

**CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT IN CHINA: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN CHINESE MANAGEMENT AND ANGLO EMPLOYEES**

By

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**CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT IN CHINA: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP
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We hereby certify that this Dissertation submitted by **Carl Bamford** conforms to acceptable standards, and as such is fully adequate in scope and quality. It is therefore approved as the fulfillment of the Dissertation requirements for the degree of Master of International Management.

Approved:

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Date 14 April 2012

The University of Liverpool
2012

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this dissertation constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions or writings of another.

I declare that the dissertation describes original work that has not previously been presented for the award of any other degree of any institution.

Signed,

Carl Bamford

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ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural management has been a widely researched topic and continues to be due its dynamic nature and the increasing interdependency of international commerce and thus impact on peoples' lives. The rise of many emerging economies is seeing a shift of power and influence that will cause changes in the world order and a necessity to better understand cross-culture in this context. The researcher found a gap in the literature for Chinese organisations managing foreign employees from western economies (Anglo culture) and subsequent relationship pertaining to practices, differences, compromises and adjustments. Therefore, this dissertation explores this cross-cultural relationship through multiple case studies.

A review of the literature revealed the large impact culture has on organisations in addition to how culture can be distinguished in a social setting, allowing diverse elements to be compared from the perspective of people from different nation cultures. The literature offered a convergent model based on the five most researched cultural themes (CCD model), which forms the basis of the research and analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants (four Chinese management and four foreign employees) at four different Chinese organisations in the eastern city of Wuxi, Jiangsu province, China. The results were qualitatively analysed within-case and cross-case to establish differences, generalisations and consistencies.

The primary data revealed that both Chinese management and foreign employees had made adjustments and adapted towards the other party during the working relationship, particularly with greater transparency and narrower job focus respectively. Time and organisational structure are also important factors in the relationship. Further, the empirical data was very consistent with the

CCD model with cultural playing a significant part in the relationship. However, it is offered that uncertainty and informal networks also play a part in the behaviour and attitudes of the parties and therefore goes beyond culture.

Despite the limitations, this dissertation builds a foundation for future research into this particular area, especially given its increasing importance. Further, the research is of interest to Chinese organisations that employ western workers and for foreign employees arriving to work for Chinese organisations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MNC	Multinational Corporation
CCD	Core Cultural Dimension
FE	Foreign employee
CM	Chinese manager
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
O1	Organisation one
O2	Organisation two
O3	Organisation three
O4	Organisation four

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the dissertation topic related to cross-cultural management including a brief background of globalisation and its impact. A rationale is offered for the dissertation in addition to the intentions, aims and objectives that are sought through the research. Finally, the structure of the dissertation is outlined.

1.1 Background of the dissertation

International commerce is vast, ubiquitous and affects the majority of the people in the world to some degree: from the products people buy, companies they work for or even the websites they visit. The mix of all the aforementioned points to globalisation, which it could be argued affects all organisations to varying degrees. Organisations may buy or sell internationally, outsource all or part of their operations, which in turn influences the economic, cultural and social environment (Salvatore, 2007). Shenkar and Luo (2008: 1) define globalisation as “the acceleration and extension of interdependence of economic and business activities across national boundaries”, illustrating the connectivity, influence and impact of international commerce as a force of importance and opportunity. While globalisation would suggest the advancement of homogeneity and uniformity, it is argued that it is the reverse: people are more, not less aware of differences due to this contact. Global and local forces are dynamic and mostly co-exist and can fundamentally impact organisations (Mead and Andrews, 2010; Jacob, 2005; Gibson and McDaniel, 2010).

The world of commerce is witnessing an increased proliferation of organisations seeking out lower costs, efficiency gains or new markets (rather defensive and offensive strategies)

around the world and in particular, the last two decades have seen major foreign direct investments (FDI) by organisations from developed economies into emerging economies such as China, Brazil, India and Russia (The Economist, 2011). This has entailed outsourcing, joint ventures, alliances and Greenfield investment and with this an understanding and best practices for how to deal with other cultures and business environments. The 'liability of foreignness' is a cost incurred that many international companies accept as part of doing business abroad as they seek to balance and offset these costs with the gains and eventually reduce these costs ((Shenkar and Luo, 2008: 73). The Uppsala model illustrates how organisations incrementally invest abroad to balance this particular risk and gain further knowledge of the foreign market conditions, especially local conditions (Shenkar and Luo, 2008: 74).

This area of international business has required many organisations to change, adjust and evolve new ways of working in order to be more effective. Consequently, this has led to an emphasis on cross-cultural management. Hofstede (1994:1) once wrote that the "business of international business is culture", with reference to the necessity for international management to understand employees' background in order to predict present and future behaviour along with the idea that knowing people assists in management practices for 'getting things done'. As commerce witnesses an increasing amount of cross-border transactions, ever more facilitated by information technology and lower barriers, a need exists to better understand this area in order to produce satisfactory outcomes for organisations. Moreover, the increased movement of people across borders in search of employment and opportunities (Mead and Andrews, 2010: 239) makes cross-cultural understanding even more significant for both organisations and their employees. Culture continues to be a widely explored area that has a large impact on firms who comprise of a diverse workplace or customer base.

While many definitions of culture exist, Whiteley and England (1997, cited in Shenkar and Luo, 2008: 156) defined culture as “the knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs and other capabilities of one group distinguishing it from others”, illustrating how different groups vary in their approach and view of life. Although it is argued that culture plays an important role and remains significant for organisations, it cannot be assumed to explain everything: that anything ‘different’ is down to culture would be erroneous as other environmental variables may play a part in explaining attitudes such as the role of education, economic factors and legal systems (Mead and Andrews, 2010).

The issue of defining and making cultures explicit has been complex: early cultural scholars have used the nation state as a parameter, which has been criticised by subsequent cultural scholars for its simplicity and assumption of homogeneity. While it is argued that this is somewhat inaccurate, as heterogeneity exists within nations, it remains a useful tool and its advantage is that it is clearly defined and therefore continues to be used (Gibson and McDaniel, 2010; Jacob, 2005). In considering the above, the implications for international management are quite evident and the area requires continual research due to its dynamism and overall relevance for the global economy. Culture as a characteristic influences behaviour, attitudes and beliefs is helpful for organisations at both organisational and individual level for operations and strategic imperatives. As Mead and Andrews (2010: 75) offer, “in theory globalisation implies the free movement of political, economic and cultural resources between countries, each society influencing and being influenced by every other society”, although in practice, Western values predominate due to their economic dominance and clout over the past century and as will be highlighted, the world may be seeing shifts occur.

The area of cross-cultural management is expansive and extremely dynamic as culture shifts and evolves due to a myriad of influences from both within a culture and outside a culture. As

developed and developing countries increasingly mix, there is more potential for hybridisation to occur, bringing about new cultural values, which has been termed 'crossvergence' (Kelly, MacNab and Worthley, 2006).

1.2 Rationale for dissertation

The area of culture has been studied in depth as scholars attempt to analyse and understand how people of different cultures think and behave in order to provide some form of comparison, prediction and categorisation. This had led to a series of cultural dimensions and typologies being constructed as an analysis tool, with different cultures being positioned along them, offering the potential for comparison (Mead and Andrews, 2010). For international managers, the area of culture is fundamental and valuable to understand as they come into contact with people from cultures other than their own. Being able to understand, predict and apply a degree of uniformity to a group of workers may be the line between success and failure. The researcher has spent over nine years living in and working with other cultures and appreciates its importance and the challenges it embodies. Indeed, the researcher's own experience points to the steep learning curve that culture presents along with the necessity to consider one's own behaviour and attitudes in society and work life. With the belief that the world will witness increasing numbers of cross-border employment coupled with a shifting economic winds from East to West (O'Sullivan, 2011), an understanding of culture's impact on management practice and thus organisations is significant.

1.3 Research problem

While much research has been undertaken regarding the topic of western Multinational Corporations (MNCs) managing and operating in emerging economy countries and the subsequent issues in cross-cultural management both at individual and organisational level, the researcher has found very little research in terms of the reverse: namely organisations in emerging market countries managing employees from developed economy countries. For example, the majority of cross-cultural research in China has focused on foreign managers and their employees or the Chinese employees who work with these foreigners (Dong and Liu, 2010).

Due to the current economic crisis and economic stagnation that has gripped many mature economy countries, it is suggested that the world is witnessing more of an economic power shift from West to East that has further implications for cross-cultural management (O'Sullivan, 2011). The stagnation of the western economy may see increasing numbers of workers relocating to find employment and career opportunities as the possibility of a reshuffle in the division of labour increases (O'Sullivan, 2011). Additionally, some large organisations in East Asian countries (China and India in particular) are expanding operations beyond their own borders (rather through acquisition or FDI), which require the organisation's management to adapt to managing foreign employees (either from other emerging economies or developed economies) (The Economist, 2011). Further, with a economically important country like China foreseen as having major issues in the future due to an ageing population, there may well be a need to open the labour market to the outside which then would see the necessity to manage foreign workers effectively (Magnus, 2009).

The above has been the experience of the researcher and again has implications for cross-cultural management: with little experience of managing foreign employees in these emerging

market countries, how will they (if they do) adjust their management style, practices and attitude towards the employees to facilitate an effective workplace? Therefore, a research problem is proposed for exploring cross-cultural employer and employee relationship management in emerging market countries.

1.4 Aim and objectives of the dissertation

This dissertation covers the area of cross-cultural management and researches the relationship between management practices in an emerging market organisation and its developed economy country employees by investigating Chinese companies as case studies.

Four Chinese subject companies were chosen for analysis of their management practices, attitudes and experience of Anglo employees. Further, the dissertation analyses Anglo employees' experience and attitudes towards their Chinese management in the expectation of exploring the relationship regarding adjustments, differences and conflicts they have encountered.

Many cultural scholars have highlighted many differences between Chinese culture and Anglo cultures, often placing them at opposites in the cultural research (Nardon and Steers, 2009). Both cultures (Anglo and Chinese) are said to have many different norms, behaviour and values, which are mostly cultural, stemming from (but not exclusively) society, education and customs. Further, this influences the workplace and its institutions and practices, giving rise to behavioural expectations, unwritten or informal norms resulting in the potential for conflict and disagreement as well as converging the two views to be more holistic as an organisation.

Given the proposed differences in culture and within this context, the following research objectives will be addressed:

- How Chinese management adapts their practices for foreign employees and vice-versa. Further, what compromises and adjustments are made in the working relationship given the different cultures.

As people from differing cultures, the styles and attitudes towards the working relationship may require certain compromises and adjustments in order to attain a healthy and effective working relationship. The researcher believes that each party may concede and adapt their practices, adjusting expectations and thus creating a degree of compromise from previously held beliefs.

- What differences occur (if any) and whether they are a result of culture or some other reason.

In any workplace, there are always degrees of conflict and it is suggested by Dierkes et al. (2001) that controlled conflict can have a positive effect in evolving the organisation. However, attitudes towards conflict do differ across societies and people as some seek to look after the interests of others, keep harmony or indeed avoid direct confrontation.

This research focuses on a cross-cultural management context to understand the relationship between Chinese management and foreign employees. By utilising the research, the researcher has uncovered how Chinese management attempts to effectively manage their foreign employees, whether they have the same expectations and approach towards their foreign employees as the local employees and how they have changed and adapted to this situation. The results illustrate the relationship between these two varying cultures; and with the increased expansion of Chinese business outside of Mainland China along with demand for foreign workers to contribute to China's growth, what can be of value to both.

1.5 Research methodology

This research entailed a qualitative research methodology approach. A multiple case study strategy was selected, allowing an embedded within-case and cross-case research and analysis to be conducted, thus offering similarities, dissimilarities and consistencies to be put forward (for the details of the research design is in chapter 0). The research utilised semi-structured interviews for depth and flexibility as well as mitigating the potential issues of cross-cultural research in China.

A sample of four Chinese organisations is selected with two employees (Chinese manager and foreign employee) from each organisation taking part. The public/private organisations are based in the affluent city of Wuxi, China and operate in the educational sector due to strict national employment criteria and laws. Both Chinese management and foreign employees have over three years working experiences with the other party, which the researcher believes provides better accuracy and more depth of experience. Further, attention to reliability and validity is recognised through a pilot survey in addition to the awareness of potential issues in cross-cultural research and finally member checking after the interviews.

1.6 Structure of the dissertation

In chapter two, a literature review of culture and organisations highlights and illustrates what culture is and its impact on organisations and thus their management practices, offering a converged model of analysis based on past cultural research and proposals. As part of the literature review, the researcher draws attention to cultural differences and challenges in working with other cultures, especially between Chinese and Anglo workers. Chapter three explains the research design, methodology and analysis along with the validity and reliability of the research. Chapter four introduces and discusses the results of the research before analysing and forming conclusions based on the qualitative data. In chapter five, the limitations of the research are offered, along with implications and key findings of the research and finally suggestions for future research.

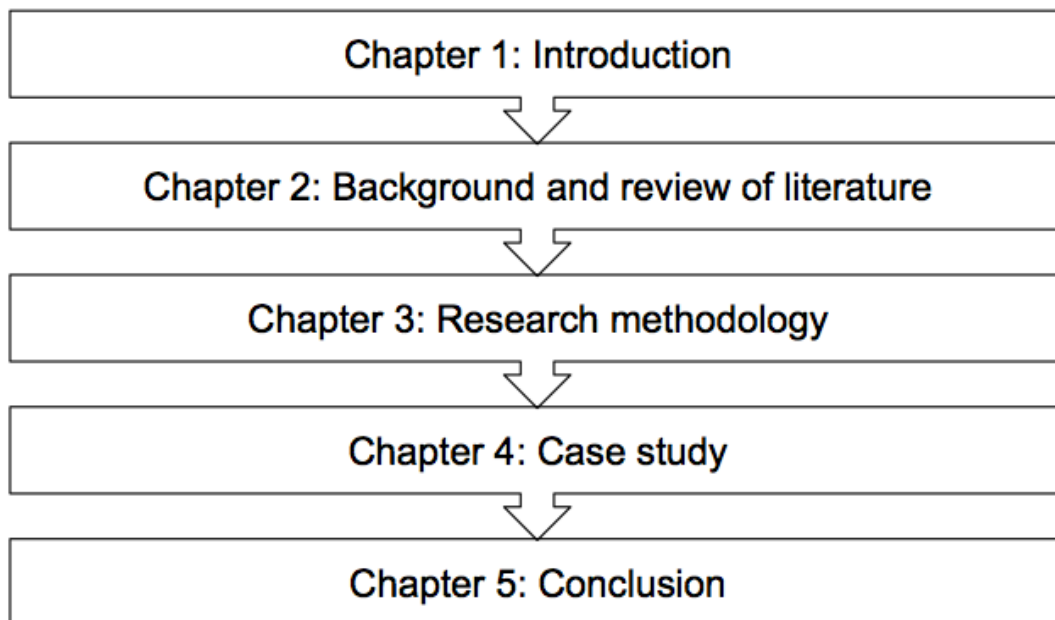


Figure 1.1 Dissertation structure

1.7 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the background and intentions of the dissertation, along with the aims and objectives. By highlighting what is deemed relevant in the context of cross-cultural management in the global economy and people's lives, the significance of the dissertation was offered. Finally, the structure of the dissertation was conveyed. The next chapter reviews the literature and explains culture and its potential impact in an organisation.

Chapter 2. BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter introduces and discusses the topic of culture and its impact on organisations and management practices. Highlighting work by prominent cultural scholars and their subsequent cultural models and limitations, the researcher advances the utility of a more convergent model through Nardon and Steers' (2009) Core Cultural Dimensions model based on five common themes of culture that are widely researched and cited:

- Hierarchy - Equality
- Individualism - Collectivism
- Mastery - Harmony
- Monochronism - Polychronism
- Particularism – Universalism

Both Chinese and Anglo cultural values are offered in accordance with prior research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the challenges of working in China for the expatriate and includes suggestions for acclimatisation.

