32	18.1%	14	11.4%	19	19.2%	20	10.0%	12	6.0%	14	13.9%	111	12.3%	
blue	11	6.2%	8	6.5%	11	11.1%	17	8.5%	32	16.1%	12	11.9%	91	10.1%	
tan/brown	20	11.3%	7	5.7%	9	9.1%	13	6.5%	6	3.0%	1	1.0%	56	6.2%	
dark	6	3.4%	6	4.9%	1	1.0%	1	0.5%	4	2.0%	2	2.0%	20	2.2%	
yellow/orange	2	1.1%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.3%	
purple	0	0.0%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	3	0.3%	
red	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.0%	2	1.0%	1	1.0%	5	0.6%	
Assymetric	78	44.1%	71	57.7%	34	34.3%	73	36.3%	61	30.7%	37	36.6%	354	39.3%	<.01**
Outdoors	39	22.0%	40	32.5%	16	16.2%	49	24.4%	31	15.6%	15	14.9%	190	21.1%	<.01**
Multiple people in picture	20	11.3%	2	1.6%	4	4.0%	11	5.5%	8	4.0%	2	2.0%	47	5.2%	<.01**
Color photo	173	97.7%	117	95.1%	98	99.0%	201	100.0%	196	98.5%	99	98.0%	884	98.2%	.05*
Company name or logo	8	4.5%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	6	3.0%	5	2.5%	4	4.0%	24	2.7%	0.18
University name or logo	2	1.1%	1	0.8%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.4%	0.39
Setting of profile picture															
none	102	57.6%	57	46.3%	70	70.7%	116	57.7%	112	56.3%	68	67.3%	525	58.3%	<.01**
work	19	10.7%	17	13.8%	14	14.1%	20	10.0%	28	14.1%	10	9.9%	108	12.0%	
personal	56	31.6%	49	39.8%	15	15.2%	65	32.3%	59	29.6%	23	22.8%	267	29.7%	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

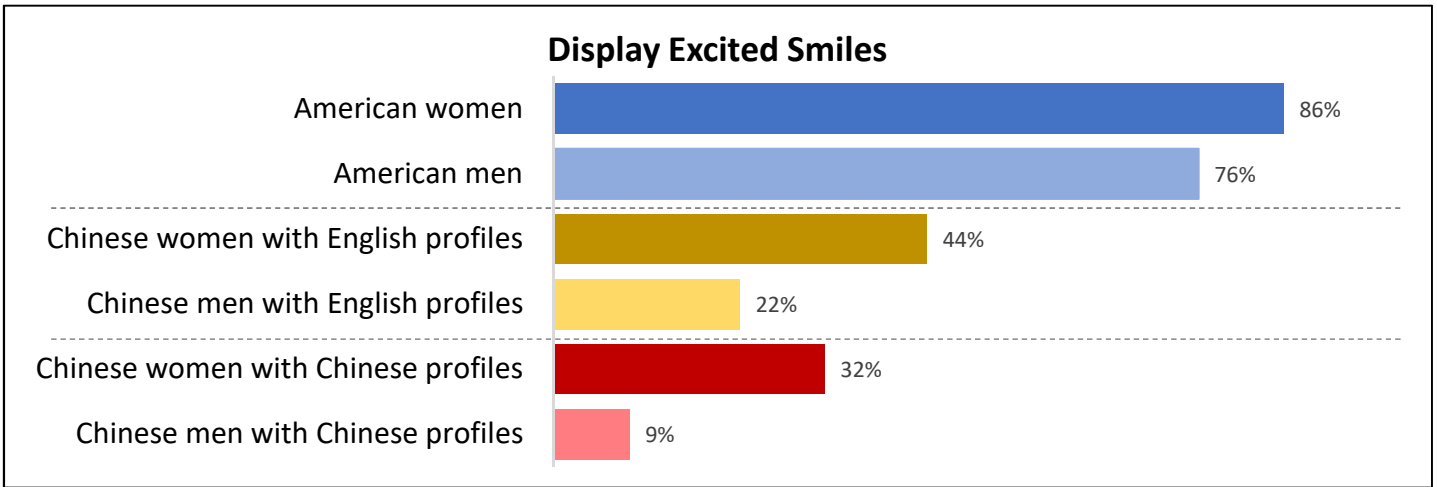
**Table 8.** Dress, accessories and banners in professional profile pictures of Chinese and American professionals.

	<u>Americans</u>				<u>Chinese with English Profiles</u>				<u>Chinese with Chinese Profiles</u>				<u>All</u>		<i>p</i>
	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>		<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>			
Dress style															<.01**
Not visible	3	1.7%	11	8.9%	3	3.0%	22	10.9%	4	2.0%	9	8.9%	52	5.8%	
Casual	9	5.1%	3	2.4%	8	8.1%	19	9.5%	41	20.6%	9	8.9%	89	9.9%	
Business casual	30	16.9%	41	33.3%	19	19.2%	77	38.3%	50	25.1%	44	43.6%	261	29.0%	
Formal	135	76.3%	68	55.3%	69	69.7%	83	41.3%	104	52.3%	39	38.6%	498	55.3%	
Dark top	146	82.5%	78	63.4%	81	81.8%	103	51.2%	134	67.3%	52	51.5%	594	66.0%	<.01**
White shirt	112	63.3%	22	17.9%	69	69.7%	54	26.9%	105	52.8%	40	39.6%	402	44.7%	<.01**
Stylish or colorful	22	12.4%	28	22.8%	3	3.0%	53	26.4%	16	8.0%	21	20.8%	143	15.9%	<.01**
Jewelry	0	0.0%	38	30.9%	3	3.0%	25	12.4%	6	3.0%	17	16.8%	89	9.9%	<.01**
Tie	119	67.2%	1	0.8%	62	63.3%	0	0.0%	65	32.7%	0	0.0%	247	27.5%	<.01**
Scarf	3	1.7%	8	6.5%	2	2.0%	19	9.5%	4	2.0%	6	5.9%	42	4.7%	<.01**
Art or props															<.01**
None	174	98.3%	119	96.7%	99	100.0%	195	97.0%	184	92.5%	93	92.1%	864	96.0%	
Status	1	0.6%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	2	1.0%	9	4.5%	0	0.0%	14	1.6%	
Personal	2	1.1%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	4	2.0%	6	3.0%	8	7.9%	22	2.4%	
Activity															<.01**
None	173	97.2%	123	96.7%	83	83.8%	169	84.1%	165	83.3%	91	90.1%	799	88.9%	
Work	0	0.6%	0	3.3%	11	11.1%	5	2.5%	11	5.6%	4	4.0%	36	4.0%	
Personal	4	2.3%	0	0.0%	5	5.1%	27	13.4%	22	11.1%	6	5.9%	64	7.1%	
Banner															<.01**
None	136	76.8%	100	81.3%	74	74.7%	175	87.1%	183	92.0%	92	91.1%	760	84.4%	
Work	26	14.7%	20	16.3%	15	15.2%	10	5.0%	13	6.5%	5	5.0%	89	9.9%	
Personal	15	8.5%	3	2.4%	10	10.1%	16	8.0%	3	1.5%	4	4.0%	51	5.7%	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .



**Exhibit 7.** Excited Smiles among American and Chinese Finance Professionals.



**Americans**



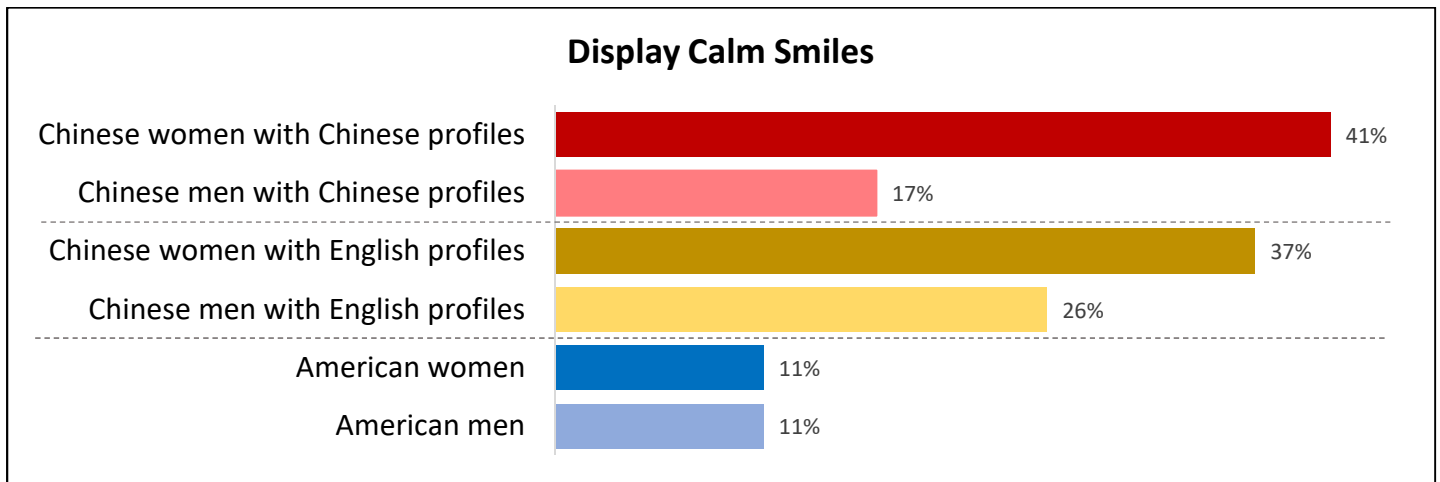
**Cosmopolitan Chinese**



**Domestic Chinese**



**Exhibit 8.** Calm Smiles among American and Chinese Finance Professionals.



Americans

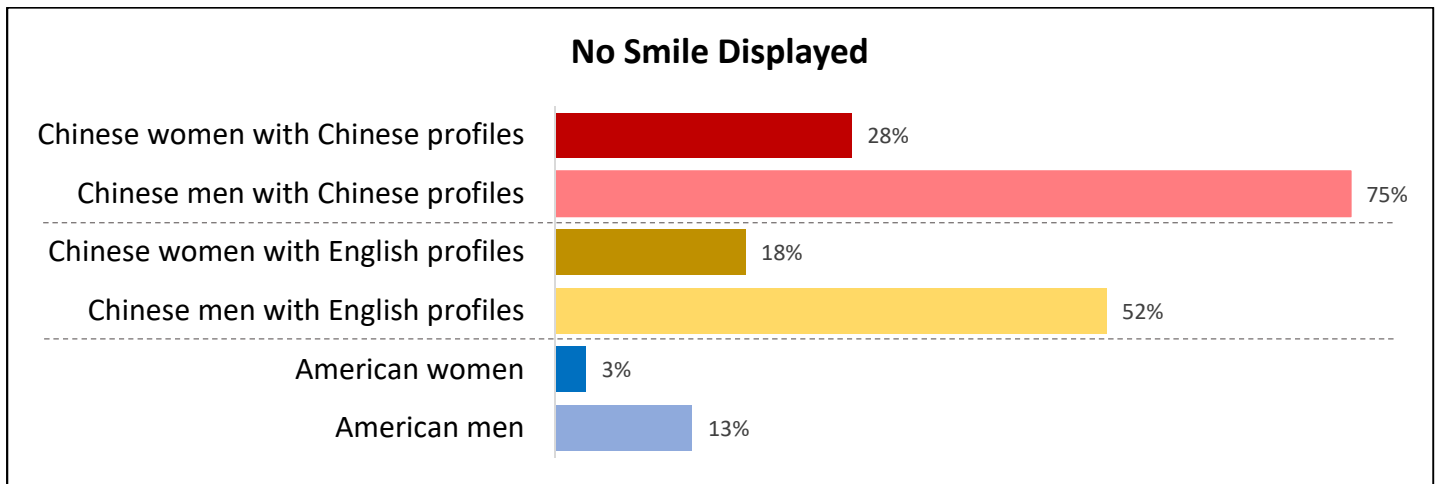


Cosmopolitan Chinese



Domestic Chinese

**Exhibit 9.** No Smile Displayed among American and Chinese Finance Professionals.



Americans