2.1 What is culture?

Culture is associated with patterns of thinking and feelings that then give rise to action. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) state that much of this is acquired in early childhood (10-12 years old), with culture being learned as opposed to being innate. Further, it is attained from one's own social environment and can be observed in practices through symbols, heroes and rituals. While observable to an outsider, their actual cultural meaning is unseen, with only insiders able to fully interpret them. Deeper, is a person's values which are hidden and most difficult to observe, are at the core of culture as they are broad predispositions to prefer certain states to others (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010: 31). As people age,

they switch their learning method to become more conscious in their ways of learning, concentrating mainly on new practices.

In society, people tend to distinguish in-groups and out-groups, insiders and outsiders (Mead and Andrews, 2010). These people have full rights and obligations as being part of that group. Often the perception of threat from outsiders can create smaller circles and promote group cohesion. This is demonstrated in Switzerland, which although has many fragmented regional groups (cantons), historically they have come together to fight an outside enemy and now represents modern day Switzerland (Chevrier, 2009). A Swiss culture exists because it made sense (i.e. survival and development) to be cohesive in the face of outside threats. Cohesion is demonstrated in degrees of autonomy and consensus for a Swiss state and has implications for the many groups and levels that people often belong to: national, regional, generational, organisational and even departmental. Conflicts frequently arise due to being part of many groups, and therefore it is difficult to predict behaviours in new situations (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

2.2 Culture in context

Hofstede (1980) and numerous other cultural experts have analysed the area of culture through application of cultural dimensions and typologies, which are further used to form predictions and understanding of nations as a culture (see 2.5). A number of different models have been proposed by different scholars, which may be based on single, multiple dimensions or on historical or social models.

Countries (and thus their culture) have been given an index rating for comparison with other countries (cultures), which is valuable for management in an international management context for decision-making, comparison and attempting to predict behaviour (Mead and Andrews, 2010: 28-29). Cultural experts have long offered that countries (and thus cultures) are homogenous cultural entities, classifying anyone within those geographical boundaries as similar. However, many authors and scholars have refuted this proposal as too simplistic (Myers and Tan, 2002), as heterogeneity exists as well as many sub-cultures. Nevertheless, it is offered that the nation state has advantages over alternative models such as subcultural group analysis that are difficult to identify and compare in addition to a shortage of reliable data relating to them (Mead and Andrews, 2010).

2.3 Heterogeneity within nation states

Jacob (2005) argues that the idea of homogenous cultural entities is false and misleading, as often a degree of heterogeneity exists within a nation. Jacob (ibid) claims hybridisation exists which is supported by the existence of 'crossvergence' (Kelly, MacNab and Worthley, 2006), citing Switzerland as an example with its different languages, cantons and concepts of time. Further, Jacob (2005: 515) suggests that people can have membership to several cultural groups. Chevrier (2009) backs this in her case study of Switzerland, concluding that Swiss people share some parts of culture, while not other parts, thus arguing against the case of a national culture as all encompassing. As a society the Swiss people are brought together with a common goal that gives way to institutions and practices conducive to being a cohesive and successful nation. The concept of the nation-state as a political entity around the world is a relatively recent human creation (last 100 years) and the globe can now be organised fully with lines drawn on a map (Myers and Tan, 2002: 31). This demarcation does not fully represent the thousands of years of history that have shaped cultures and the subsequent delineation

tion that have divided peoples and thus cultures: nation states continue to be drawn and redrawn (for example Sudan in 2011) which further complicates cultural research.

In sum, it is often common goals that draw different people together and sees insider groups formed. This may be witnessed in many organisations as employees strive towards achievement and stability.

2.4 Impact of culture on workplaces

Gibson and McDaniel (2010) addressed how cross-culture affects working relationships (through teams, leadership and conflict) and further, they support Jacob's (2005) view that within a nation state, many sub-cultures exist and it therefore influences organisational behaviour. For example, the different cultures between the Chinese management and their foreign employees means that conflict may be approached differently. In their research, Tinsley and Brett (2001, cited in Gibson and McDaniel, 2010: 456) used four conflict norms and tested 214 managers from Hong Kong and USA to evaluate different reactions and attitudes towards certain conflict situations. The data led them to conclude that Chinese management has a high tendency to avoid direct conflict and resort to authoritative lines for solutions rather than an Anglo tendency to resort to conflict norms of discussing each party's interests. Further, research by Ma (2007: 104) found that Chinese people prefer more of an avoidance and non-confrontational approach to conflict to retain harmony and relationship. This concern for authority and collectivism has implications for cross-cultural management as other cultures view, approach and handle conflict differently. This impacts the dissertation as to how differences are managed and whether it supports this notion.

Dispute resolution can be highly influenced through culture, especially in the light of difference between individualist and collectivist cultures. Conflict is said to be a culturally defined event with many different conflict management styles existing (Ma, 2007). In collectivist society cultures such as China, relationships are imperative and the need to sustain group harmony is central. This harmony can take priority over such personal desires and accomplishments of tasks and may involve compromising, accommodating and avoidance (Ma, 2007). Conversely, individualist society cultures such as Anglo cultures value assertiveness, autonomy and competing and therefore results in direct, task-oriented conflict management style with greater emphasis on the self and lack of concern for others. A successful resolution may be considered when there is a winner.

In the workplace, disagreements over certain issues can be expected and it is pondered as to whether Chinese management would compromise to save the relationship with the Anglo employee or that the line of authority is expected to take precedence. The Anglo employee may only consider him/herself in the resolution of the conflict and further, what may be considered as open to negotiation and participation (and therefore conflict) in an Anglo culture may not be so in a Chinese culture.

Functioning communication is vital in an organisation as it can contribute to sustainable, long-term success (Kittler, Rygl and MacKinnon, 2011). The impact of miscommunication in an organisation can result in an unnecessary, unproductive and costly situation. Hall (1976) with his High/Low Context model proposed that culture is at the very heart of communication, especially pertaining to implicitness and explicitness. Further, communication lines based on structure and hierarchy are often the result of culture.

China is said to be a high context culture while Anglo cultures occupy a low context culture. It has been suggested that 'words are the world' (Hall, 1976) referring to the Anglo culture of emphasis on the explicitness of the written word to which has a great impact on how orders are given/received and how responsibilities, obligations and limits are based on written law through behaviour and contracts (in commerce) (Metcalf et al., 2007; Hurn, 2007).

2.5 National culture and its impact

National culture refers to members of a community within a nation state. When these members work together in the form of an organisation, it is proposed that they will generally respond similarly to actions and decisions made by management (Mead and Andrews, 2010). Therefore, management can suppose a degree of uniformity held by the group members, which is of further use for predicting behaviour (Hofstede, 1994). While not ideal due to differences in its members, the generalisations of a shared identity are more efficient in the use of resources for management, especially in the context of bounded rationality. Therefore, cultural analyses have its value in the workplace but are restricted in their predictive worth as there are often other environmental factors at play by members of the organisation. Importantly, extraordinary circumstances such as downsizing, redundancies and promotions may induce particular survival behaviour by members that results in unexpected and unpredictable behaviour.

Many management scholars put forward the claim that national culture is the main force compelling all decisions made in human organisations (Mead and Andrews, 2010: 4). While this is disputed as to its degree of relevance, it is argued that culture is likely to influence how an organisation responds to its environment, through structure and connections in addition to

its members making decisions, communicating and thus further responding to their environment.

As managers perform different roles within an organisation, national culture may influence how the manager acts in these roles and further influences the organisational culture to which the workforce subsequently responds. The structures, institutions and systems that are created by management mean those workforces from different cultures might respond differently, which forms the basis of cross-cultural management.

2.6 Implication of culture on management in organisations

Hofstede (1994: 7) proposed that it is almost impossible to separate the culture of a country and its management practices. These practices are, in effect, culturally dependent, as organisations generally reflect the environment in which they exist and operate (Dierkes et al. 2001; Goodall, Li and Warner, 2006).

Managers and leaders, in addition to subordinates, are components of their national societies and generally have personalities customary in their country (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; Goodall, Li and Warner, 2006; Dierkes et al., 2001). They have been raised in such systems and institutions as schools, government, technology and politics as well as holding general beliefs (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; Mead and Andrews, 2010: 13-16). The implications of this may be seen in organisational structures, expectations and obligations and lines of authority as organisations represent the wider society due to being made up of individuals from it (Goodall, Li and Warner, 2006). Although organisational cultures do ex-

ist, they are said to be less embedded and more superficial as they are learnt consciously and someone may be a member of many during their lifetime, differing from national culture.

In their fieldwork research conducted at six large foreign companies in SuZhou China, Goodall, Li and Warner (2006) illustrated the difficulty of foreign expatriate managers posted there and the impact of the local cultural environment on their management practices. Issues with miscommunication, empowerment, teamwork, motivation and language barriers were all highlighted and said to be due to cultural differences and expectations and lack of cross-cultural training (awareness). The impact on business effectiveness for expatriate managers was said to be quite profound and it was proposed that cultural differences can impact key organisational systems like performance evaluation and rewards, training and recruitment (ibid: 58).

2.7 Culture clustering: Anglo and Chinese

Defining the nation state for cultural context and unit of analysis has certain issues but has value if properly applied and understood, utilising it in the correct context and an awareness of its limitations (Myers and Tan, 2002). The challenge for researchers of culture in terms of comparison represents some difficulties as cultures are not monolithic and so there are degrees of variance between people within nationalities. If one focuses on central tendencies of a culture, it becomes more useful for comparison. This is furthered somewhat by clustering cultures into regional similarities based on various cultural dimensions as proposed by Ronen and Shenkar (1995).

A dimension is offered as a feature of a culture that can be calculated relative to other cultures. A multitude of cultural scholars have created many dimensions which group together a number of phenomena existent within a society that were “empirically found to occur in combination, regardless of whether there seems to be a logical necessity for their going together” (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010: 31). Different nations have different dimensional scores that can be assessed as to how these different nations are according to phenomena. It should be noted that the culture of a country is not representative of the ‘average citizen’ but a set of probable reactions of citizen who share a common mental mindset or central tendencies. Statistically, these reactions occur more often in the same society as opposed to a variance among individuals (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010: 191).

Ronen and Shenkar (1995) have furthered this and produced national culture clustering based statistical synthesis of degree of similarities that are related to employee general work attitudes such as work values and goals (Ronen and Shenkar, 1995: 435). Clustering is offered to assist managers and MNCs to understand similarities and differences as broader themes and ‘values of culturally similar countries’ so that a more effective decision can be made for international assignments and compatibility between regional units: a ‘cultural landscape’ can be constructed based on people living in “particular sectors of cultures” (Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts and Earnshaw, 2002: 28-38).

Relevant to this dissertation is Mainland China’s inclusion in an East/Southeast Asian cluster for which it shares with Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (Nardon and Steers, 2009). However, as the dissertation is only concentrating on Mainland Chinese managers, the term Chinese culture is used to describe anything to do with the culture of Mainland China. The Anglo culture cluster contains Australia, Canada (English speaking), Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa (white sample), UK and USA and has its roots as former British

colonies sharing of language and having developed 'Western' economies (Ronen and Shenkar, 1995: 450; Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts and Earnshaw, 2002: 28; Nardon and Steers, 2009).

The original clustering in 1995 remains relatively the same in the later 2006 classification, illustrating its significant stability and continuity (Shenkar and Luo, 2008: 172). However, clustering has been criticised for exaggerating differences between clusters in that there may be similarities between countries of different clusters: it cannot be said that the Anglo cluster is significantly different from the Nordic cluster because there may indeed be many similarities in work attitudes and values. Further, levels of workers (white collar for example) may display similar work values across clusters (Ronen and Shenkar, 1995: 448).

2.8 Core Cultural Dimension model

Given the multitude of different cultural models that have been created, this presents a problem for researchers of culture, as there is a lack of convergence of the various models. Nardon and Steers (2009) propose this as a "culture theory jungle", as researchers are required to select competing and often overlapping models in order to further their research goals and subsequently defend their choices against critics. Their aim to converge six cultural scholars and models based on national cultures that are widely cited in the cultural research literature resulted in the creation of the 'Core Cultural Dimensions' (CCD) model. It synthesises the well-known models of Hofstede (1980), Hall (1976), Trompenaars (1993), Schwartz (1992), GLOBE (House et al., 2004) and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) into five dimensions that have a relatively distinct common theme among the scholars. This is useful for the researcher of culture in the context of organisations and offers a pragmatic approach to analysis. The five dimensions proposed are:

- Hierarchy - Equality
- Individualism - Collectivism
- Mastery - Harmony
- Monochronism – Polychronism
- Universalism - Particularism

The CCD model seeks out commonalities among the many models rather than developing a new model or indeed debating existing models. The researcher believes that this synthesis and attempt at convergence offers a more balanced approach to research. Below illustrates the central tendencies of different culture clusters in relation to the CCD model.

Country Clusters	Hierarchy-Equality	Individualism-Collectivism	Mastery-Harmony	Monochronism-Polychronism	Universalism-Particularism
Anglo	Moderately egalitarian	Strongly individualistic	Strongly mastery-oriented	Strongly monochronic	Moderately universalistic
Arab	Strongly hierarchical	Strongly collectivistic	Moderately harmony-oriented	Strongly polychronic	Strongly particularistic
East European	Moderately hierarchical	Moderately collectivistic	Moderately mastery-oriented	Moderately monochronic	Moderately particularistic
East/Southeast Asian	Strongly hierarchical	Strongly collectivistic	Strongly harmony-oriented	Moderately monochronic	Strongly particularistic
Germanic	Moderately egalitarian	Moderately individualistic	Moderately mastery-oriented	Moderately monochronic	Strongly universalistic
Latin American	Moderately hierarchical	Moderately collectivistic	Moderately harmony-oriented	Strongly polychronic	Strongly particularistic
Latin European	Moderately hierarchical	Moderately collectivistic	Moderately harmony-oriented	Moderately polychronic	Moderately particularistic
Nordic	Strongly egalitarian	Moderately collectivistic	Moderately harmony-oriented	Moderately monochronic	Strongly universalistic
Sub-Saharan African	Strongly hierarchical	Strongly collectivistic	Moderately harmony-oriented	Moderately polychronic	Strongly particularistic

Table 2.1 Central tendencies on Core Cultural Dimensions for country clusters (Ronan and Shenkar, 1995, cited in Nardon and Steers, 2009: 19)

The following subchapters will discuss the five dimensions in more detail, explaining what it means and its implications.

2.8.1 Hierarchy vs. Equality

It is accepted that there will always be differences in society in terms of the way that power is distributed. Hofstede (1994: 2) suggested, “all societies are unequal, but some are more than unequal than others”. The question is how power is allocated: more hierarchical or more egalitarian? Certain cultures have hierarchies and this manifests itself with large distances in authority, with power distributed unequally, allowing elites to exist in institutions (government, organisations, school). These cultures tend to be autocratic, controlling with benevolent followers often accepting this authority in return for protection and guidance. Certain cultures in many Asian, Arab and Latin American countries tend to display a more hierarchical society in what Hofstede (1980) refers to this as ‘Power Distance’. It is offered that China has a strongly hierarchical society with a large power distance that has its roots in Confucian values as well as demonstrated in the current communist government (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; Schwartz, 1994, House et al., 2004; Chen and Lee, 2008). However, Goodall, Li and Warner (2006: 59) propose that there is a shift in Chinese culture, especially where there has been contact with foreign values (through the Internet, consumerism and foreign companies/staff), which is moving Chinese workers towards more of a goal-oriented value system as opposed to egalitarian. This is said to be particularly true of younger workers under 41 years old.

Somewhat converse to this is a society based more on equality, pointing to egalitarian values (moral equals) and allowing a more participative approach in the institutions of society (Nardon and Steers, 2009). People expect dialogue and consultation about decisions affecting

them, with Scandinavian cultures strongly exemplifying this (Schwartz, 1994). These small Power Distances are witnessed in many institutions (including the family) whereby relationships tend to be based on equality with hierarchies only established for convenience and usually based on roles or pay scales (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). It is proposed that Anglo cultures display a moderately egalitarian society that results in more participative working conditions, narrower salary range and decentralised decision-making (Nardon and Steers, 2009; Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

2.8.2 Individualism vs. Collectivism

A very common theme between cultural scholars and their models pertains to how cultures are organised. Some cultures are said to be more individual, basing activities and focus on loose ties, placing the individual at the centre with expectations of independence and concern only for close family. Conversely, collective cultures gravitate towards strong, cohesive groups with concern for extended families and reliance on each other (Nardon and Steers, 2009; Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). Individualist cultures teach personal responsibility and individual achievement and less reliance and dependence on others. Contrastingly, collectivist cultures stress harmony and group cohesiveness as the societal objective with an individual's identity hard to separate from the group identity. This appears in organisations through group harmony and the avoidance of conflict with employees' concern for their loyalty and their close group for consensus, ideas and rewards (House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 1980). In his research on this dimension, Trompenaars (1993) states that in individualist cultures, people think of themselves primarily as individuals whereas collectivist see themselves principally as a member of a group (be it family, department, organisation etc.). Many scholars place Anglo cultures as strongly individualist and Chinese cultures as strongly collectivist. Research by Goodall, Li and Warner (2006) offered that while Chinese culture is collectivistic,

competition among different groups can be fierce, as people align with their guanxi network rather than departmental for example.

The implication for this dissertation is that Chinese culture is said to be strongly collectivist in contrast to Anglo culture being strongly individualistic (Nardon and Steers, 2009). However, Goodall, Li and Warner (2006) propose that the Chinese younger generation are moving towards more individualistic tendencies. Many cultural scholars propose shifts in culture due to its dynamism but suggest that cultures often shift together and so dimensional variance stay relatively stable (Kelly, McNab and Worthley, 2006). Interestingly, Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) offer that increased individualism is positively correlated with increased GNP per capita. Given China's rapid growth, it is wondered what impact (or conflict) this will have on Chinese values in the future.

Of note in this context is Hall (1976) who proposed High and Low Context cultures in terms of communication. High Context cultures are implicit with communication and context highly relevant for the meaning of the message. Body language, utterances and ambience all play a part in this and it is only possible and effective if people share an understanding with the close people around them (Nardon and Steers, 2009). It requires trust and personal relationship and this is typical in more collectivist cultures. On the contrary, Low Context cultures are explicit and words convey the meaning, not requiring any close or long-term relationship in order to be effective. China is said to be a High Context culture whereas Anglo societies reflect a more Low Context culture in their communication and actions (Hall, 1976; Nardon and Steers, 2009). Low context cultures tend to be more direct with the words, which opposes the High context tendency for implicit and less confrontational communication. This may impact communication channels and misunderstandings.

2.8.3 Mastery vs. Harmony

As part of their CCD model, Nardon and Steers (2009) offer that many cultural scholars have attempted to identify to what degree people within a society try to control or adapt to their environment or surroundings. Hofstede (1980) sought to separate these in his Masculinity versus Femininity dimension. Cultures with a high Masculinity index tend to value success, competitiveness, progress and assertiveness so as to control the environment and thus attempt Mastery: there are often clearly distinguished roles in society with achievement valued over relationships. Conversely, cultures that are classed more feminine tend to be more in Harmony with nature, with emphasis on prioritising relationships over transactions and social equality through modesty and prioritise quality of life over other financial or career pursuits. Nardon and Steers (2009) suggest that China culture is strongly Harmony-oriented whereas Anglo cultures tend to be strongly Mastery-oriented. This impacts the organisation in terms of competition and expectation of a strong, assertive and empowered leader. Further, Mastery cultures have preference for prioritising work time over family time in order to progress and may enforce values on others.

2.8.4 Monochronism vs. Polychronism

The concept of time is perhaps one of the most significant variables that differ between cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). The different models constructed by cultural scholars offer insights into how cultures plan for and their focus on the present, past and future.

Hofstede's (1980) original dimensions didn't include future or time and criticism was aimed at the original dimensions for being biased and 'too westernised' in their concept of defining and assessing culture (Goodall, Li and Warner, 2007). In cooperation with Michael Bond and his

Chinese colleagues, the Chinese Values Survey (CVS) was developed and the Long-Term Orientation (LTO) dimension was created. LTO refers to certain values such as frugality and persistence together with traditional respect for social obligations. The Confucian values of unequal relationships, family at the centre and spending one's life working hard, being patient and acquiring skills and education are at the heart of the dimension. Cultures that are deemed high on long-term orientation display delaying gratification and adopting longer planning horizons (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). Perhaps unsurprisingly, China comes top on LTO dimension whereas Anglo cultures score low (short-term oriented). There may be conflict between the two cultures in terms of patience for decisions and willingness to spend money within the organisation. Further, accepted unequal relationships may be difficult for Anglo cultures that prefer more equality and less paternalism.

In characterising time, Hall (1959) approached the topic by discussing time in its relation to work activities and the tendency for certain cultures to approach it in linear fashion (monochronic) in contrast to cultures that approach several tasks concurrently (polychronic). It is proposed that this relates to Trompenaars (1993) dimension in terms of time orientation as to how people approach tasks in a sequential or simultaneous way. The CCD model (Nardon and Steers, 2009) offers that Hall's monochronic/polychronic model is the most useful for understanding the view of time, how people focus on the now or future by their approach to tasks. The Monochronic culture offers a linear, precise, single-minded and job-centred approach to work and planning shows impatience with more focus on current events and issues. Conversely, Polychronic cultures are people-centred, committing to people and human relationships with a relative concept of time with attention multiplicity, with an unfocused and patient approach and work.

On this dimension, Chinese culture is said to be moderately Monochronic in relation to Anglo cultures that are offered to be strongly Monochronic (Nardon and Steers, 2009).

2.8.5 Universalism vs. Particularism

One of the more challenging dimensions that can be found in many cultural models is to do with uncertainty in society and how it is approached via rules, laws and regulations and how strictly and universally and arbitrary they are applied. GLOBE (House et al. 2004) and Hofstede (1980) proposed similar dimensions for degrees in which society attempts to reduce, control or tolerate uncertainty through rules and regulations.

The CCD model proposes that it is how a culture tries to deal with the uncertainty that is the main issue and has implications for management. Offering Universalistic (or rule-based) cultures that use a whole host of laws, procedures, regulations and strict social norms in an attempt to control the various unforeseen events as much as is possible. People have a moral belief in the rule of law and its virtue, obeying orders with universal applicability and not allowing exceptions for who or the status of the person. Formal contracts typify this as well as emphasis of rigorously detailed record keeping in commerce. This in effect attempts to create a society with no surprises and objective decision-making.

Contrastingly, Particularistic (or relationship-based) cultures have a tendency to utilise influential people for social control rather than regulations and rules. This manifests itself through people who have an influence over an individual such as parents, superiors, peers and government officials (Nardon and Steers, 2009). This leads to individual circumstances in way rules are applied and its arbitrary nature. Interpersonal relationships that exhibit trust substitute for rules and the lack of certainty. Khanna and Palepu (2010) propose these as 'institutional voids' and are often existent in emerging economies and therefore there is a need to form close relationships to reduce uncertainty in business relations and security. Greater tol-

erance for rule breaking exists, even to the extent that the rules and laws aren't always applicable to certain people (Hurn, 2007). It should be noted that laws and procedures are valued in these cultures, but they are dependent on the social network embracing them and whether they are aligned with the moral virtues and necessities of the followers (Nardon and Steers, 2009). For example, a contract may be negotiable even after being signed and its applicability dependent on the people involved (and thus their relationship) (Hurn, 2007). This may be seen as uncertain and is tolerated by Particularistic cultures with any conflict resolved through relationship rather than litigation.

Chinese culture is suggested to be strongly Particularistic in contrast to Anglo culture's moderately Universalistic approach. Therefore, one may see Anglo cultures attempt to reduce uncertainty in their business dealings, preferring to adhere to rules and laws to relationship; whereas Chinese culture may see ambiguity in the rules and procedures and use personal relationships to build trust and certainty which is often witnessed in guanxi (personal networks).

2.8.6 Conclusion for the CCD model

The difficulties of converging cultural perspectives was highlighted and the researcher believes that the CCD model offers a more useful and pragmatic foundation for understanding and analysing culture in respect of cross-cultural management practices. Nardon and Steers (2009: 20) propose that the model includes the five most "conceptual variances across cultures", decreasing the need for the researcher to choose between the numerous cultural models that exist and overlap. However, caution should be exercised in making such concrete and definite applications of the CCD model and should merely seek to assist the researcher in understanding and making proposals.

2.9 Cross-cultural management

Mead and Andrews (2010: 16) define cross-cultural management as “development and application of knowledge about cultures in the practice of international management when the people involved have different cultural identities”. This implies an awareness and sensitivity to managing people from different cultures as well as continual learning and adjustment to one’s cultural knowledge. This is true when management has the responsibility to manage a single culture group that he/she is not part of. It is widely accepted that management cannot force fit members of another culture into its own cultural norms and has been the source of much organisational conflict (Chevrier, 2009; Gibson and McDaniel, 2010).

For multicultural organisations, management practices such as appraisal systems, incentives, empowerment and candour may be suitable for one culture and not another and are therefore of importance for effective performance.

2.10 Complexities of working in China as a foreigner

China is often seen as a complex place for foreigners to work due to lack of cultural fit, complicated societal networks and language (Paine, 2010; Buckley, Clegg and Tan, 2006; Goodall, Warner and Lee, 2006). Varma et al. (2009) researched the treatment of expatriates in China by their host country nationals (HCN) and suggests that working in China requires considerable adjustment and support from locals to succeed. However, assistance is affected by the status as an expatriate/foreigner in position to Chinese people. As culture endeavours to distinguish and define people in terms of groups they belong to, the implications of outsiders becoming part of the in-group are clear. Due to China’s strong collectivist society, it

is proposed they clearly distinguish in-group and out-group members (Hofstede, 2001 cited in Varma et al., 2009), which impacts expatriates as outsiders. Their findings of the treatment of Indian and American expatriates by host country national (HCN) indicated that Chinese are more willing to assist expatriate co-workers if they find some interpersonal effect and homophily. To this concern Indian expatriates (as Asians) were given more assistance and were trusted more than American expatriates.

As Anglo expatriates, the likelihood of Chinese perceiving them as an out-group may affect their attitude towards managing and working with them. This impacts the dissertation as it brings to light cultural differences but also behavioural differences (Goodall, Li and Warner, 2006). With the crucial role of guanxi (network) in China built on trust, Varma et al. (2009) propose that expatriates attempt to adjust and learn through their actions and words to become part of the in-group that then should facilitate an easier and more comfortable working environment. The dissertation may uncover whether certain behaviour can be learnt and displayed to integrate better.

To work in China as a foreign national for a Chinese company, an employee has to have a specific skill that cannot be filled by a domestic candidate and is therefore classed as a foreign expert (Lehman, Lee and Xu, n.d). This is mainly demonstrated in Chinese educational organisations, especially teaching English. Therefore, Chinese educational organisations are the chosen subject of this dissertation.

2.11 Chapter summary and frame of reference

This chapter highlighted the impact of culture on organisations and management practices. The considerable literature that exists on culture draws attention to the importance of culture as a fundamental factor in international businesses. The literature puts forth an argument for the significance and impact of culture in the workplace. As a unit of analysis, the nation state is offered to be the most comprehensive and feasible despite its limitations. Therefore, culture clustering is further proposed for China and the Anglo cultures as relevant to this dissertation in order to define empirically differences between the two.

By utilising the convergent CCD model by Nardon and Steers (2009), the researcher sought to introduce and illustrate Chinese and Anglo cultural differences and similarities along with how it could potentially impact a workplace containing the two respective cultures. The CCD model highlights five dimensions that are most common to cross-cultural research and illustrates the central tendencies associated with the culture clusters. This forms the foundation of the research to assist the researcher in collecting information and helping to form the research design through the survey questions. Additionally, the existent literature forms a frame of reference and these theories will be used to investigate and compare with the empirical findings.

The researcher intends to discover:

- Hierarchy vs. Equality

Does the Chinese management impose a strict hierarchy on its Anglo employees who are said to prefer a more equitable structure? Does the Chinese management allow more empowerment and a participative approach? Does the Chinese management seek to maintain a power distance or narrow it?

- Individualism vs. Collectivism and Mastery vs. Harmony

Does the Chinese management seek to maintain harmony? Further, are the Anglo employees accepted into the group and expected to concede their personal goals for the sake of the group? Do the Anglo employees act individually and competitively? Does the Chinese management act in a more relationship based and exclusive manner?

- Monochronism vs. Polychronism

Given the monochronic similarities, can some distinctions be drawn from the two cultures as Anglo culture is said to be strongly monochronic, which may conflict with moderately monochronic Chinese culture? The long-term orientation of Chinese culture values patience and thrift: is this displayed to the Anglo employees?

- Universalism vs. Particularism

Given the importance of relationship in China, this dimension may have a strong impact when compared with the universalistic values of the Anglo culture. Are strict rules and laws established in the workplace and are they applicable to all? Do the Anglo employees believe that the rules are fair and does it reduce the uncertainty they desire?

In using the CCD model to investigate the above factors, it is believed that the working relationship between the Chinese management and Anglo employees at the subject company can be established and assessed, highlighting to what degree any compromises have been made from either party, what conflicts as well as if a middle ground has been created. Further, what impact culture has had on the organisations as well as the impact of national culture.

Chapter 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to White (2000: 20), a methodology is the approach a researcher utilises to investigate a particular subject. Further, methodology forms the “philosophical basis on which the research is founded”, referring to the structure and foundation for the investigation. The research methodology assists the researcher bringing together the required information in addition to how it is to be analysed. It is thought that this approach will produce the desired results. This chapter outlines and discusses the research methodology that is used in this dissertation.

3.1 Research purpose

Research is classed as the process used when people have questions to answer, need to acquire knowledge and extend an understanding of the world (Matthews and Ross, 2010). Therefore, in social research, it is undertaken to describe and explore some form of social phenomenon, along with understand and explain the ‘how’ and ‘why’. In a simplistic view, a researcher attempts to explore and describe the phenomenon using questions such as ‘What?’ ‘Where?’ ‘When?’ ‘Who?’ and then explain and understand the phenomenon by asking questions like ‘Why?’ and ‘How?’. Schutt (1996, cited in Matthews and Ross, 2010: 31) offers four types of research. These are known as descriptive, exploratory, explanatory and evaluation research respectively (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 57).

Exploratory research attempts to understand or explore some social process when the researcher has limited prior understanding of the area or issues. This seeks to accumulate information on an issue, especially when the research problem is difficult to define absolutely. Due to the lack of demarcation of an issue, in order to gather enough information, surveys

are a recommended technique, with interviews allowing more substantive exploration (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

Matthews and Ross (2010: 134) offer that descriptive research is often concerned with quantifying an issue, area or phenomenon and is suitable when a problem is known and can be quantified. Explanatory research goes towards the 'why?', looking for causes and effects and utilises the formulation of hypotheses that can be tested empirically.

Evaluative research concentrates on the value of a certain social practice or issue. This research often attempts to find out how something can be changed or improved, resulting in questions and would move more towards market research and focuses on its commissioners (but not exclusively) (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

This dissertation's research problem focuses on **"investigating cross-cultural employer and employee relationship management in emerging market countries"** and therefore considers explorative research in the aim describing and understanding the phenomenon lacking full development.

3.2 Research approach

Two main approaches (qualitative and quantitative) exist towards research and are well known and documented. The quantitative research method attempts to quantify the results, using statistical and mathematical evaluation on the numerical values of the data (White,

2000: 24). However, it lacks the depth of exploration of the qualitative method and requires a more defined study often through testable hypotheses.

Qualitative research methods are a popular form of research in social sciences and are a descriptive, non-numerical way to collect and interpret information (White, 2000: 28). Brewerton and Millward (2001: 12) offer that qualitative approaches to culture “seek to characterize its rich, emergent, constructed and multi-dimensional nature” in organisations, offering flexibility for the research process. A researcher using qualitative methods becomes part of the research, allowing a closer more personalised examination of the phenomenon, which can potentially produce deeper information, especially in the form of interviews, which can be part of a case study.