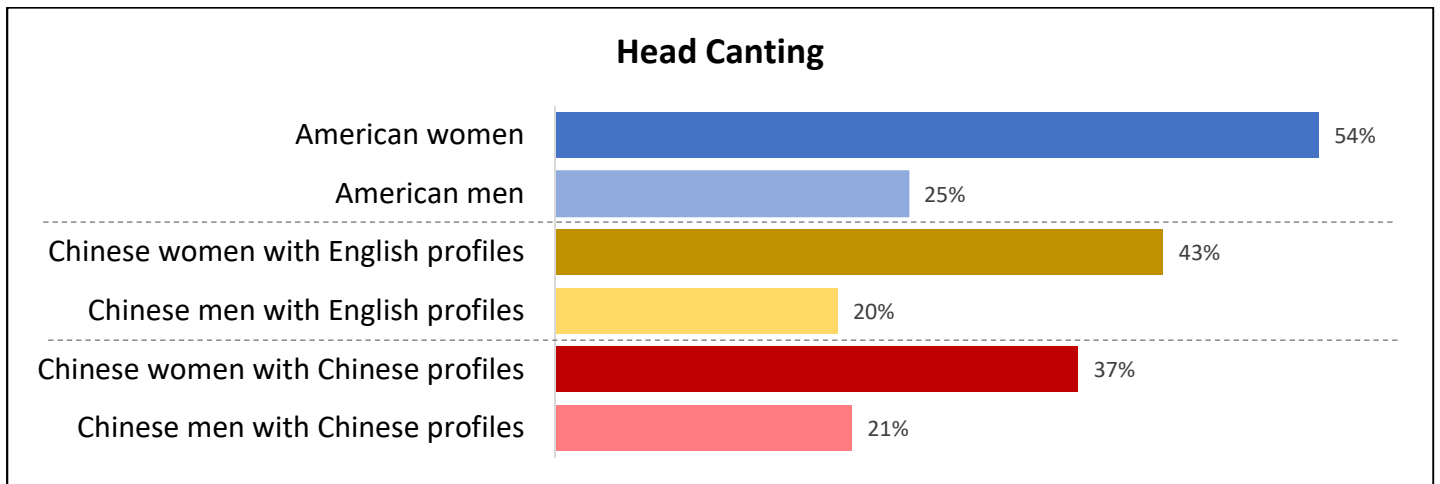


Cosmopolitan Chinese



Domestic Chinese

**Exhibit 10.** Head Canting among American and Chinese Finance Professionals.



### Americans



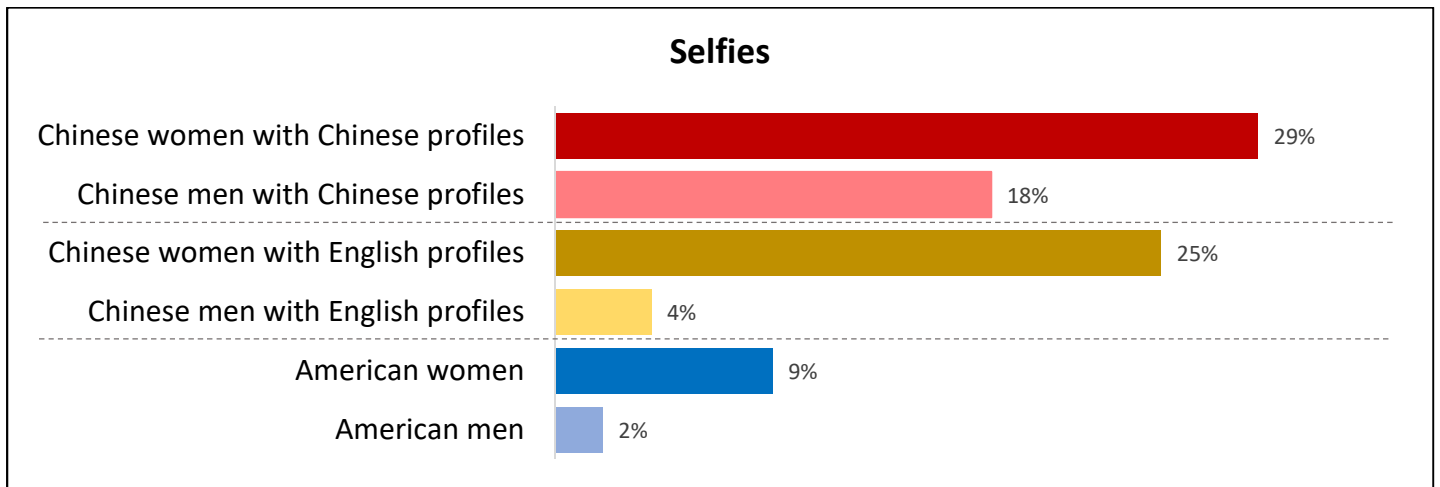
### Cosmopolitan Chinese



### Domestic Chinese



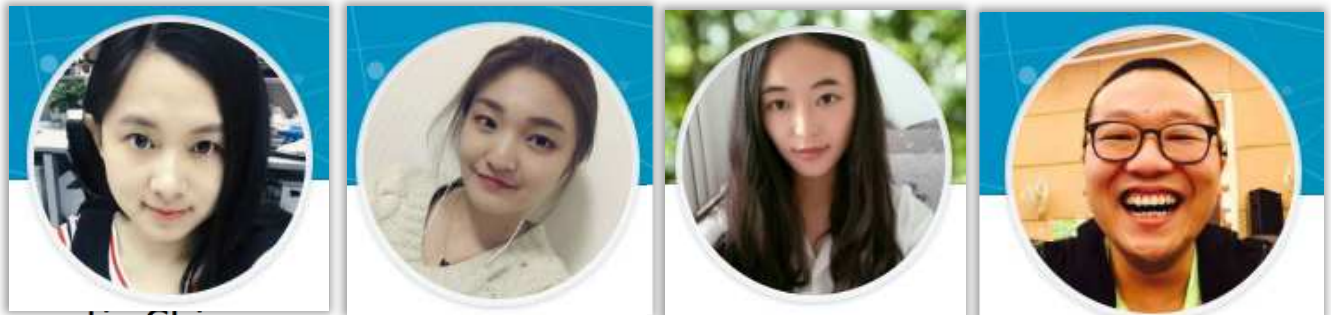
**Exhibit 11.** Selfies among American and Chinese Finance Professionals.