As this dissertation’s purpose is to consider and examine Chinese management practices with their foreign employees, it is difficult to quantify in a numerical way and therefore a qualitative approach is considered more appropriate. Culture is multi-dimensional and this approach offers a better opportunity for a wider viewpoint.

3.3 Research strategy

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007: 135) propose 7 typical research strategies, which are part of classic research ‘Onion’. These are Experiment, Survey, Case study, Action-research, Grounded theory, Ethnography and Archival Research respectively, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. The choice for the researcher is dependent on:

- Research question and objective
- Extent of existing knowledge

- Time and resources available
- Researcher's own philosophical underpinnings

Given these criteria, the researcher chose a case study research strategy. Experiment strategy is unsuitable as there is no variable being researched. While survey would have expanded the research area, it may limit the ability to explore due to the number of variables that the data can collect. Ethnography requires heavy investment of time and requires the researcher to become immersed. Further, grounded theory requires the building of theory and as a current lack of knowledge exists, this would prove difficult. Given the multiple case and type of information required, archival research is not of interest.

Robson (2002, cited in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007: 139) defined a case study as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence”, with context playing an important part in its relationship with the phenomenon. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) propose that this strategy has substantial capacity to generate answers to the question ‘why?’ and ‘how?’ especially in a situation that the researcher has limited or no control.

Yin (2003, cited in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007: 140) offers four case study strategies, which are founded on two distinctive dimensions:

- Single case v. Multiple case;
- Holistic case v. Embedded case

As stated above, case study research can involve a single case or multiple cases, and be holistic of a group or organisation or narrowed to sub-group/unit or department for example. A single case may be chosen if the phenomenon hasn't been considered before while a multiple case study offers a more comparative and pursuit of generalisations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007). Therefore, given the case study strategy's ability to answer 'why' and 'how' as well as the phenomenon, a multiple case study strategy is the most appropriate for this dissertation. Further, the case study is embedded as it selects a specific group and location rather than a holistic investigation.

3.4 Sample selection

In research, the selected sample should closely represent the issue or problem and add value to the area investigated. The two main branches are probability and non-probability samples and are selected for the representative value and feasibility concerning resources. Given that the research area is very specific and non-random, non-probability branch is selected. Purposive sampling is a deliberate selection, ideal for small in-depth studies, focusing qualitative data that seeks exploration of perception and experiences although its weakness has low representation on a larger scale. Participants are chosen on 'purpose' due to their knowledge and experience. Further, a willingness to participate and be explicit is a vital component in the sample selection. (Matthews and Ross, 2010). Therefore, for this dissertation, a purposive sample of participants is selected based on the following criteria:

- A Mainland Chinese organisation that directly employs over 5 foreign employees
- Chinese managers who have direct authority of their employees and have over 3 years experience in managing foreigners
- Employees who are from an Anglo culture country and have worked in Mainland China for over 3 years
- Located in the city of WuXi, Jiangsu province

The researcher believes that the above criterion allows a better exploration of the relationship, especially through the length of experience and relationship between the two parties under investigation.

3.5 Organisation backgrounds

Organisation 1: Public-private organisation

The organisation is a 10-year-old joint partnership between a Chinese university and four other international educational institutes. The local management is Chinese and is responsible for operations, budgets, recruitment and licensing. They employ approximately 35-40 foreigners on 6 month-1 year contracts at the local location according to national and provincial laws. The faculty is split between Chinese employees (teachers, administration and management) and foreign employees (teachers). The partnership exists and operates as part of the larger Chinese university with its own administration building. The private partnership has a Dean and deputy Dean to oversee daily operations but financial and regulatory decisions are made higher up at the public level. The partnership's product/service is Diploma/Bachelor degrees issued by the local university and foreign university. Foreign employees are expected to have a minimum Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree for teaching business subjects.

The researcher has worked for this organisation for three years and is currently employed there.

Organisation 2: Public-private organisation

The organisation is a 6-year-old joint partnership between a Chinese university and two other international educational institutes. They employ 13 foreigners full-time to teach on 1-year contracts at the local location according to national and provincial laws. The faculty is split between Chinese employees (teachers, administration and management) and foreign employees (teachers). The partnership exists and operates as part of the larger Chinese university with its own administration building. The organisation offers Diploma/Bachelor degrees issued by the local university and foreign university. Foreign employees are expected to have a minimum Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree for teaching business subjects.

Organisation 3: Private organisation

A large Chinese owned private (floated) educational institute spanning more than 55 cities/towns across China and over 500 training centres. Within the selected city, it has 6 institutes and employs around 6-8 foreigners both full and part-time (seasonal). They employ a number of Chinese English language teachers at each branch as well as administration staff. The product/service is mainly international for the customers to be able to take internationally recognised English certificates such as TEFL, TOEFL and IELTS at official centres. Further, they teach customers of all ages in improving English skills.

Organisation 4: Private organisation

A Chinese owned nationwide private educational franchise established in 1998 with over 100 training centres. The local franchise is owned by family that has 20 branches altogether, operating 6 within the specific city. The product/service is mainly teaching spoken English. Lo-

cally, the organisation employs around 10 foreign employees who are deployed around the different branches daily (depending on demand). Chinese employees account for the management, administration and English tutors.

3.6 Data collection methods

The cases are selected according to the above criteria and it is necessary to examine the variety of research methods available. The collection of data is influenced by the chosen methodology with secondary and/or primary data the main choices in the chosen case study research. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) offer that secondary data through current organisational documentation or archival records can be useful in support of the research issue, especially as they may offer a broader, diverse set of events. However, these both lack focus on the particular research issue, especially in light of difficult access to relevant documents (including language issues).

Primary data can be collected via observation (direct and/or participant) or surveys. Observation has strengths as the researcher gains a first hand view. However, it is time consuming and the observer may unduly influence events and it is felt the research issue cannot be witnessed so easily.

Surveys can be more qualitative or quantitative, structured or unstructured with questionnaires being more quantitative and structured. Interviews are suited to case study research and can be semi-structured or unstructured (in-depth). Interviews rely very much on the interviewer and the preparation and construction of the interview (questions, environment etc.).

Interviews have potential disadvantages in bias, leading the respondent and the interviewee offering answers they believe the interviewer wants to hear. This is especially true in China where 'face' is very important (Stening and Zhang, 2007). The strength of the interview lies in the ability to focus on the case study issue and a large amount of information to be gathered resourcefully.

Therefore, given the benefits of the interview method, the semi-structured interview is chosen to gather data. The interviews took place at the organisations as per selection criterion. The collection of data from the locations will allow a larger amount of research and more opportunity for themes to occur for analysis.

3.7 Data analysis

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) qualitative data are characterised by richness and fullness based on the opportunity to explore a topic in a real manner. Qualitative data is based on meanings that are expressed through words, results collected in non-standardised format with analysis through the use of conceptualisation. To analyse, the non-standardised and complex nature of the data often needs to be categorised in order to be analysed meaningfully.

As explanatory studies need propositions, the data analysis (and collection) should be structured to support the research proposition (Rowley, 2002). This theoretical proposition (Yin, 2003 cited in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007: 489) is chosen and therefore the analysis is conducted in this method:

Within-case analysis

The analysis was conducted within each case at different levels of analysis, centred on five cultural themes. Consequently, similarities, dissimilarities and consistencies are identified within each case and provide the results.

Cross-case analysis

The analysis was conducted within each case at different levels of analysis, centred on five cultural themes. Consequently, a comparative analysis was conducted with similarities, dissimilarities and consistencies identified to provide the results.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007: 493) offer the data display and analysis approach based on the work of Miles and Huberman. The three concurrent sub processes are:

Data reduction: this involves data reduction with the process aim of transforming and condensing it via interview summaries, coding and categorising data

Data display: from the extended data, organising and assembling to the reduced data into diagrammatic or visual displays, through matrices and networks. Drawing conclusions from the selected is considerably assisted from data displays as it helps establish key patterns, relationships and trends evident in the data.

Drawing and verifying conclusions: paying attention to meaning by outlining and describing any patterns, similarities and explanations.

This dissertation follows the above three steps for analysing the collected data. Based on the theoretical dimensions of the CCD model (Nardon and Steers, 2009), the within case analysis

compares the emergent empirical results accordingly and then extends to cross case analysis to ascertain parallels and variations. Further, the analysis explores the impact of culture in organisations and national culture from the primary findings. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn based on the findings from the analyses, as each research question is recurred in order to provide answers.

3.8 Quality criteria

White (2000: 25) states that the two important concepts of validity and reliability need to be built into the research design. Validity attempts to ensure that the research design fully addresses the research objectives and questions that the researcher seeks to answer and therefore requires comprehensive planning in the initial stages. Reliability is concerned with research and consistency; the ability for another researcher to use the research design and attain comparable findings although conclusions and interpretation will likely be different.

Rowley (2002: 5) outlines four tests that are widely used in establishing the quality of empirical research:

Construct validity: this entails establishing correct operational measures for the concepts under study, thereby exposing and reducing subjectivity via linking data collection question to research questions.

Internal validity: involves establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships.

External validity: establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised. This generalisation is based on replication logic as highlighted above.

Reliability: demonstrates that the operations of a study - such as the data collection can be repeated with the same results. This is achieved through thorough documentation of procedures and appropriate recording keeping

To gather evidence, the researcher used interviews for the research in this dissertation. The researcher had access to the organisations through various relationships and recommendations. However, it should be noted that the researcher's own organisation was investigated and that may have influenced some of the answers given by the participants of that organisation.

As the case study does not involve causal relationships, internal validity is not an issue here. External validity is concerned with generalisations and it is stated that a single case study would be very low while a multiple case study increases external validity (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

Particular issues pertaining to research in China concerns keeping 'face'. Stening and Zhang (2007) highlight the issue of 'face' and its importance in answering questions, but state that face-to-face methods (if handled sensitively) have an increased chance of yielding more reliable results, especially if anonymity is assured and participation is voluntary (Stening and Zhang, 2007). Additionally, the Western researcher (of low-context nature) should be aware of the high-context nature of Chinese communication when surveying, and information may be diffused in different ways, especially its codification, abstraction and timing (Roy et al.,

2001: 207; Stening and Zhang, 2007). Finally, with cross-culture, language is always an issue as words may have different meanings across cultures. For example, commonly held values such as trust, justice or loyalty have different meanings for different cultures (Stening and Zhang, 2007).

Participants were notified in advance of the research topic and sent a list of questions. Tablet technology was used in addition to note taking so that answers can be checked at later date. The data collected was sent back to the participants to check for misinterpretations. Regarding reliability, it has been suggested that an observer is present to witness or corroborate the findings and interpretations as it increases accuracy. Multiple observers would be ideal in a case study given the resources, but the researcher interviewed the participant face-to-face and so is reliant on one person.

Pilot study

Some of aforementioned mentioned issues can be minimised by conducting a pilot survey. This was first conducted with three Chinese students who had a decent grasp of English and study business and management. The goal was to ensure that the questions were unambiguous, pertinent and culturally sound. Certain issues arose over the term 'responsiveness' to which the researcher later clarified to the participants in order for comprehension.

The researcher personally interviewed each pilot study participant, recording and asking questions. The questions were sent prior to the interview.

Ethics and confidentiality

The researcher endeavoured to ensure that any confidential information has been breached. The participants were notified as to how the information will be used and permission granted as its use for the dissertation. Further, the participants openly agreed to participate and had the option to accept or decline. The researcher offers that no information will be used that will compromise the position of the participant in his/her organisation or indeed implicate another person. In order to gain permission, the participants wish that confidentiality is adhered to in terms of the final document.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the concept of research methodology, the goal of research and the reasoning behind chosen methods. Moreover, the sample selection criterion was offered in addition to a brief introduction of the chosen organisations. The data analysis methods were explained and the importance issue of validity and reliability discussed. Finally, the significance and researcher's approach to ethics and confidentiality were outlined.

Chapter 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents data on the cross-cultural relationship between Chinese management and their foreign (Anglo) employees. The data is first presented within-case for the four subject organisations and analysed according to the research objectives. Further, as a cross-case analysis, the data is compared to the empirical findings with reference to the literature. Finally, a comparison will be made between Nardon and Steers' (2009) CCD model with an extension on the impact of national culture, and culture in the workplace according to the research findings.

This dissertation has two research objectives:

Research objective one: How Chinese management adapts its practices for foreign employees and vice-versa and what compromises and adjustments are made in the working relationship.

Research objective two: What conflicts occur (if any) and whether they are a result of culture or some other reason.

4.1 Within-case study

The following presents and analyses the data from a within-case perspective, taking each organisation individually. There is support in this section from the literature but the issues are discussed in more detail in the cross-case analysis with further support from the literature.

4.1.1 Organisation one (O1)

This organisation is a public-private organisation with over 10 years experience of employing foreigners. It became apparent that the structure of the organisation (public/hierarchy) deeply influences the relationship and processes. Further, its connection with external institutions often means that there is a standardised format for work tasks. The government has a degree of control, which permeates throughout the organisation and influences management practices.

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective One

Chinese Manager 1 (CM1) has attempted to make processes and requirements more transparent due to her dealings with foreign employees. Over time, she has learnt that the FEs require additional attention (and time) and are very demanding and persistent in terms of the need for answers and has therefore adjusted to make practices, requirements and processes more explicit. However, Foreign Employee 1 (FE1) disagrees that this has been enough and points to many examples of where the process is implicit and very opaque. One particular example is:

FE1 stated: "I don't know how my performance is rated. It's only when I am offered a new contract at the end of the semester that I guess that I've performed well enough.I live with the fear that anything at all could compromise this. If I only I knew the rehiring criteria".

In reaction to this, FE1 offered that he has learnt (adapted) to focus more narrowly on his own position and tasks, and only approaches the Chinese management if there is no other real alternative. This is in contrast to when he first arrived and approached his managers like western managers, assuming greater transparency, more open dialogue and explicit communication regarding goals, tasks, rules and feedback. Other issues of explicit communica-

tion include relevant/expected paperwork (such as instructions, forms, payslips, pay dates), which FE1 feels are not given or that he has to ask for them. FE1 has readjusted his expectations but also feels that the CM1 has made an effort to accommodate the foreign employees as a whole. Both parties state that there has been much progress over the last 2 years but the Chinese management beyond CM1 has tightened budgetary control and responsibilities and that has left CM1 unable to manage and operate as she would like to, especially in terms of better integration, expectations and image.

CM1 stated that she has adapted to give more advance notice of changes and information as a result of the FEs, which is acknowledged by FE1 and signifies a shift in the operation and greater demand by the FEs in general. CM1 further states that the contract lays out certain behaviours and rules and she has confidence in the abilities of her FEs to act and behave professionally and they therefore don't need close supervision or indeed interactions from her. On this topic, FE1 offered:

"There is a 'laissez faire' attitude, which is good on one hand but often leaves me wondering what I'm supposed to do. It wouldn't be so hard for management to actually talk to me and we can discuss what tasks I am more suited to... work tasks seem arbitrary and often lacking fit. I don't know how they decide these things".

CM1 stated that it is very common for the Chinese employees to have many regular meetings to make announcements but doesn't require the FEs to attend or indeed have meetings so often. CM1 feels that this is cultural and assumes FEs wouldn't like to have additional meetings and she would have to pay them extra to attend. This would indicate a different attitude towards the purpose of meetings from a cultural perspective.

CM1 offered that her Chinese employees are expected to work extra and do so while she believes that the FEs are more concerned with being compensated for this. FE1's comments conflict with this and states that he does extra work for his customers (students) but it is not announced to the Chinese administration for the reasons stated above (not approaching the CM). This would indicate a break down in communication or misunderstanding. After further talking to FE1, he said that official extra work should be paid, especially where it is to fill in for a vacant teacher but is willing to offer unofficial and more informal assistance without compensation.

The working relationship has evolved over time with the Chinese management adapting towards their foreign employees and vice-versa. However, both parties admit there is still some way to go and are held back in part due to the institutions inherent within organisation. While FE1 has adjusted his expectations, behaviour and general approach, he fears that many new employees will suffer as he did upon first arriving. The informal network attempts to advise new employees, but this learning curve may be steep and even result in conflicts due to conjecture and misinformation.

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective Two

The expectations of both parties are intrinsically cultural with each party likely to see things from their own cultural perspective. It is the divergence between these expectations that brings conflict and differences. However, it is also offered that naturally the relationship between manager and subordinate would require certain behaviours, irrelevant of culture.

CM1 stated that impatience by FEs was a reoccurring conflict/difference, as they demand fast, detailed answers especially as they believe the CM to have authority and knowledge to fully answer/act (which is not always the case). CM1 tries her best but is limited, which the

FEs don't always seem to understand. This would point to the expectations of managers being empowered to make decisions or offer where the employees can get the information. Many organisations don't empower employees but it is more prominent in Asian cultures.

CM1 stated, "(The) foreign employees don't understand what is required and expected in Chinese company(ies), that it is easy for quick decisions. I can't make many decisions or make promises. Things change quickly and I have to follow and not disagree".

CM1 and FE1 both suggest that many differences are down cultural differences, especially through prior working experiences in their respective home countries. FE1 admits that it is difficult to give up his focus on time, transparency and belief in equality and empowerment. However, he has learnt greater patience and empathy towards CM1.

4.1.2 Organisation two (O2)

As a public-private organisation, CM2 and FE2 offer that the governmental side of the organisation is very rigid, traditional and hierarchical which has an impact of the relationship between the Chinese management and foreign employees. This is witnessed the allocation of tasks, rules, regulations as well as empowerment.

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective One

Both parties admit that they have adjusted the relationship over time, forming more of mutual understanding. CM2 admits:

"My job is to help and assist the foreign teachers. I can make decisions about their basic work but not after (beyond) that"

She has a narrow focus on managing FEs and providing them with tasks and information. FE2 said that he has narrowed his scope of responsibility and interest so as to concentrate on his own tasks. While FE2 admits he has a good relationship with CM2, he does empathise with her position and feels that upper management is an issue for a better overall working relationship. In one example FE2 stated that O2:

“... has very traditional (upper) management, and sometimes disapproves of our western teaching style that may be more casual and open. They sometimes give directives to being more traditional, like the Chinese teachers, such as no sitting on desks while teaching.”

In relation to this point, as a long-standing teacher, FE2 believes that power distances should be narrowed which may go against local culture and traditional approaches. He further believes that there is a clash between the younger Chinese management and the more traditional upper management. Additionally, he stated that the Chinese Communist Party members that exist at all levels (from management to students) have substantial influence and this affects the decisions and the overall relationship and behaviour.

FE2 states that he has eventually adapted his behaviour with time due to the need to adhere to the organisation's expectations, operations and indeed his frustrations. Upon arrival, he felt that not enough instructions were given, particularly to what his overall objectives and responsibilities were as well as the rules. The implicitness meant that many times, rules were unintentionally broken which then led to conflict.

CM2 offers that she has a narrow focus on managing the FEs and providing them with the necessary tools and information for doing their job. However, she is limited in what she can offer and decide which FEs sometimes fail to understand. FE2 said that he would normally like to be part of the decision making process and would like to assist the organisation in improving performance and quality for the customers (students) but his attempts have been mostly fruitless so this results in a focus on his tasks. With certain issues, he is unsure who is responsible and where to even begin searching. The opacity is bewildering to him, especially given his prior experiences. FE2 suggested:

“[A]s a teacher, I am expected to fit in with the company and that it is the foreigners who should adapt, not the Chinese management.”

The researcher would suggest that many Anglo employees believe that they have more to offer than just what they are employed to do. That it is natural to want to improve the working conditions, practices and relationship, and therefore be part of that process. However, the Chinese management appear to suggest that FEs are employed to do a particular task and are mistaken in that they should be involved in higher decision making or indeed anything outside their task/remit. This would point to strict hierarchy and a very Confucian approach of leader and benevolent follower (Lee and Chen, 2008) while Anglo employees expect a more egalitarian approach (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective Two

Both FE2 and CM2 offer that the organisation is ‘typically’ Chinese and that this is the source of many differences. FE2 believes that clearer lines of communication and duty would assist and minimise conflict. FE2 further stated that:

“Even if certain Chinese managers were removed or left, the same structure would exist and nothing would change. It is inherent.”

FE2 suggested that better work and cultural orientation would assist the working process and minimise conflict. Further, many conflicts arise over behaviour and expectations, which the FEs are often unaware of. The lack of explicitness frustrates the FEs, especially as they see it as a small detail that can easily be solved.

One particular conflict arose due to the misunderstanding of the medical insurance and responsibility for payment and reimbursement to a foreign employee. While a disagreement arose over responsibilities and stipulations, it resulted in the organisation refusal to refund part of expenses. It was only when the FE represented by a local person (his wife) persisted and threatened to go to the local foreign expert bureau (responsible for the FEs in Wuxi) that it was suddenly resolved. FE2 believes that the Chinese management were right but didn't want to cause further conflict and lose 'face' and so accommodated the request and made it "disappear" (FE2).

4.1.3 Organisation three (O3)

As a private organisation, they are very much focused on profit as well as have more localised control in operations, although CM3 still follows initiatives and guidelines from above. He is empowered to make most decisions but certain financial decisions may have to be discussed laterally or vertically. CM3 stated that greater competition in this particular sector has forced pressure both on product and quality.

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective One

CM3 believes that he has made various adjustments towards his FEs but offers that the FEs have not made enough effort to adjust to China, his organisation or their own expectations. He feels that they arrive in China with too high expectations, and demands that are unrealistic and are therefore likely to create future problems. CM3 stated that some of the younger employees don't take their job too seriously and that a cultural difference exists in terms prioritising social life over work life. FE3 stated that he has adjusted over time to operate in an arbitrary decision making environment and isn't surprised when plans change quickly or that he isn't informed of something. While it is frustrating for him, he accepts that it is the norm for working in China and though it occasionally causes conflict, he doesn't get too irritated about it. However, FE3 admits that he still has trouble adapting to this way of working and will never be completely adjusted to it. Further, FE3 feels it is just better to continue doing his job than get caught up with the extraneous details, indicating a concentration on task.

CM3 stated that he manages his Chinese employees very differently than his FEs, in effect making them work longer hours, controlling what and how they do their job. This is because of the product they offer and feels that his Chinese employees need more guidance and require stricter supervision and rules:

"I do treat my Chinese employees different from my foreign employees. I feel they need to know what the company is trying to do. The Chinese teachers can be a little shy and not (less) open and so I have to encourage them to change. They also expect me to be involved more in their job".

Agreeing with this, FE3 said that CM3 seldom interferes with his work and allows much freedom:

“He (CM3) leaves me to do pretty much what I like. I think he trusts me. But, I still don’t know what he thinks of my work and performance. I guess it’s positive as I still work here.”

CM3 has changed his general practices towards the FEs, although it’s difficult to conclude whether it more about the final product or just cultural. However, FE3 said that CM3 gives his Chinese employees a ‘hard time’ and that they have a high turnover of staff.

CM3 believes that he encourages contact with his FEs and is open to their ideas. Conversely, FE3 stated that his ideas are seldom used especially if they involve expense. This would suggest that CM3 believes that he is open enough while FE3 believes he isn’t. Therefore, their expectations are misaligned.

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective Two

FE3 feels that O3’s expenditure is big issue for which the CM should pay attention. FE3 believes that the attention to small details such as having the correct equipment and materials for completing his job are important. FE3 feels that the organisation is being frugal in this approach that negatively affects his performance and quality of service as well as his view of the CM. While all organisations attempt to control costs to a degree, FE3 has experienced this at other Chinese organisations and doesn’t understand why such small costs are an issue, particularly as they result in ‘false economy’.

Other particular issues involve FE3 and feedback and decision-making, which he feels is opaque, arbitrary and implicit. Further, rules are an issue. FE3 stated:

"If there are no troubles, there are no rules. It is only when there is trouble that a rule is found".

FE3 offers that this issue is quite reactive and makes it uncertain to work. While FE3 has loyalty towards CM3, he still feels isolated from organisation as a foreign employee. Further, FE3 feels that decisions never involve him nor does he receive valuable performance feedback. From FE3's perspective, a level of mistrust exists between the two parties. CM3 did state that some conflicts have occurred, especially regarding what he describes as the 'red line'. This pertains to what is acceptable and customary in working in China (it is outlined in employment contracts too). Certain cultural and political topics and behaviour are unacceptable and occasionally FEs step over this line (such as talking about politics, sex and other Chinese taboo subjects like death). CM3 stated:

"There is a what we call (a) 'red line' in China. Things we just don't discuss in the class. Teachers need to know about this and not do it".

If this happens, it is often one the Chinese administration who discusses it with the FEs and not CM3. It is approached in a subtle and polite way, often stating that a 'sensitive' student complained (FE3). This would suggest avoidance of direct conflict and an attempt by CM3 to maintain harmony, as well as (Anglo) cultural tendency by the FEs to be more informal, liberal and public in their approach and views (Mead and Andrews, 2010).

4.1.4 Organisation four (O4)

As a private organisation, CM4 appears less constrained by governmental or indeed institutional impacts. CM4 claims that she has much independence in her ability to deal with her foreign employees, which after six years, has greatly altered. Her managers have seen im-

proved results, which has resulted in greater empowerment although there are still many limits to this power.

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective One

CM4 stated that she has formed a close, more open relationship with her FEs over her six-year experience (two years managing) of working with foreigners. She has attempted to integrate their opinions and to accommodate their expectations as much as possible. However, FE4 claims that while opinions and consensus seem to be welcomed, they are not always accepted for change and believes it is just to appease the FEs. FE4 suggested that:

“In the past, many foreign teachers have complained and moaned about too many small things and so I understand if (CM4) doesn’t always listen and act. It is better to concentrate on the things that matter and have a chance of change”

While CM4 admits that she ‘micromanages’ her Chinese employees, she does allow more freedom to her FEs and how they work. However, FE4 stated that the FEs are still required to work long hours and are given the same holiday entitlement as the local people. He admits that his experience of working in America heavily influences his expectations and believes that the working conditions are not conducive to better productivity.

CM4 offered that she had attempted to be more transparent with decisions and processes as she is frequently asked questions by the FEs and had often been accused of ignoring requests or procrastinating with answers. Therefore, in weekly meetings, she expresses what the management above her is currently dealing with in order to appease the FEs, thus increasing communication and transparency. She also feels that there is much impatience by

the FEs, which again she attempts to deal with through better transparency. FE4 said that there is much transparency/explicitness with work tasks as well as bonuses.

Data presentation and analysis regarding Research Objective Two

FE4 stated that many conflicts are due to money, whether through compensation, spending on materials and equipment or just 'cutting corners'. This always gives a bad impression for FE4 and his colleagues and affects their ability to deliver a better quality product. In support of this, CM4 also claimed that while she is able to make decisions about daily operations, she works within a strict budget and many financial decisions have to be made above her, even for small items. Many organisations control costs, often at the expense of product quality or even working conditions so it would be erroneous to consider this as typically cultural. Perhaps what is more cultural is the hierarchy of decisions and empowerment, which are typically more rigid and strict for Asian cultures than Anglo cultures (Chen and Lee, 2008).

Other conflicts have been towards the contract and its stipulations, which are occasionally argued about between the CMs and FEs at O4. While CM4 states that she strictly adheres to the contract, FE4 says that they often attempt to negotiate its meaning, often offering the minimum until the FE challenges it. Most organisations will of course attempt to minimise a cost burden but this suggests that the meaning of a contract could differ across cultures (Hurn, 2007).

FE4 suggested variations of treatment exist even between different FEs, especially those who have worked there longer and is a source of occasional conflict. Certain FEs receive a higher housing allowance which other FEs believe to be unfair.

CM4 stated that she had created a bonus system to manage the FEs better. This involves rewards for formal dress, punctuality as well as performance feedback. This was an attempt to create a more professional approach tied to monetary incentives. Furthermore, it meant that she didn't have to keep reminding and enforcing the FEs of her expectations and rules thus reducing confrontation and friction between the two parties. The researcher would suggest that this is a smart approach that considers the cultural differences (namely direct confrontation), although it would be misleading to suggest that it is only cultural.

"It took time for the change, but it eventually became normal and sets a standard and example for our company... Everyone know(s) the rules and they have to obey them "

CM4 stated that the initial resistance by the FEs eventually led to it becoming the norm and formed a more professional working environment.

4.1.5 Conclusions and discussion of within-case study

In many cases, there are a number of within-case agreements on existent practices and behaviours. There has been many adaptations by both parties towards the working relationship. Over time, each party has learnt more about the needs and demands of the other party and has therefore adjusted accordingly and to varying degrees. In most cases, each party believe that he or she has adjusted towards the other party. However, in many cases, it is still not sufficient in the view of the other party and gaps exist. This suggests that more effort is still needed or that time will eventually result in better alignment.

4.2 Cross-Case study

The above analysed the data from a within-case perspective. This section will now analyse the data from a cross-case perspective. The analysis is organised into eight issues for brevity and space restrictions.

4.2.1 Cross-case analysis

Table 4.1 below demonstrates some key findings from the data and organises them into a cross-case format, highlighting consistencies and generalisations.

Issue number	Adaption	O1	O2	O3	O4
I1	FE has learnt to narrowly focus on own activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
I2	CM treats FEs differently from Chinese employees	✓	✓	✓	✓
I3	FEs feel that Chinese management is opaque in their decision-making processes/Lack of explicit communication by Chinese management regarding rules, expectations, feedback	✓	✓	✓	×
I4	FEs are more demanding than Chinese employees	✓	✓	✓	×
I5	FEs don't adapt enough to Chinese organisations	✓	✓	✓	✓
I6	Improved transparency over time by CMs	✓	✓	✓	✓
I7	Top management offered as a barrier to better working relationships and conditions	✓	✓	×	✓
I8	Frugality is central to working conditions and decisions	×	×	✓	✓

Table 4.1. Cross-case issues highlighting consistencies and generalisations

✓=Issue exists within that particular organisation

×=Issue does not exist within that particular organisation

I1 - Time has proved to be a big factor for all organisations and the participants. It appears the longer the experience, the more adjustments are made and expectations to realigned. Each FE who arrives in China to work brings their past (and culture) with them, often resulting in assumptions, unrealistic expectations as well as their perception of an employee's position as part of an organisation (for example: suggestions and improvement ideas, consensus, equality, efficiency and feedback). This emerges to be contrary to how the CM views the FEs' position: the FEs are given a task to do and should therefore concentrate on that task, not involving themselves with matters beyond that task. All parties displayed this to different degrees. Many FEs eventually realise this, and narrow and concentrate on their task. Researchers have offered that Chinese employees tend to narrowly focus on their own task, not being concerned with matters outside their remit, often just following orders, especially as a lack of legal protection makes them more risk-averse (Kolb and Jiang, 2005; Chen and Lee, 2008; Schilling and Kluge, 2009). This often contrasts to an Anglo focus on believing that their position is looser, that they should be involved in making suggestions, improving the organisation and they should have an opinion on matters indirectly or directly concerning them (Kolb and Jiang, 2005). This suggests that Anglo employees shift more towards the Chinese way of working.

I2 – The CMs all admitted that they treated their Chinese employees differently from their foreign employees: examples such as different amounts of supervision, management, compensation or workload. Market factors as well as government contractual stipulations play a part in terms of compensation and workload. Further, cultural factors in terms of employee expectancy appear to be a factor in this. In their research, Zhao et al. (2011), suggested that Chinese employees mostly expect their managers to give regular direction and close supervision and an absence of this can lead to lower productivity and the manager losing 'face' and respect as a leader.