**Americans**

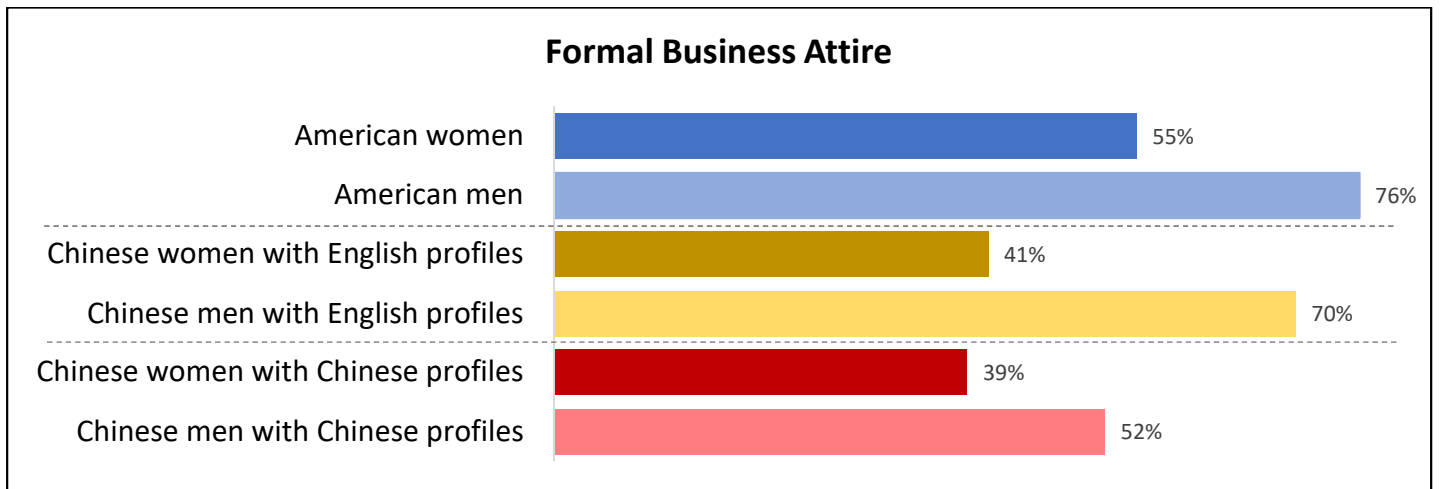


**Cosmopolitan Chinese**



**Domestic Chinese**

**Exhibit 12.** Formal Business Attire worn by American and Chinese Finance Professionals.



Americans



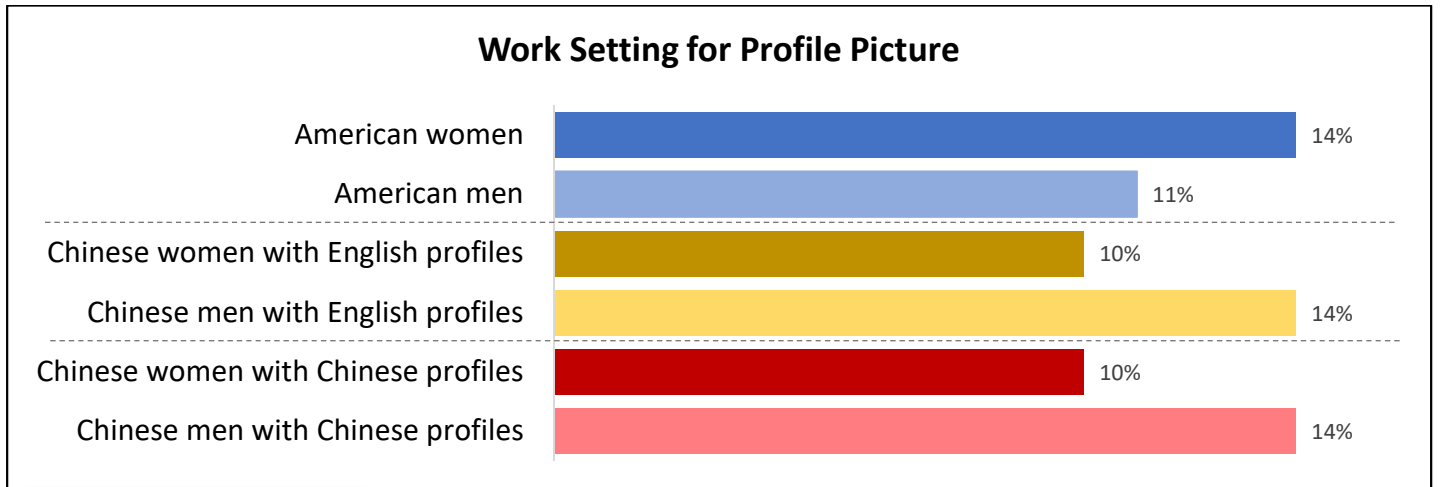
Cosmopolitan Chinese



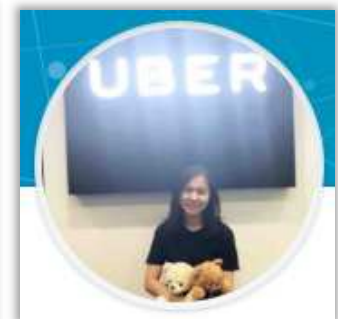
Domestic Chinese



**Exhibit 13.** Work Settings in the Profile Picture.



Americans

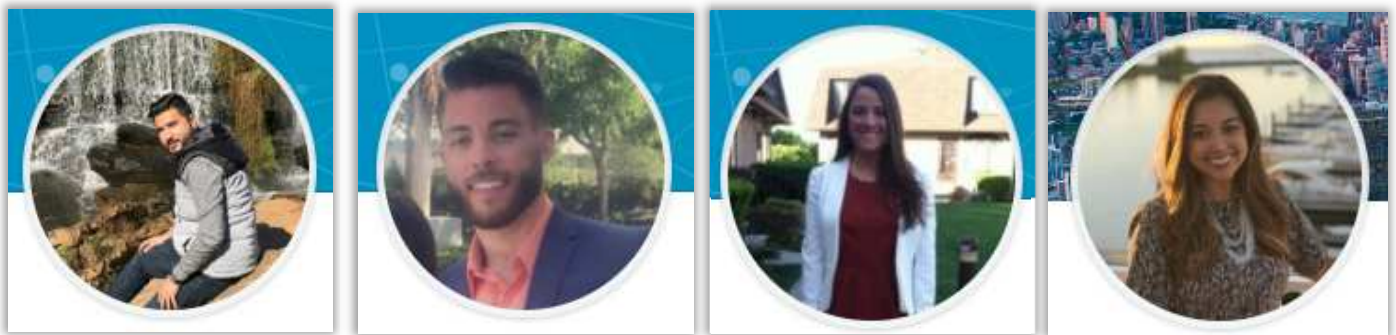
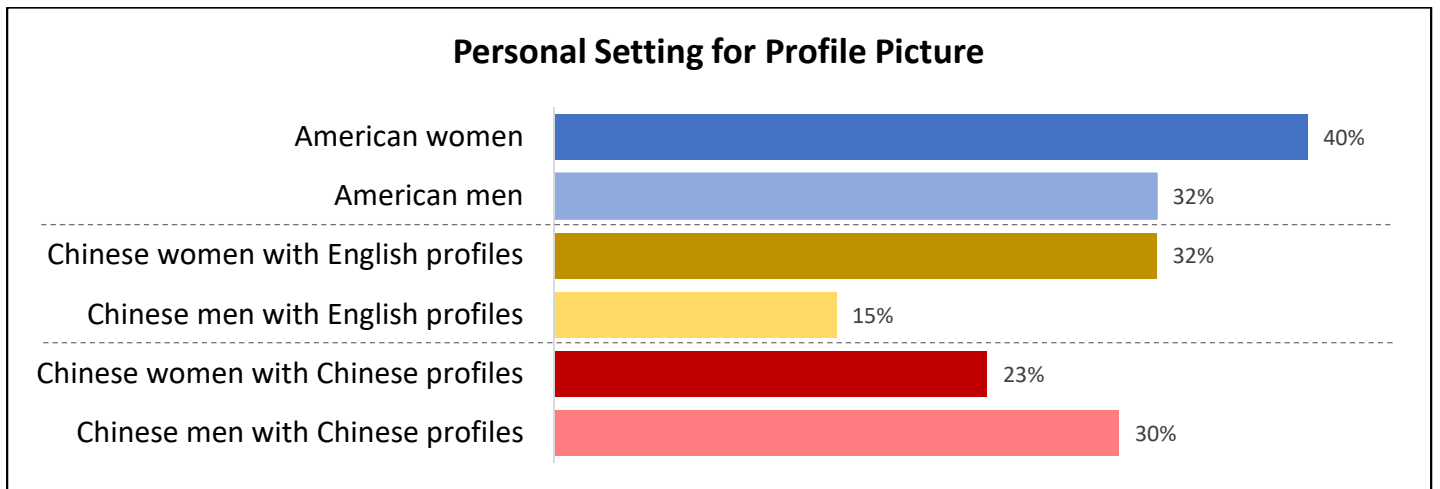