I3 - FE1, FE2 and FE3 required more explicit communication and understanding as to how decisions are made. It is clear that they used to working in more transparent organisations and more importantly, societies that endeavour to regulate and welcome greater transparency and accountability through laws, institutions and equality. Khanna and Palepu (2010) and Paine (2010) offer that institutions such as the Communist government heavily influence China and therefore opacity is often prominent. Further, power is often held by a few and this allows them to retain it (Mead and Andrews, 2010). However, O4 has attempted to make more decisions transparent as well as keep FEs informed of decision processes due to her past dealings. The manager (CM4) has more power and authority to do this but admits that the upper management still retain power and seldom interact with the FEs. Further, Kittler, Rygl and MacKinnon (2011) proposed that Chinese people tend to be more implicit with their communication style, which contrasts to the Anglo explicit communication style. This suggests that the differing styles occasionally clash with these types of differences.

I4 – All CMs offer that FEs are more demanding than their Chinese employees, especially in terms of information, decision making and response time. It is suggested that the unfamiliarity of a country and practices influence the need to be informed and acquire answers, minimising risk and the liability of foreignness (Shenkar and Luo, 2008). Further, the FEs' belief of being informed of decisions that affect them may also be a reason. Other factors could include necessity for explicitness, transparency and the belief that managers should be empowered to make instant decisions. Much literature has highlighted Westerners' (Anglo) focus on 'time' (Hall, 1976; Trompenaars, 1993) in comparison with South Eastern Asian orientation.

I5 - All CMs stated that the FEs do not fully understand Chinese culture (or organisations) and their expectations are unrealistic and are therefore likely to represent an eventual conflict

or disagreement. O4 and O1 have initiated more cultural orientation in an attempt to bridge these differences. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) have offered that culture is so inherent that it is difficult to fully move away from it. Its entrenchment may explain why it's so difficult to adjust for FEs (and CMs) and thus, ethnocentrism is difficult to avoid.

I6 - Many CMs realised that demand for greater transparency is important for their FEs, especially making matters more explicit. While this has been done to a degree by all organisations, there still exists a barrier from above the CMs, especially in O1 and O2. Further, the desire of the FEs to reduce uncertainty through planning and advance notification is recognised by the CMs. All of the FEs had noticed a shift during their time from capricious changes/schedules to more certainty and information.

I7 – In the majority of organisations, upper management is responsible for many decisions and are therefore likely to heavily influence operations. This is witnessed through budgetary constraints for the organisation, which may ultimately affect the working conditions. In O1 and O2 particularly, the influence of local government has an impact due to its regulations and limitations. CM1, CM2 and CM4 (budgetary) all stated that their managers place various restrictions on them, which affects the working relationship with the FEs to a degree. CM3 stated that his managers have a negligible affect on this matter. The researcher offers that this isn't necessarily cultural and typical that every organisation works with constraints.

I8 - The FEs all commented on the working conditions to differing degrees, but in O3 and O4 particularly towards spending money. It is offered that developed countries are more likely have better working conditions as a result historical development and strict labour laws and would therefore influence the FEs perspective and expectations. Further, the Confucian prin-

principles of frugality may also play a factor as well as concern for profits (particularly in O3 and O4) (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). It is difficult to make an absolute conclusion but each part could be a factor.

4.2.2 Conclusion to cross-case analysis

Many of the experiences and attitudes of both the CMs and FEs are similar across the organisations. This would suggest a degree of consistency and generalisations to be made. However, O4 differs from the other organisations in terms of the most adjustment towards their FEs in terms of explicitness and transparency. As a young manager, she is perhaps less traditional in her approach and less constrained due her empowerment and belief from her upper management. Goodall, Li and Warner (2006) proposed of a shift in Chinese culture, especially for workers under 41 years old who have had contact with foreign cultures, and this may explain CM4's approach. Her attitude needs to be aligned with support from upper management in order to be effective, otherwise it would be difficult to fully implement changes. However, CM3's approach is no less transparent than the other Chinese managers (according to FE3) so it is proposed that is it how much exposure the CM has had towards FEs: O4 employ a lot more FEs within the chosen location (city) and CM4 has had much more experience in terms of length of time and thus quantity.

It is further apparent that private companies (O3 and O4) are more focused on profits and thus costs. As smaller localised organisations, they make many attempts to be more frugal with spending. Much literature has highlighted Chinese State-owned Enterprises/Governmental departments and their historically inefficient use of capital as they often have preferential (and generous) access to capital and less accountability to shareholders as well as incumbent workforce based on stability rather than efficiency and economic performance (Wong, Ngo and Wong, 2006). The researcher suggests that this is possibly a factor in

that O1 and O2 are public-private organisations and don't pay as much attention to this micro managing of finances.

4.3 A comparison between the empirical findings and the literature

The following compares the primary data with the literature. The CCD model that was outlined in chapter two will form the majority of the comparison. Further, a brief comparison is made as to the impact of culture and the empirical findings.

4.3.1 A comparison regarding CCD model

While the above focused on the with-in case and cross-case perspective, this section will analyse, review and discuss the data with reference to literature and Nardon and Steers' (2009) CCD model.

Cultural literature has long been a dynamic topic, with a number of prominent scholars empirically examining central tendencies of people within nation states in order to explain, compare and predict behaviour through a variety of typologies. This has led to dimensions being created and the proposal that people of a certain culture exhibit certain behaviours and values, which can be witnessed through institutions (organisations, government, school, family etc.). Nardon and Steers (2009) proposed a Core Cultural Dimension model (CCD), which categorises and clusters culture into five dimensions. The five dimensions illustrate central tendencies and place cultures along it. South Eastern Asian culture (China) and Anglo culture are often distant to each other in being placed along these dimensions and therefore, a working relationship between the two could present many challenges.

Below in table 4.2 is a brief overview of the typical characteristics of the CCD model, which can be witnessed in various cultures. They are based on central tendencies rather than on the 'average citizen' (Nardon and Steers, 2009).

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
Hierarchy vs.	Unequal distribution of power; Large power distance Non-participative decision-making
Equality	More equal distribution of power; Narrow power distance Participative decision-making
Individualism vs.	Individual at the centre; self interest over group interest; low context communication
Collectivism	Greater use of in close group/out groups; group interests prevail over individual interests; high context communication
Mastery vs.	Competitiveness; attempt to control environment; achievement over relationship
Harmony	Seeking to maintain harmony; Indirect and avoidance; prioritising relationships and quality of life
Monochronism vs.	More concern for time, linearity, focused, sequential work activities, concern for current task; impatience; short-term orientation
Polychronism	Less concern for time, multiplicity, unfocused, concern for relationship, thrift; patience; long-term orientation
Universalism vs.	Rules based, formal explicit rules, avoidance of uncertainty, universally applicable rules
Particularism	Relationship based, implicit rules, trust, particularistic deviance from rules

Table 4.2 Nardon Steers' (2009) Core Cultural Dimensions: a brief overview.

Further, table 4.3 below illustrates the two culture clusters in each of the five dimensions.

<i>Country Clusters</i>	<i>Hierarchy-Equality</i>	<i>Individualism-Collectivism</i>	<i>Mastery-Harmony</i>	<i>Mono-chronism-Polychronism</i>	<i>Universalism-Particularism</i>
Anglo	Moderately egalitarian	Strongly individualistic	Strongly mastery-oriented	Strongly monochronic	Moderately universalistic
East/South east Asian	Strongly hierarchical	Strongly collectivistic	Strongly harmony-oriented	Moderately monochronic	Strongly particularistic

Table 4.3 Central tendencies on Core Cultural Dimensions (Ronan and Shenkar, 1995 cited in Nardon and Steers, 2009: 19)

The results of the research are mainly consistent with the CCD model in describing the behaviour of both the Chinese and Anglo cultures. This gives rise to the differences and how both parties adapt and manage the working relationship. There is much consistency across the different organisations although private organisations tend to be more open to transparency and flexible towards their management approach. Further, the Anglo employees expressed similar experiences and were quite consistent overall.

Hierarchy vs. Equality

All the organisations have a stringent hierarchy that the CMs strictly adhere to and further expect the FEs to know their place in. The work tasks/objectives are stringent, largely autocratic and must be adhered to, seldom involving the FEs in decisions pertaining to what is done. All FEs stated that the workload and schedules are given in advance with little interaction in terms of what is taught. Across the organisations, there are differences in the amount of advance that is given for changes.

Promotion within the hierarchy is almost impossible in O1 and O2 due to the criteria and law, although CM4 has promoted several FEs at local level, allowing them responsibility and power to make decisions in supervising staff (although just FEs).

All CMs stated that they treat their Chinese employees differently from FEs in terms of compensation, benefits, contract length, meetings, and extra work requirements (hierarchy). As highlighted, Chinese employees are more 'micro-managed' (equality).

The FEs feel that they have much more to offer than is currently asked of them, but feel it is difficult to approach their CM, not encouraged and puts their position at risk (power distance,

hierarchy). Power distances are chiefly maintained between CMs and FEs in O1 and O2, and slightly narrowed in O3 and O4: the public-private status means that departmentally they are flexible but behind them, governmental and institutional barriers exist.

The CMs allow much flexibility as to 'how' work tasks are completed which does differ from how they treat their Chinese employees. CM3 and CM4 both stated that they encouraged participation from the FEs in improving the service/product while CM1 and CM2 said they do to a much lesser degree (participative).

Individualism vs. Collectivism and Mastery vs. Harmony

The individualism tendencies of the FEs and the collectivism tendencies of the CM are obvious from the data: FEs concentrate on their own task, what they have been instructed to do and don't feel obligated or motivated to do more for the group while the CMs feel that FEs' focus on their own needs and are particularly demanding.

The FEs offer that the task is more important than the relationship and they are employed to do a job. CMs have demonstrated compromises and attempted harmony with their FEs (although not obvious to FEs). This has been through requests (that they can fulfil) and through implicit, non-direct contact.

The CCD model suggests Anglo cultures tend to be Mastery oriented but the FEs put their quality of life first (harmony) over financial and career pursuits (in China) and free time is

fundamental according to the FEs and CMs. The lack of promotional opportunities may be responsible for this in addition to the nature and reasoning for working in China.

FEs feel that much implicit communication is given but they often seek explicit information and communication. While explicit rules are offered, they are somewhat lacking the details required by the FEs. O4 displays good communication at local level, which results from the skills of the CM and her empathy and experience of working with FEs.

The researcher would offer that job security, contract length and lack of feedback (transparency) perhaps brings out competitive, self-interest elements from the FEs but that the CMs may be looking at the relationship and harmony elements in deciding future employment decisions. The fact that the FEs have adjusted and taken a narrower, less vocal approach would indicate that they are seeking harmony and developing the relationship more.

Monochronism vs. Polychronism

All the CMs stated that they felt that their FEs were generally impatient in their approach to work and requests. FEs often persisted in stating that their needs were important and needed to be taken care of immediately, often failing to understand the whole organisation or people's limits. The FEs express frustration in trying to get things done quickly. From the FEs' perspective, they are small details but make a big difference. The FEs feel that their requests are ignored, and that even a polite no/response is absent, which they feel is a basic expectation from a manager. This is typical of monochronic behaviour in terms of focus on immediate task.

The lack of transparency in the processes often leaves the FEs feeling confused and under informed which then leads to questions over the competency of the management.

Different approaches to patience and the idea of spending money emerged. While thrift exists in all companies to a degree, it was a central theme for all of the organisations, more so in O3 and O4. While these seem important small details for the FE, the CMs view the bigger picture. As a private organisation, CMs could be compensated based on profits and therefore have an incentive for tighter cost control.

The FEs felt that there is a lack of planning, with little notice of changes given. However, there has been a noticeable change with all the organisations in making decisions in advance and notifying the FEs that would indicate a shift and adaption by the CMs.

Universalism vs. Particularism

The CMs pointed to FE inflexibility, and that FEs like to have everything included in the work contract (explicit/rules based). This refers to working extra, pay, holidays, schedule, medical insurance for which the CMs are frequently asked about by FEs.

All the FEs believe better planning is needed, especially on arrival in China and work. FE1, FE2 and FE3 all expressed that they are not given enough instruction, paperwork to fully complete their position

The contract outlines much of the work agreement and provides a platform which the FEs adhere to as much as possible and expect the CM to do so too. They have seldom experienced non-conformance to the contract but have willingly referred to it in a few matters with their CM to solve issues.

CMs strongly expressed the necessity to adhere to the contract but in keeping harmony and a good working relationship, they sometimes allow the FE to go outside the contract and take extra holidays, less working hours and negotiate pay.

The FEs seem very wary due to working in a foreign country where they have limited rights and local knowledge. This agrees with the CCD model that Anglo cultures attempt to minimise uncertainty through formal, written agreements that are objectively and universally applied. The rules need to be made explicit and therefore anything implicit poses a risk and creates mistrust. The FEs display a typical Anglo culture in referring to contracts and written rules in dispute resolution rather than rely on certain significant people (Ma, 2007). The CMs attempt to minimise the uncertainty of the FEs through adhering to the contract but ambiguities still exist that the FEs mistrust.

The CMs display some particularistic tendencies through their relationships with the FEs. For example, the Chinese employees are treated differently from the FEs, with more being required of them.

To conclude, the comparisons between the primary findings and the CCD model can be summarised:

Dimension	Conclusions
Hierarchy - Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hierarchy is adhered to with decision-making made at higher levels ➤ Opaque decision-making, little consensus ➤ Little empowerment of foreign employees ➤ Power distance maintained
Individualism/Mastery – Collectivism/Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foreign employees prioritise self-interest and task ➤ Chinese management look mainly to the organisation's interests ➤ Foreign employees require explicitness which Chinese management have acknowledged ➤ Insider/outsider groups strongly exist
Monochronism - Polychronism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foreign employees display impatience and concern for task ➤ Chinese management view a more holistic, long-term orientation not concerned with small details ➤ Certain foreign employees view their organisation as frugal and quantity oriented ➤ Difficulty for Chinese management to meet their foreign employees' expectations due to restrictions from upper-level management
Universalism - Particularism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foreign employees expect explicit rules to govern the relationship and reduce uncertainty but the organisations don't meet this ➤ Chinese management adjusts to the explicitness of rules from a legal and operative perspective

Table 4.4 Summary of conclusions for the CCD model.

The empirical findings do match the CCD model but there is a slight disagreement with regards to elements of Mastery, with FEs putting their free time before work and competitiveness.

The above summaries, analysis and conclusions of the primary data point to minimal adjustments and compromises in the working relationship. As in most learning situations a learning curve exists in order to find better ways to accomplish organisational objectives and tasks, often through double-loop learning and adjusting towards individual, group and organisational needs (Dierkes et al., 2001; Zhao et al., 2011:297). When comparing the expectations of the FE with the reality a Chinese organisation and management, there is clearly a difference. The

evidence suggests that FEs realign their expectations with time but not fully: Anglo employees adjusting more towards their organisation and Chinese management than vice-versa.

4.3.2 Comparison regarding the impact of national culture

In chapter two, national culture and its impact were discussed. It offered the relevance and limitations of national culture. National culture and its impact are discussed in relation to the empirical findings.

There can be no doubt that national culture does have an impact on the members of an organisation (Hofstede, 1994; Mead and Andrews, 2010). The uniformity makes management and operations more efficient; consistency, agreements and norms means that transaction costs are decreased. The culture of China manifests itself through its organisations, especially when dealing with governmental institutions, which have long been established but like China itself, are going through changes. However, as a centrally planned economy and a communist government, opacity, structure and lack of accountability may be witnessed in many organisations and are therefore apparent when considering practices, behaviours between management and employees.

Considering the empirical findings, it is evident that opacity exists in the organisations. Anglo culture which has historically exposed many of the employees to a more participative, transparent and democratic environment (whether in society or institutions) means that their expectations reflect this and can therefore be an obstacle or barrier to a successful working relationship in China. Much of the empirical findings suggested that these national cultures via institutions and expectations do conflict and play a large part.

However, the researcher believes that it is not only national culture that impacts the working relationship between the Chinese managers and the foreign employees. For example, the FEs are in a foreign country and therefore unfamiliarity and need for certainty would play a part in their behaviour and attitude. In order to successfully survive in a local environment, the researcher believes that any employee of any country would seek this type of certainty and survival behaviour and would therefore seek assurances from management and organisations.

While strong national cultures exist, people do have their own sub cultures that they belong to. As a group of foreign employees who share a workplace and common goal, this sub-group can be quite powerful and influence that behaviour and expectations of the individual FEs. While national culture is at the core, the sub-group will communicate advice, experiences and conjecture, together with recommendations that will adjust and adapt people's behaviour, which is consistent with how people and thus organisations, learn (Nonaka and Konno, 1998). For example, many FEs pointed to the informal network as well as outsiders status meaning that smaller groups will naturally assemble based on shared interests.

4.3.3 Comparison regarding the impact of culture on workplace

When considering issues such as communication and conflict in an organisation, culture is very much a part of it. Much of the empirical findings suggest that the way the CMs and FEs communicate and resolve conflicts is cultural. However, the data did suggest that the CMs became more explicit in their dealings with the FEs and would suggest that it is possible to go beyond their culture in the workplace. However, the researcher would be interested to know if

the CMs still maintain that implicit style of communication with their Chinese employees. CM4 did state that her bonus system applied to the Chinese employees too and was transparent to all employees. However, CM4 did resort to a non-direct forms of conflict through the rules rather than directly confront FEs employees and their unacceptable behaviour. Research by Tinsley and Brett (2001, cited in Gibson and McDaniel, 2010: 456) suggested the Chinese management's tendency to resort to authoritative lines is demonstrated through adherence and reference to the contract in many situations. Further, the FEs do demonstrate individualistic tendencies to gain and win in certain situations, with only concern for themselves. The researcher would offer that as a foreigner, they seek to get the best deal and personal gain as they are away from home (and perhaps making a sacrifice and justifying their decision) and don't necessarily consider harmony or collective group interests (no concern for other employees).

As the dissertation explores the relationship between two different organisational levels (manager and subordinate), behaviour will be a factor. The subordinates are compelled to follow instructions given by the management and therefore culture will not always be a factor. The management will mostly attempt to find the best way to manage their employees, whether natives or foreigners and so some adjustment is to be expected. The degree of adjustment is most pronounced with the distance of cultures but a person's own experience and exposure will also play a factor.

Differing organisational cultures would suggest a difference in the results. However, as shown above, there is much consistency and agreement across the organisations and the researcher would therefore suggest that it is more culture over organisational culture.

There can be no doubt that the FEs' expectation of how an organisation should operate is ingrained and therefore expected when they arrive in China to work. This is very much culture based (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010) and therefore provides disagreement and difficulties when dealing with their respective CM and administration.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and analysed the empirical findings from a within-case and cross-case perspective: initially considering the four individual organisations and then comparing as a cross case to present consistencies, disagreements and generalisations. Nardon and Steers' (2009) Core Cultural Dimensions model was then used to further analyse the empirical findings, offering agreements and disagreements, resulting in a summary for the model. Finally, topics highlighted in chapter 2 regarding national culture and culture's impact in the workplace were briefly discussed in relation to the empirical findings.

Chapter 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter reviews the previous chapters and answers the research aim and objectives. Further, the chapter offers a summary and outlines the contributions and limitations of the research. Finally reflects on the learning and offers recommendations for future research.

5.1 Review of Chapters 1-4

Chapter 1 offered the background and rationale of the dissertation, pointing to the importance of cross-culture, especially where emerging economies are increasingly employing foreign workers. Therefore, Chinese organisations were selected as case studies to investigate and research the relationship with their foreign employees. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature pertaining to culture and its impact on people and therefore organisations and practices. Given the 'culture theory jungle' that exists (Nardon and Steers 2009), a convergent cultural model (Core Cultural Dimension) emerged as a foundation for investigating the relationship between Chinese culture and the Anglo cluster culture, proposing five dimensions. Additionally, the complexities of working in China as a foreigner were offered, in particular, being an outsider without guanxi (network, relationship).

Chapter 3 stated the research methodology and deducted the many options for conducting research, resulting in a decision for multiple case studies via semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data analyses were elected as within-case and cross case along with the CCD model and the impact of culture in the subject organisations. Research validity and reliability outlined the potential issues of cross-cultural research, particularly in China regarding mianzi

(face), confidentiality and language. Finally, chapter 4 provided the results and analysis, discussing the research findings through comparisons, variances and the literature. The within-case analysis looked at the two research objectives before the cross-case analysis sought consistencies and generalisations. The researcher offered his views and conclusions in addition to analysis of the empirical findings via the literature, using the CCD model as a foundation.

5.2 Answer to research aim

In chapter 1, the aim of this study was outlined as the following:

Research objective one: How Chinese management adapts its practices for foreign employees and vice-versa and what compromises and adjustments are made in the working relationship.

According to the empirical findings, Chinese management does adapt its practices for its foreign employees. The Chinese managers have all attempted to adjust practices and processes to be more explicit and transparent in reaction to their foreign employees. Further, the Anglo employees have adjusted their working practices and focused more narrowly on their task, suggesting a more Chinese working style. However, the researcher concludes that it is the foreign employees who have adapted more in light of the necessity to survive and adjust to the local environment.

Research objective two: What conflicts occur (if any) and whether they are a result of culture or some other reason.

Many conflicts do occur between the two parties and while culture is at the heart of it, it isn't the only reason. Conflicts such as communication, feedback, opacity, impatience and parsimony do have some roots in culture but also occur in the general organisational environment. Further, the situation of foreigners working abroad increases certain behaviours such as survival instincts and minimising uncertainty. The nature of the working relationship, namely employer and employee influences who has to adapt more. This is demonstrated with foreign employees' need to gain future employment and that the Chinese management don't necessarily need to justify or be accountable for their actions.

In relation to the above, time has been a significant factor as both parties have gradually adjusted. This is not just because of culture, but also as a natural learning curve that exists within organisations and people.

By answering these two objectives, the Research Aim is successfully achieved.

5.3 Overall conclusions

According to the data and the interpretation of the researcher the following conclusions are drawn:

Incorrect supposition of the Chinese organisation - Many wrong assumptions exist for the foreign employees when they arrive to work in China. A theme emerged of assuming/expecting western style management methods and practices, especially given the organisation's experience in employing foreigners. The Chinese managers believe that the expectations of the foreign employees should be lowered and more aligned with the reality (financially, logistically and institutionally).

Impact of time - There has been adjustment and compromise from both sides for the working relationship. The longer the foreign employee works in China, the more they adjust to the working conditions, organisational practices and expectations. This is through greater patience, narrower focus on task and dealing with uncertainty. Further, the Chinese manager becomes more experienced and adjusts certain practices towards their foreign employees in terms of explicitness, needs and expectations.

Organisational impact - The type of organisation impacts the overall relationship, with the more rigid public-private organisations having more bureaucracy while private organisations focus on profits and micro-managing costs. The private organisations are more flexible than public-private organisations in their management style and move more towards the middle ground between the two parties. Top management are offered as a barrier towards a better working relationship.

Impact of Trust - Naturally, trust between management and subordinates is central and takes considerable time to develop but ultimately in this case does not result in full trust. It is referred to as the insider and outsider groups and is naturally occurring in culture. From the foreign employee perspective, trust is difficult to develop as uncertainty and a lack of trans-

parency exists. Chinese management view the transient nature of foreign employees as inevitable but tend to strike more trust with longer-term workers. There is sometimes opportunistic and individualist behaviour by foreign employees that thwarts the building of trust.

Limited integration- Integration between the two cultures has had limited success and that the foreign employees tendency to concentrate on task, explicitness, contract and self interest comes from an opposite angle from the Chinese management's tendency to focus on relationship, implicitness and harmony.

5.4 Recommendations

It is clear to the researcher that although adjustments are made between the two parties, not enough is done to narrow and align the two parties' interests and expectations. Cultural orientation should be offered for foreign employees upon arrival to work in China, which would introduce the working environment, management/organisational practices and an insight to the facets of Chinese culture. The foreign employee should not assume that their Chinese managers will behave and act like western managers, even if they do employ many foreign employees and have much experience.

Further, Chinese management may benefit from greater input of their foreign employees, especially given their academic background and desire to contribute to the organisation's growth and success. The opaque nature of the organisations could benefit from more transparency, especially in terms of work performance, expectations and access towards their for-

eign employees. Finally, Chinese managers need to understand the Anglo requirement of explicitness and minimising uncertainty for new arrivals in China.

5.5 Learning reflections

From the researcher's view, cross-culture is the nature of international business, especially international management, and has offered an insightful view of different cultures. Importantly, the research has opened a window into how people from different cultures think and behave, and ultimately, has made the researcher question and explore his own cultural views, which is extremely valuable for future goals and pursuits.

5.6 Contributions

The current cross-culture literature between China and Western employer/employee relationship typically focuses on Western management and Chinese employees. The researcher found very little concerning the change of roles that is becoming an increasing occurrence given recent economic shifts and future expectations (O'Sullivan, 2011). This dissertation adds to the literature concerning this phenomenon and offers a valuable insight into the relationship along with existent differences and issues, providing potential solutions and practical advice for both Chinese management/organisations that employ Anglo employees and Anglo employees who come to work in China. By reading and exploring this dissertation, both parties could benefit and better prepare themselves for the cross-cultural relationship, resulting in improved work practices and behaviour.

5.7 Limitations and future research

A variety of limitations are offered for this research and should be discussed. Firstly, a limitation in the methodology concerning the small sample of four organisations based within one city and sector. It may be inappropriate to state that generalisations exist for different organisations, industries and geographical locations, especially given the size and diversity of China (White, 2000: 25). This is especially due to the qualitative methodology that analyses based subjectivity and interpretation. Secondly, it is suggested that the concept of Chinese 'face' (mianzi) may play a part in the honesty and candour of answering questions, especially to a foreign researcher and as a position of manager (Stening and Zhang, 2007). This is especially true of Chinese Manager 1, who is the researcher's manager, and perhaps may not be so open and attempt to keep 'face'. While language is always an issue in cross-cultural research, the Chinese managers who participated all had excellent English language skills so the researcher believes it had a minimal effect.

While limitations are offered, the researcher believes that data collected and analysed are reliable as numerous methods were taken to make certain its validity. During the interviews, the researcher clarified questions and reiterated the answers to the participant, following up with member checking after the interviews to ensure that the information and answers were similar. Further, the researcher believes that Chinese Manager 1 understands the nature of research and the requirement to be truthful. All participants were assured of confidentiality, which should encourage honesty.

The researcher recommends that two types of future research could be conducted. The first type of future research would be to focus on the weaknesses of this research, namely, a larger sample, across different locations in China within different industries. This would indicate whether the generalisations offered in the analysis and conclusions are still valid.

A second type of future research could involve taking one of the research's key findings and exploring it in greater depth. For example:

- How the type of organisation affects the relationship of the Chinese management and foreign employees.
- A longitudinal study that focuses on new foreign employee arrivals in China and their adjustment/adaption over a period of time.
- How trust between the two parties is gained and developed, along with its impact on performance

5.8 Summary and concluding marks

This chapter reviewed chapters 1-4 and answered the research aims. The chapter then discussed the contributions to the literature and area of the topic before outlining the overall contributions. The limitations were then offered as well as recommendations and a reflection of the learning by the researcher. Finally, the suggestions for future research were put forward.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. SEED QUESTIONS

Chinese management

- **Relationship:** the relationship with your foreign employees:
 - Who decides **what is done** and **how**?
 - **Responsiveness** of foreign employees to your requests
 - **Frustration** with your foreign employees
 - **Hostility** with or from foreign employees
 - **Behaviour** of foreign employees in terms of self interest and the group
 - Inclusive of foreign employees in the company?
 - **Suggestions for improvement of** working relationship with your foreign employees
 - **Culture** to blame on **differences** or other reasons?
- **Workplace practices**
 - Do foreign employees have the necessary information for their job
 - Explicit or implicit rules?
 - Clear rules or few rules?
 - Who decides **what is done** and **how**?
 - **Treat** foreign employees **different** from Chinese employees?
 - Foreign employee **promotion opportunities**?
- Any **anecdotes** for the relationship between the participant and foreign employee:
 - A time with a disagreement and how it was resolved
 - A time when the cross-cultural relationship has worked very well

Foreign (Anglo) employees

- **Relationship:** the relationship with your Chinese management:
 - Who decides what is done and how?
 - Responsiveness of Chinese management to your requests
 - Frustration with your Chinese management
 - Hostility with or from Chinese management
 - Behaviour of Chinese management in terms of self interest and the group
 - Inclusive of foreign employees in the company?
 - Suggestions for change/improvement of working relationship with your Chinese management
 - Culture to blame on differences or other reasons?
- **Workplace practices**
 - Do foreign employees have the necessary information for their job
 - Explicit or implicit rules?
 - Clear rules or few rules?
 - Who decides what is done and how?

- Treat foreign employees different from Chinese employees
 - Foreign employee promotion opportunities?
- Any anecdotes for the relationship between the participant and Chinese management
 - A time with a disagreement and how it was resolved
 - A time when the cross-cultural relationship has worked very well

Appendix B. REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

Dear xxx,

My name is Carl Bamford and I am a good friend of xxx who recommended that I contact you.

The reason I am writing to you is that I am currently writing my Master dissertation paper about Chinese management and their relationship with foreign employees, and xxx suggested that you would be a good candidate. As you'll no doubt agree, this issue will become increasingly important in the future as more foreigners come to work in China. I am mainly exploring the relationship and work practices in a cross-cultural context.

I am currently conducting some interviews with both Chinese management and foreign employees in Wuxi and would like to interview you. The interview would take no longer than 45-60 minutes and I would send the interview topics in advance for your preparation before we meet. Further, your identity would remain confidential in the paper and your views and experiences will be added to another 7 participants.

Please let me know if you would be interested in taking part in my interviews. We could arrange a time that is suitable for you.

I look forward to hearing from you. This can either be through email or mobile phone.

Warm regards

Carl Bamford

Appendix C. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Organization	Number of years working with target culture	Years in current position	Nationality	Educational Background
Foreign Employee 1 = FE1	65	Male	Public-private organisation 1 = O1	3	3	U.S.A.	Ph.D
Chinese Manager 1 = CM1	49	Female	Public-private organisation 1 = O1	7	2	People's Republic of China	Ph.D
Foreign Employee 2 = FE2	62	Male	Public-private organisation 2 = O2	3	3	United Kingdom	Master
Chinese Manager 2 = CM2	27	Female	Public-private organisation 2 = O2	3.5	1.6	People's Republic of China	Master
Foreign Employee 3 = FE3	43	Male	Private organisation 3 = O3	6	3.5	U.S.A.	Bachelor
Chinese Manager 3 = CM3	33	Male	Private organisation 3 = O3	5	3.5	People's Republic of China	Bachelor
Foreign Employee 4 = FE4	30	Male	Private organisation 4 = O4	3.3	3.3	U.S.A.	Master
Chinese Manager 4 = CM4	29	Female	Private organisation 4 = O4	6	2	People's Republic of China	Bachelor

Appendix D. SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewee: FE4

Profession: Teacher

Date of Interview: 10/02/2012

Duration: 1 hour 4 minutes

Location: Participant's workplace, Wuxi.

Q: Thank you for agreeing to take part in my dissertation. Is it okay if I record this?

FE4: Sure.

Q: Who decides what is done and how at your company in terms of workload?

FE4: The workload is in the contract, it's very specific. I have to teach 25 classes per week. What those classes are is decided by the schedule, which the management and receptionists allocate. The receptionists matches and decides the classes which are booked and who will do them. It's one of the worst jobs. Any teachers in any of the centres can teach any of the classes. They try to make it fair but it's obviously a difficult task.

Q: So someone else decides on your workload and classes for that week?

FE4: Yes, but it's not decided until the day before. You don't know what you'll teach until you turn up for work.