Cosmopolitan Chinese



Domestic Chinese

**Exhibit 14.** Personal Settings in the Profile Picture.



Americans

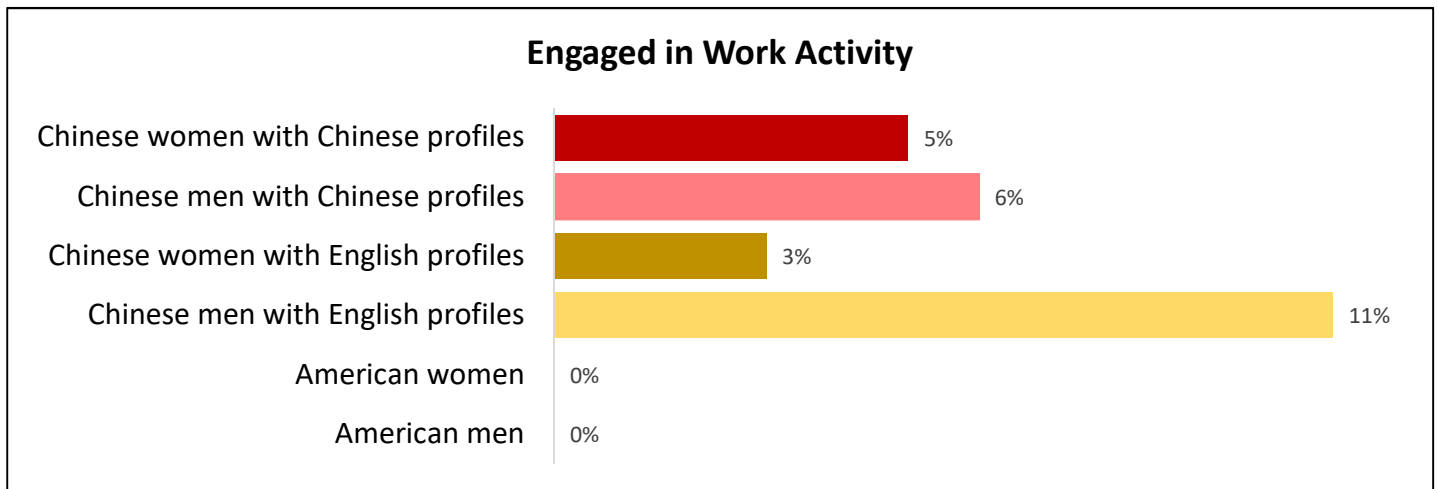


Cosmopolitan Chinese



Domestic Chinese

**Exhibit 15.** Engagement in Work Activity.



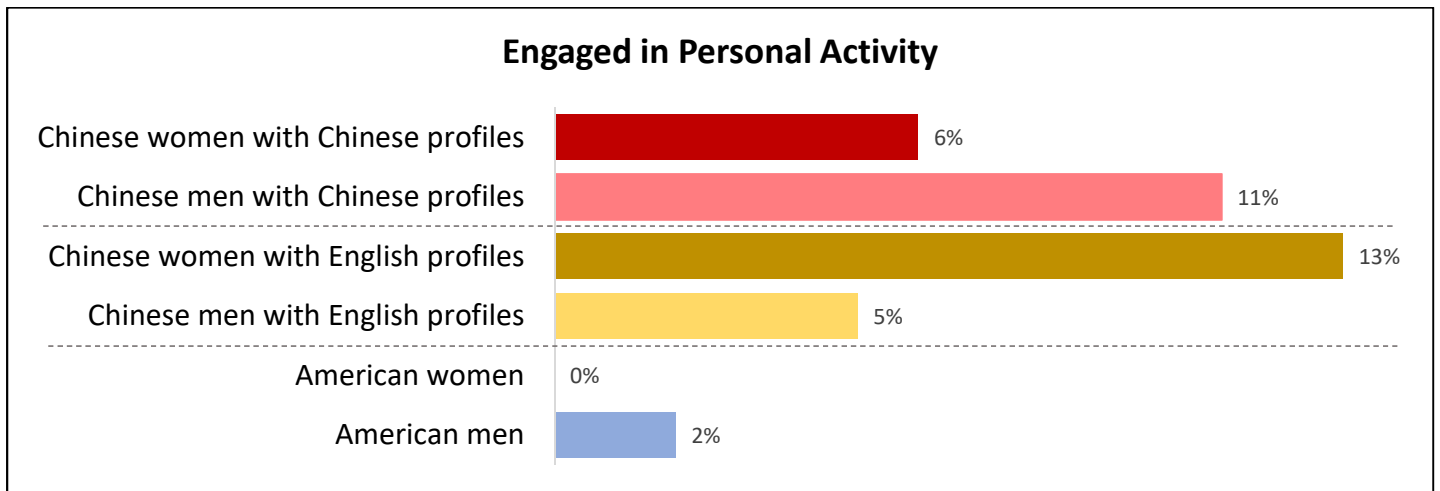
**Cosmopolitan Chinese**



**Domestic Chinese**



**Exhibit 16.** Engagement in Personal Activity.



### Americans



### Cosmopolitan Chinese



### Domestic Chinese

**Exhibit 17. Work-related Banner.**

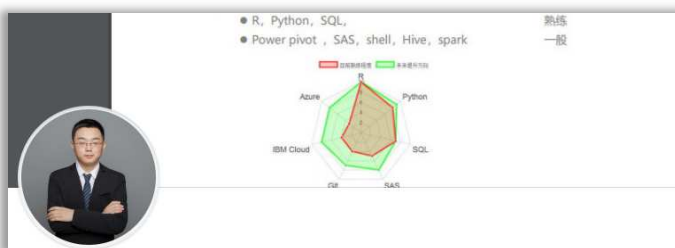
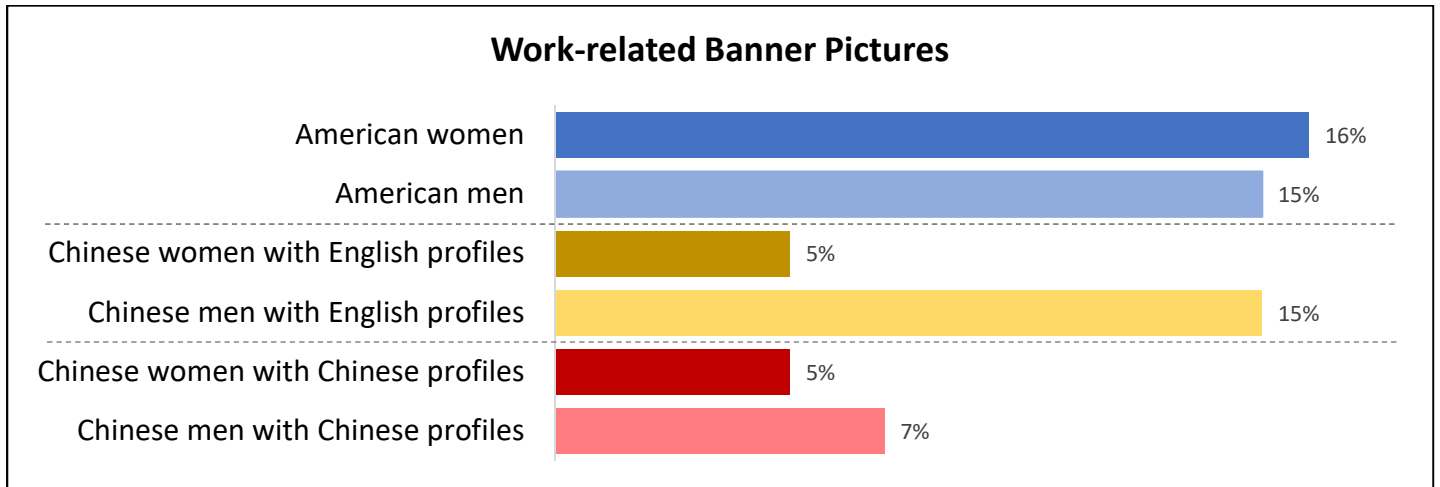
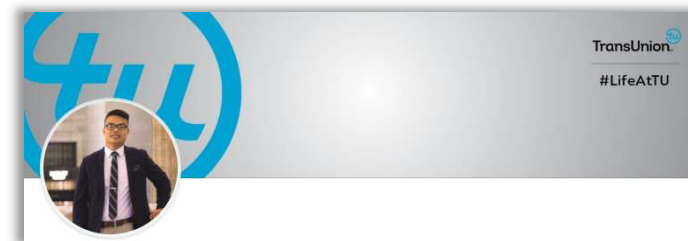
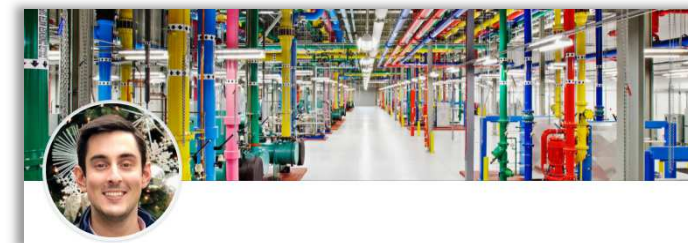
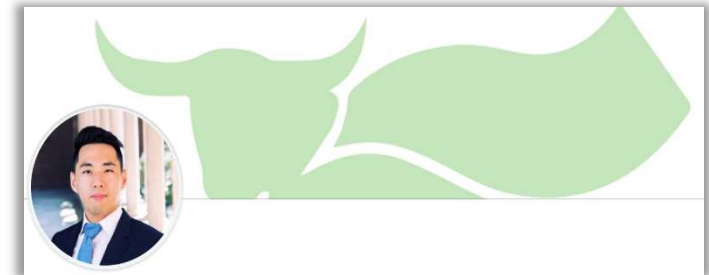




Exhibit 17. Work-related Banner (cont.).



**Exhibit 18. Personal-Related Banner.**

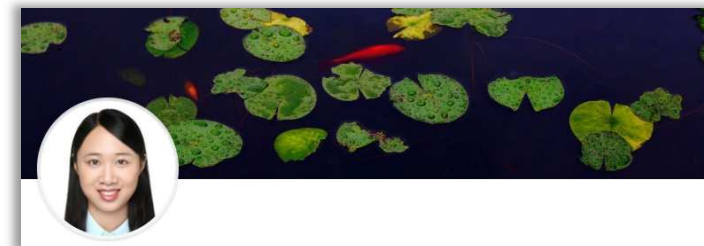
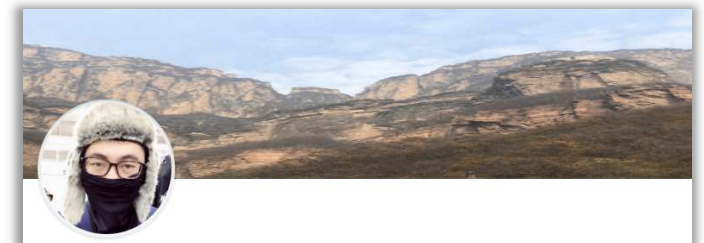
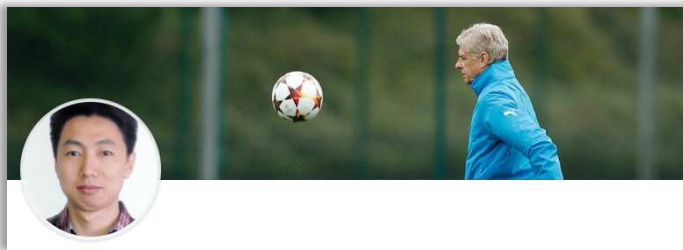
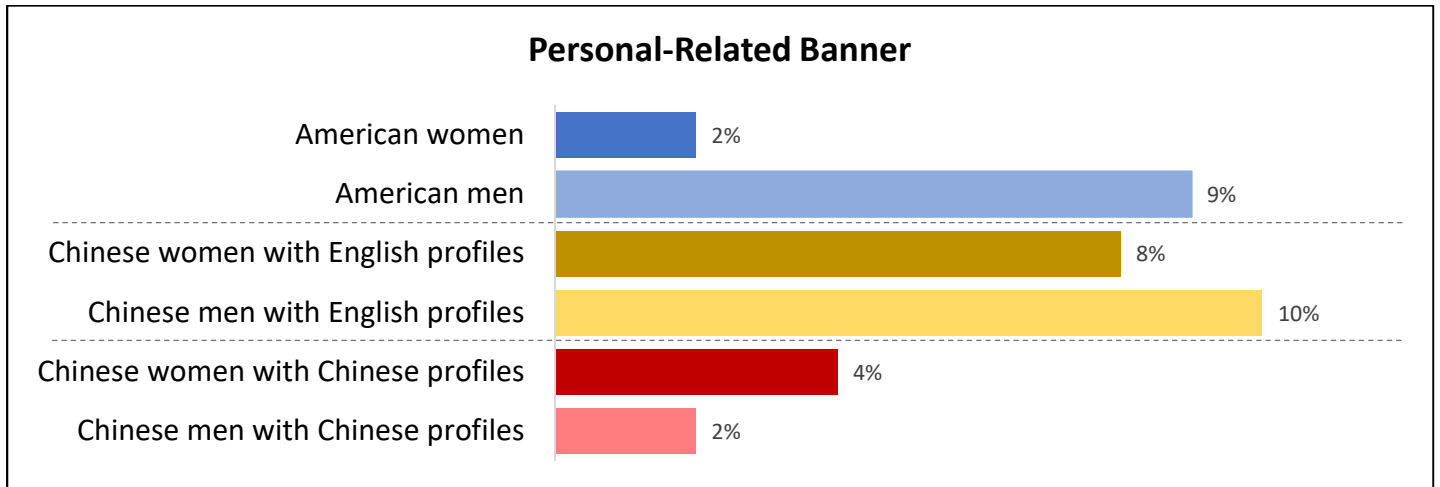
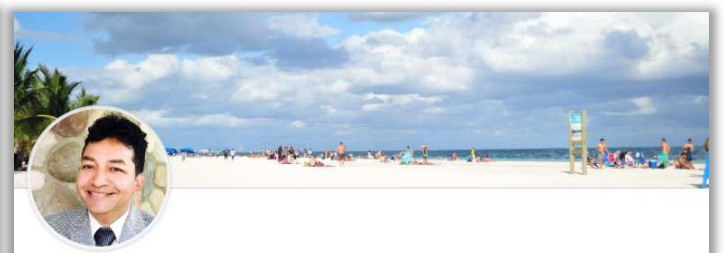
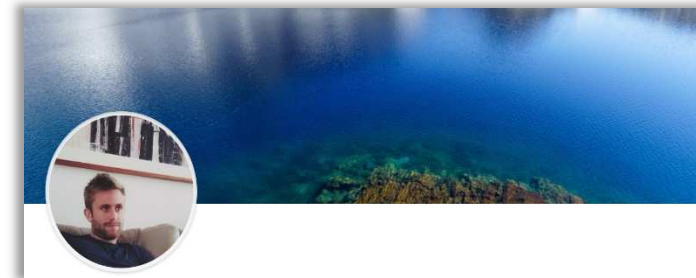
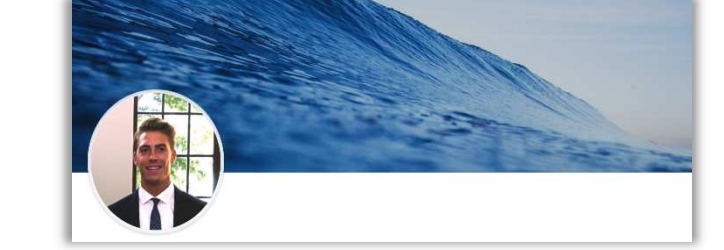
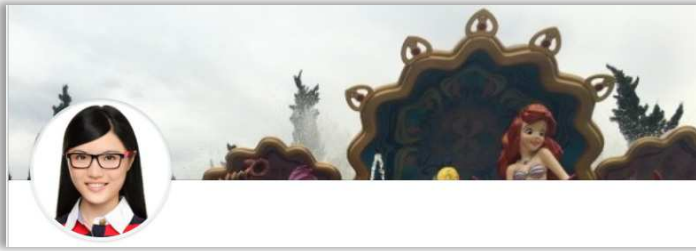




Exhibit 18. Personal-Related Banner (cont.).



We created two indexes to capture overall (a) individuality and expressiveness and (b) professionalism and status. These indexes were inspired by the work of Tifferet & Viilnai-Yavetz (2018). They evaluated emotional expressivity through head canting, eye contact, and smiling. They evaluated status with formal business attire (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018). In the individuality and expressiveness index (hereafter referred to simply as the expressiveness index), we added up the presence of various factors that generally showed individual expression or emotional expressiveness: calm smile (+1); excited smile (+2); head canting (+1); hand on face (+1); casual attire (+2); business casual (+1); stylish or colored (+1); outdoors (+1); setting: personal (+1); props: personal (+1); activity: personal (+1); banner: personal (+1); black and white photo: (+1). For the professionalism and status index (hereafter referred to simply as the status index), we added up the presence of various factors that tended to show alignment with corporatism, the professional environment, and/or formality and status: formal business attire (+1); no smile (+1); folding arms (+1); setting: work (+1); props: work (+1); activity: work (+1); banner: work (+1); company name: (+1); and university name: (+1).

We used ANOVA tests to identify overall differences in individuality and expressiveness (see Table 9) and professionalism and status (see Table 10) among the various groups. American women and cosmopolitan Chinese women are significantly more expressiveness than nearly all other groups, closely followed by Chinese women and American men. Cosmopolitan Chinese men and Chinese men are the least expressive.

**Table 9.** ANOVA Tests of Significance for Expressiveness Index.

	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
				25.28	<.001**
1. American men	2.98 <sup>2,3,4,5</sup>	177	1.51		
2. American women	3.87 <sup>1,3,5,6</sup>	123	1.57		
3. Cosmopolitan Chinese men	1.81 <sup>1,2,4,6</sup>	99	1.69		
4. Cosmopolitan Chinese women	3.61 <sup>1,3,5</sup>	201	2.18		
5. Domestic Chinese men	2.11 <sup>1,2,4,6</sup>	199	2.16		
6. Domestic Chinese women	3.13 <sup>2,3,5</sup>	101	2.09		
Total	2.94	900	2.05		

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ . Superscripts for mean scores represent significant differences with the following corresponding groups: 1. American men; 2. American women; 3. Cosmopolitan Chinese men; 4. Cosmopolitan Chinese women; 5. Domestic Chinese men; 6. Domestic Chinese women.

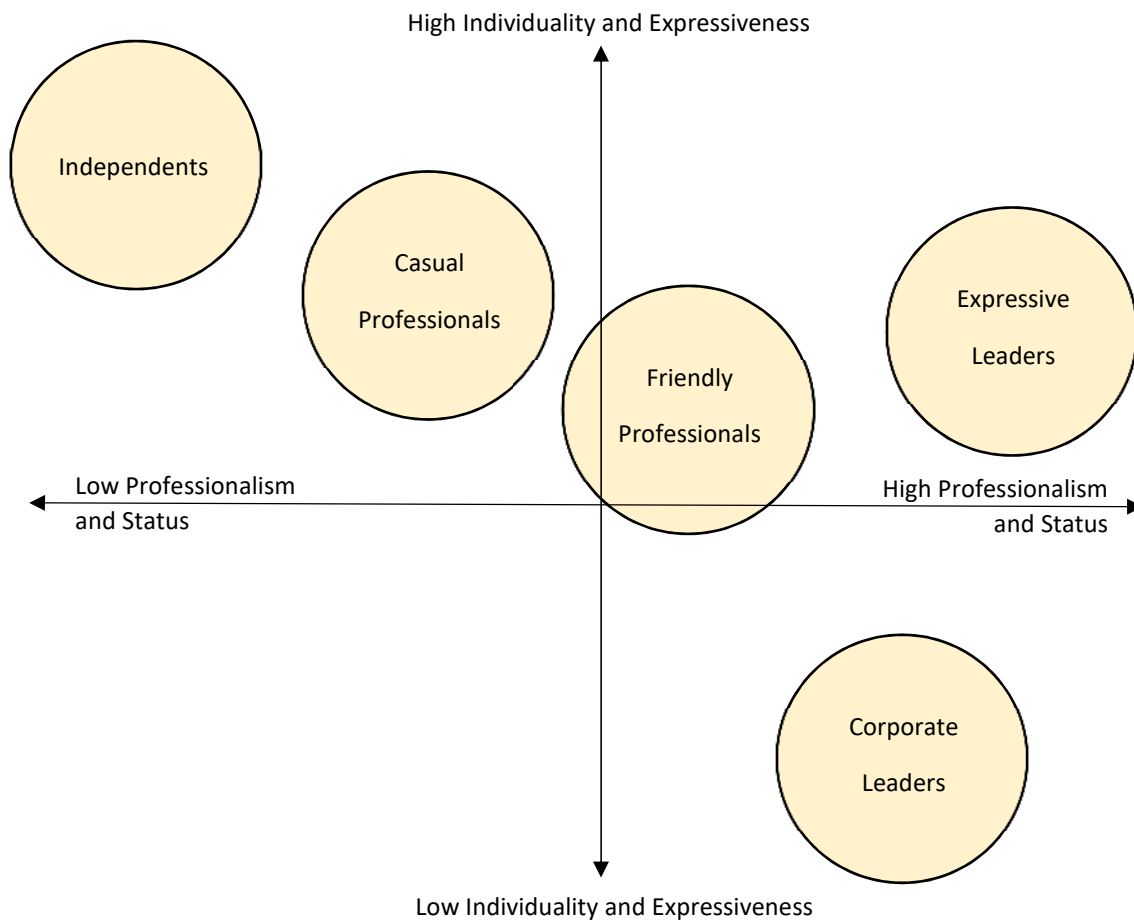
Chinese men and Cosmopolitan Chinese men display a significantly higher number of professionalism and status signals than all other groups. Women, particularly Chinese women with English profiles, display significantly fewer signals of professionalism and status.

**Table 10.** ANOVA Tests of Significance for Status Index.

	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
				23.31	<.001**
1. American men	1.21 <sup>3,4,5</sup>	177	0.83		
2. American women	0.96 <sup>3,5</sup>	123	0.82		
3. Cosmopolitan Chinese men	1.70 <sup>1,2,4,6</sup>	99	1.03		
4. Cosmopolitan Chinese women	0.84 <sup>1,3,5</sup>	201	0.92		
5. Domestic Chinese men	1.64 <sup>1,2,4,6</sup>	199	1.12		
6. Domestic Chinese women	0.90 <sup>3,5</sup>	101	0.88		
Total	1.21	900	1.01		

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ . Superscripts for mean scores represent significant differences with the following corresponding groups: 1. American men; 2. American women; 3. Cosmopolitan Chinese men; 4. Cosmopolitan Chinese women; 5. Domestic Chinese men; 6. Domestic Chinese women.

To categorize various overall approaches to professional profiles, we conducted a *K*-means cluster analysis of the expressiveness index and the status index. We found five groups depicted in Figure 5 as far as their relative mixes of expressiveness and status. We label these

**Figure 5.** Typologies of LinkedIn Profiles.

clusters in the following ways: independents ( $n = 45$ ,  $M^{\text{expressiveness}} = 7.60$ ,  $M^{\text{status}} = .18$ ), casual professionals ( $n = 252$ ,  $M^{\text{expressiveness}} = 4.91$ ,  $M^{\text{status}} = .62$ ), friendly professionals ( $n = 364$ ,  $M^{\text{expressiveness}} = 2.11$ ,  $M^{\text{status}} = .91$ ), corporate leaders ( $n = 159$ ,  $M^{\text{expressiveness}} = .31$ ,  $M^{\text{status}} = 2.41$ ), and expressive leaders ( $n = 80$ ,  $M^{\text{expressiveness}} = 3.09$ ,  $M^{\text{status}} = 2.60$ ). Examples and further descriptions of each of these typologies is displayed in Exhibit 19.

In Table 11, we present the breakdown of these typologies for the various groups. Cosmopolitan and domestic Chinese men stand out as much more likely to fit into the corporate leader typology. American women are most likely to fit into the casual professionals typology, followed most closely by cosmopolitan Chinese women. American men and domestic Chinese women are the most likely to fit into the friendly professionals typology. Expressive leaders hover around ten percent for each group. Independents comprise the smallest typology for all groups, with just two to five percent of each group fitting into this typology with the exception of cosmopolitan Chinese women, who have nearly ten percent in this typology.

**Table 11.** Breakdown of Typologies by Various Groups.

Group	Independents	Casual Professionals	Corporate Leaders	Expressive Leaders	Friendly Professionals
American men	2.3% (4)	26.6% (47)	8.5% (15)	10.2% (18)	52.5% (93)
American women	4.9% (6)	45.5% (56)	2.4% (3)	11.4% (14)	35.8% (44)
Cosmopolitan Chinese men	2.0% (2)	10.1% (10)	38.4% (38)	8.1% (8)	41.4% (41)
Cosmopolitan Chinese women	10.4% (21)	35.3% (71)	8.0% (16)	9.0% (18)	37.3% (75)
Domestic Chinese men	3.5% (7)	19.6% (39)	40.7% (81)	7.0% (14)	29.1% (58)
Domestic Chinese women with Chinese profiles	5.0% (5)	28.7% (29)	5.9% (6)	7.9% (8)	52.5% (53)
All finance professionals	5.0% (45)	28.0% (252)	17.7% (159)	8.9% (80)	40.4% (364)



**Exhibit 19.** Types of Profile Picture Personas.

## Friendly Professionals

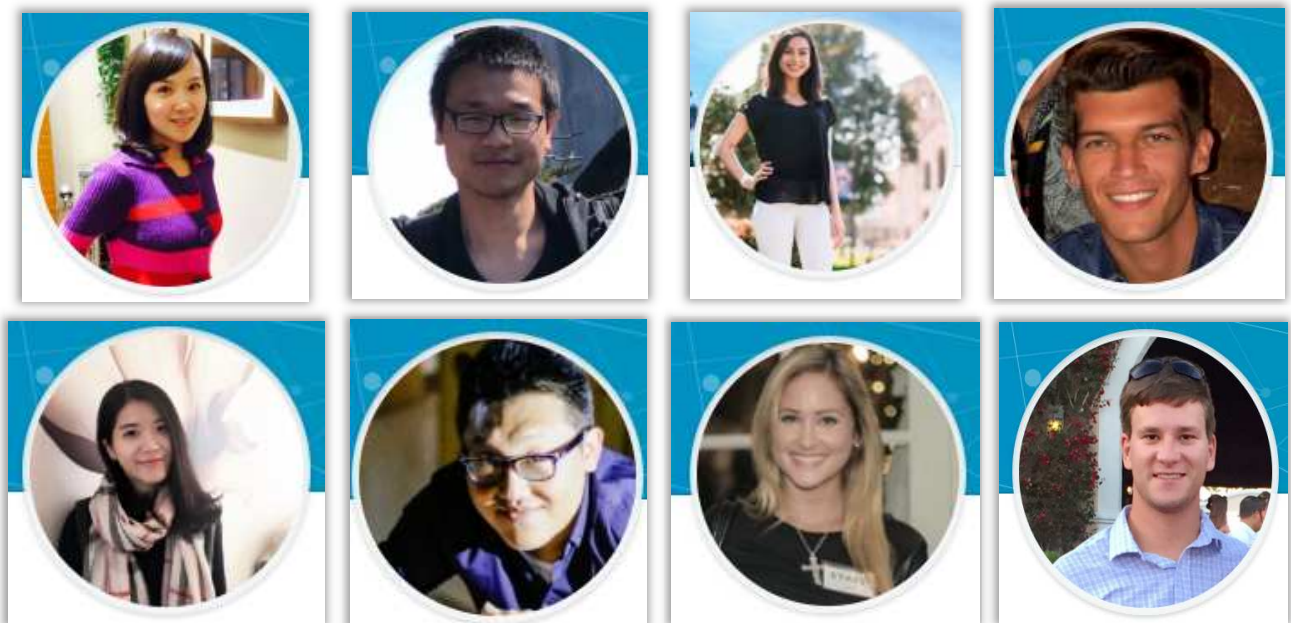
These finance professionals generally display several professional and status signals—such as formal business attire or an office background—and several individuality and expressiveness signals—such as excited smiles and business casual attire. Overall, roughly 40 percent of the professionals in our samples fall into this category.



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## Casual Professionals

These finance professionals primarily display signals of individuality and expressiveness with few if any signals of professionalism and status. They comprise roughly 28 percent of our samples.



**Exhibit 19 (cont.).**

## Corporate Leaders

These finance professionals primarily display professionalism and status signals with few if any individuality and expressiveness signals. They comprise roughly 18 percent of our samples.



## Expressive Leaders

These finance professionals many professionalism and status signals and some individuality and expressiveness signals. They comprise roughly 9 percent of our samples.



## Independents

These finance professionals display few if any signals of professionalism and status but rather display many signals of individuality and expressiveness. These professionals comprise just 5 percent of our samples overall.



## Discussion of Findings, Limitations, and Future Research

Our studies broadly reveal that professionalism and status signals in professional profile pictures are displayed more often among Chinese professionals, particularly men. Individuality and expressiveness signals in professional profile pictures are displayed more often by American professionals, particularly women. In many aspects of professional profile pictures, cosmopolitan Chinese professionals fall in between American and domestic Chinese professionals.

One contribution of our study is an exploration of professional profile typologies. Several cross-cultural studies of professional profile pictures have focused primarily on various elements of professional profile pictures without any synthesized or overall analysis of the professional profile pictures. We found that Chinese and American professionals tend to cluster into the following types: friendly professionals, corporate leaders, expressive leaders, casual professionals, and independents. These typologies involve various combinations of expressiveness displays and status displays. Each of these typologies effectively serves as a visual rhetoric of professional identity. We think there is opportunity to further explore the notion of professional profile typologies and, specifically, explore the degree to which these typologies are most appropriate for various occupations and the degree to which the various typologies influence HR professionals, external stakeholders, and other picture evaluators.

There are certainly limitations to our study. Our coding scheme was more nuanced than other work. Yet, our coding certainly did not capture everything in the photos or capture a level of nuance that could be evaluated. The study of facial expressions is tremendously complex (Todorov & Porter, 2014; Vernon, Sutherland, Young, & Hartley, 2014) and our evaluation of facial expressions was limited to three forms of smiling (excited smile, calm smile, no smile). On nearly all other coded elements, there is additional detail that could be coded. The style of hair potentially reveals many signals about expressiveness and status (Walsh, 2017). Accessories, makeup, and fashion of attire are among the many issues that could be examined more closely. The exploration of color could be explored much more as we found it difficult to provide reliable analysis with the data we collected. Finally, while our study reveals clear cross-cultural and gender differences, we're still not certain how to precisely attribute the causes of these differences. We recommend further studies to better capture the influence of culture and gender on visual self-presentation in professional profile pictures.

*Pictures and acknowledgements:* Steve Cardon helped manipulate the portrait backgrounds for Study 1. All pictures in Studies 2 and 3 are screenshots of publicly posted and available photos.

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