Q: So, you know how many hours you will work, but what exactly what you will do?

FE4: Yes, we know the schedule but not the exact work. It can be not knowing until 15 minutes before as that's the deadline so to speak. It doesn't give you much time to prepare but you get used to it.

Q: Is there any kind of participation in what you teach? Is it all decided for you for example?

FE4: Everything is standardised. Basically you teach the lesson what's in there (the classroom). You can decide what you want to teach as long as it fits the lesson plan and the theme.

Q: So there's degrees of flexibility?

FE4: Right.

Q: Is your style flexible?

FE4: Yes.

Q: Would you say that the lesson creation is participative?

FE4: Not really. The (O4) lessons are planned in Shanghai. However, we do some corporate classes here in Wuxi, which we tailor towards the company's needs. The classes may be for up to 6 months and create those ourselves. Senior teachers have the most input.

Q: Do you think your management will listen to your ideas or are they dismissive?

FE4: For classes, they are more flexible but for changing the curriculum, no. I think it's mainly for consistency.

Q: Can you change your work schedule?

FE4: No. It's very strict and set in stone. It's almost impossible to do this. Even if you try to swap with another teacher, they don't like it and discourage it. I've managed to change it once since working there. Some of the teachers who've worked there the longest might be able to get change their schedule more.

Q: Do you feel the company sticks to the contract?

FE4: Yes. They are very good at abiding by the contract.

Q: Are they responsive to your requests? For example, questions about work or clarifying something. Perhaps if you need something for your job.

FE4: Yes. There are many staff around the company whose job it is to answer questions. If I have a question about money, I can ask the financial girl. If I want to know who I'm working with that day, they listen to you. But if I need something or want to change something in the classroom, it has to be approved by upper management and they don't care about such things. They won't spend money to fix things. For example, there was a perpetual complaint about the equipment. They might do really expensive renovation and change everything, but things that teachers care about the most they don't really bother with.

Q: Would you say that they concentrate on the bigger things? Perhaps the image for customers and what is seen?

FE4: Yes. They don't really care about it from my point, only what the students think. They want them to come and it's marketing. The teacher's are seen as marketing tool, like a game. Get the students to sign the contract and take the classes. Once they are signed up, they can't really complain, I can't really complain. It doesn't matter you've already signed the contract (from the student's perspective). So why should they care about the smaller things.

Q: Do you feel as though they are able to make a decision quickly?

FE4: Generally yes. Depends on who the person is. Because people everyone works different days, that person might be off work and so you have to wait until they come back.

Q: Do you feel as though the company is quite transparent? That you know what's going on?

FE4: No, not really. Mmm. Transparency. If there was a change, I wasn't part of the process to change the program or a change in the centres. Basically, they could create a whole new centre and I wouldn't find out about until it's actually open. I could ask questions I suppose, but the foreign teachers aren't involved in any of that... the planning and development of the franchise.

Q: Do you think that is an under utilisation of your creative talents, experience, knowledge in a way? Especially considering you have a Master's degree.

FE4: I understand why they might not want to involve the foreign teachers. In the past, many foreign teachers have complained and moaned about too many small things and so I understand if xxx doesn't always listen and act. It is better to concentrate on the things that matter and have a chance of change. So culture, living conditions etc., it may come across as bickering, complaining rather than constructive. So I can understand the manager not wanting our input.

Q: So even if you mean well and it's constructive, it can come across as complaining and negative? If they involve you, they then have to answer to you and perhaps take action?

FE4: Yes. But they do make an effort to listen and care to listen you. However, some of my concerns such as having no insurance were ignored. I felt these were legitimate concerns for me. I mentioned it many times and persisted but nothing happened. They never listened to me in this matter.

Q: So something, which involves local level, is easy to take care of but beyond that, it becomes more difficult? Upper management becomes more opaque and distant?

FE4: Yes. It took me 7 or 8 months to figure out who they were (upper management). Basically you find out who they when they invite you to some grand opening of a centre or a restaurant. I think that they used to know the staff but with changes, it became harder to know the foreigners.

Q: Do you think that do to the turnover staff, they don't invest so much time in getting to know you

FE4: Yes I think so.

Q: What about frustrations. When people work in organisations there are often many frustrations. Are there any that are unique to working in at your company and in China?

FE4: The work has become more boring, quite tedious following the structure. Due to the many levels, there are around 36 different class altogether. Eventually you've taught them many times. Lots of repetition. Other frustrations... vacations. I only had 5 days off in my first year and 6 days off in my second year. When it's the Chinese holidays, officially we only 3 days holidays and they took the rest of the days out of our holidays. So you only have 3 days off per year that can choose. You can take unpaid leave no problem, but otherwise, they won't pay you for holidays. They'd be happy to pay you less salary. Actually some staff like this, they take a month off for example. Staff may go to India. A lot of staff do that (take trips).

Q: So there is flexibility in that?

FE4: Yes, but they don't have to pay you.

Q: In a way you're breaking your contract?

FE4: Well, I don't think it's breaking it. As long as you ask 2 weeks in advance it's okay.

Q: Are the management aware of the repetition of the tasks and that it may result in poorer morale and performance?

FE4: I think they are aware of it and that's why they allow some flexibility in the class. Although you still have to abide my by the set lesson plan and its goal.

Q: Any other frustrations?

FE4: Infrastructure. Equipment such as the desks and whiteboards not working for example. As they are opening more and more centres, they want you to work in more than one place. This means that you don't have your own area. You have to compete with others for an area and apace. You have to share with others. People who've been there a long time are kind of territorial even though there are no official spaces. This is just the foreign staff as the Chinese staff (tutors) usually stay at one centre and have their own desk. They have there own students.

Q: So you are treated different from the Chinese staff in this respect?

FE4: Yes but it's for practical reasons rather than distinguishing us due to nationality. The Chinese tutors are assigned to the centres, we are assigned to the franchise. The students perhaps like that consistency of having the Chinese staff. Another frustration is that the foreign teachers lack a degree of professionalism. For example, they may ask the business students out on a date. This is absolutely frowned upon by (O4) and I think is a reason that they don't rehire some foreign teachers. I can absolutely understand why they wouldn't rehire.

Q: Is this rule made explicit?

FE4: Absolutely made explicit. But people still break the rules. It's like the management overlook it until it comes time to review comes up (renew contracts). Unless you do something very explicit, like you know, if a student gets angry and repeatedly complains, you won't get dismissed.

Q: So you are allowed to continue the wrong behaviour, they don't tell you or confront you. However, when it comes to renewing the contract, it's not renewed?

FE4: Yes, perhaps.

Q: So it's a reactive form of appraisal. You have no chance to reform your behaviour or performance.

FE4: Well there are performance appraisals and performance bonuses. This is very much related to behaviour such as punctuality, dress, etc. There are many many things you are supposed to do. Even how you interact with students and the Chinese staff. You're given numerical scores and your bonus is based on that. No one wants to confront a major problem unless they have to.

Q: So big problems are avoided?

FE4: Yes it seems so. But sometimes a head teacher (foreign) may become involved for something like persistent lateness or not showing up. It seems that the main requirement is to show up to work on time. Other than that, it doesn't matter so much. All you have to do is show up. Well, you also have to show up in shirt and tie. The dress is important. In the summer you don't have to wear a tie because it's hot. Oh that's another thing. The temperature at the centres is a problem in summer.

Q: This goes back to the classroom infrastructure.

FE4: Yes the classrooms become unbearably hot. They have air conditioning but sometimes they don't want to turn it on. They may say it's broken when we know it's not.

Q: Would you say they are trying to save money?

FE4: Yes. They aren't so concerned with us (foreign teachers) and our welfare. Even though it affects my teaching and the quality I can give. But I don't think they're concerned about the quality, rather the bottom line.

Q: Any hostility?

FE4: No not really. It's generally a good experience at the company.

Q: Would you say that the company are quite inclusive?

FE4: Inclusive of what?

Q: They want you to feel part of the company. Or is there a line between you and the Chinese? Do they try to create any loyalty.

FE4: You never feel like you were part of the company, more like the 'face' of the company. They have your face out on brochures and major malls. Each teacher has his/her own biography which people come and pick up and read so we are the face of the company... but not really part of the company. We don't have a company email for example.

Q: So they don't make you feel included in the company, like you are part of something?

FE4: In that respect, I would say I don't feel part of the company. I'm not included so much in the company.

Oh in terms hostility, I do feel like we have to fight the company for such things as the housing allowance. They are constantly trying to decrease it. This was an issue as they as legally supposed to provide an apartment or the money. I had to fight for it and I had to refer to the contract. When they first showed me an apartment, they were the worst apartments, absolutely run down. They used put (O4) teachers up in nice apartments, but little by little they decided they only wanted to pay 1500yuan for an apartment. And because of housing prices, you get less. It has gradually decreased from 2000 to 1500 and I think it's getting less. They have to provide an apartment or an allowance. In the first year they didn't tell me this. In my second year I pursued this and it took a lot of persuading. I had to say, you are not honouring the contract, do you want me to contact the local foreign expert bureau?

Q: So you have to threaten them to use not too strong a word?

FE4: Yes. Even though I had it writing they said that they don't do that (housing allowance). I had to say that I have help in this matter and eventually they backed down.

Q: Did that affect the relationship?

FE4: For a month or two. I did the same in the class (work) but I think they think that I wasn't as harmonious as I should have been.

Q: So to summarise, you are saying that they are trying to squeeze as much as they can out of the foreign workers?

FE4: Yes I think so.

Q: Is there a reason for this?

FE4: Is there a reason... I don't know. It does create some kind of tension. Maybe they look at their bottom line, this kind of thing.

Q: Do you think they don't value the teachers (foreign) as much?

FE4: Well, it would seem that they think they can make a little more money if we have this and that policy to treat people like this.

Q: Do you have any suggestions of how you could improve the relationship?...the working relationship between yourself and the Chinese management.

FE4: Basically, I don't know the upper management at all. To be honest, it seems as if, I don't know, I just know my immediate supervisor and she, those people are pretty good. They are extremely friendly people, they want to listen to you. They actually have a western perspective and are really empathetic and they understand. I think it's just that they have to relay the policies of upper management to us. Perhaps it's not so pleasant for them.

Q: Anything else to improve the working relationship?

FE4: They really tried. We had meeting in which people could speak what they thought, take over and make suggestions. They ask for suggestions, but think it was just a fluff (false, wasted), it got down to almost like complaining unfortunately. It seems as though there isn't a lot of cultural understanding or bigotry almost from the foreign staff. They need to have a better attitude (foreign staff), more aligned attitude towards different kinds of people. This is just my opinion and probably not very popular. I'm a little tired of people who say this, this and this about Chinese people and really, it borders on things I really don't want to say. They generalise and lack cultural sensitivity.

Q: Okay, what about the rules? Do you think the rules are very clear and explicit? Or are there times when you don't know the rules, the rules were implicit?

FE4: The rules pretty clear that they give you. They give you a set of rules at the beginning. There's a kind of orientation. They give you rules, talk to you for a bit. Sit in a couple of your classes, let you know which subjects are taboo... what you can't say, what you can't do, what you're supposed to wear.

Q: Did you learn a lot from the informal network? Your colleagues. Did they supplement the explicit rules?

FE4: Erm... I think all the rules are really really explicit. It wasn't explicit, then people talk about, it would be known, they would try to make a rule for it. I suppose one implicit rule was don't offend the boss's wife. There's a woman, she doesn't really work for the company, but she's in charge. You don't cross her.

FE4: Do you notice if they treat the Chinese staff differently from the foreign staff?

Q: Yes, I think they treat us with a little more respect.

FE4: Anything else?

FE4: There's an income disparity. Foreign teachers may be paid over four times as much than the Chinese staff. And the Chinese staff are expected to do anything on a whim. The foreign won't stand for this. There is another difference, the gender difference. Almost all the foreign teachers are male and the Chinese staff are female.

Q: Is there a reason for this?

FE4: I'm not sure. I think there is general thing where males tend to come to China more than females. I think that people who want to take position that pay 2000yuan per month in an office, teaching English, tends to attract females.

Q: So there is a difference in terms of flexibility and overtime? Are you ever asked to work overtime?

FE4: Yes but you can say no. You don't have to.

Q: Do you ever feel obliged to help out? You know like you want to help the company, help out.

FE4: There are extracurricular activities, like eating out, but they are part of your working hours. If you have to do something extra, they take it out of your teaching hours. They always make sure it is very very fair. Otherwise, there are dinners to attend. The big boss guy is rich and has lots of business ventures, like restaurants. You are invited to a nice restaurant, dress up but it's completely optional. It's good for his image to have the foreigners there and it seems that it's not completely for us but for him. We're extras.

Q: So it goes to an insider outsider situation that we talked about earlier?

FE4: I suppose so. We foreigners do work hard together to make sure that nothing happens to us and that we are treated fairly. I'm sure that if we don't really insist on certain things a certain way, then it might be much easier to exploit us. Because we've had a group that have been there a long time, they have created a foundation so that the management know they have to treat us fairly, and what to expect from us.

Q: So in essence, you have formed your own foreign group, standing together?

FE4: I suppose so yes. They've had the franchise for 8 years and have had a group of people for much of that. If they had a new group of people every year, it might be much easier for them to do what they want (the Chinese management). Because they've rehired, they learn how to treat the foreigners, learnt to be much more fair. I think we have a good relationship with management, we're fair to them and they're fair to us. I'm not sure, but I think have a lower turnover than other English language schools so perhaps that is an reason.

Q: Did you ever consider promotion?

FE4: Well there's the head teacher promotion, but other than that, there isn't any other promotion.

Q: The head teacher would be paid more and have more responsibility?

FE4: Well, there's not much more responsibility. Some teachers when they become head teachers, they do virtually nothing extra. When new teachers come, they give them orientation. If there's a problem with a foreign teacher, then the head teacher is supposed to confront that.

Q: Is it a kind of informal position then?

FE4: Kind of. I think it's about a 1000yuan more. It shouldn't be informal but some the teachers treat it like that. They're kind of a liaison between the foreign staff and the Chinese staff.

Q: Do you have examples or experiences where the cross-cultural relationship has worked well?

FE4: After being here about a year, they started teaching me Chinese classes. They had the tutors teach me. I prepared the materials but they taught me. We review the Chinese that I have. That was nice. The desk I usually sit at is amongst the Chinese staff, although we have a foreign teacher area. So I sit with the Chinese staff and talk with them so it has helped me with my Chinese. I'm not sure if that is cross-cultural. All the tutors speak English but the receptionist for example doesn't. So I would speak Chinese with her when I need something.

Q: Do you think the Chinese staff gained because of working with you?

FE4: I wouldn't go as far as to say that.

Q: For example, they become more confident around foreigners, different perspectives?

FE4: Maybe. I hope they have become more comfortable because of me.

Q: Perhaps their experience of working with foreigners has changed their way of working? Finding a middle ground perhaps?

FE4: I think overall that I have become more used to working the Chinese way. I don't talk about things I'm not supposed to talk about. I do my job and go home right on time. I work there, I want things to run smoothly, I try not to ask too many questions at work. I adapted perhaps my way of working more than other job in the past. Instead of trying to be a constructive influence, most of the time I just do my job and don't ask questions, just do it. I just think it's more respectful. I think that's what they expect of the workers too.

Q: So you're saying that when you first came to China, you wanted to offer more constructive criticism. But gradually over time you have adapted, you've realised what your position is? You want to create more of a harmonious workplace so you don't interfere?

FE4: Right (yes). If someone wants me to do something, I'm like okay, that's fine. I've always been a person who will say something if they don't want to do something. Instead of asking the 'why' question, I just say what do I need to do this?'

Q: So it's made you more of an eclectic, holistic worker? You have your western, constructive criticism view for improving performance but also working here has made you see another side of working, adapting to it.

FE4: Somewhat. Sadly, I kind of realised even though it seems like they want you to be part of it, part of the company, with working together activities or whatever, but in the end, this is your job, this is what you need to do and we tell you what you need to do and this is not something that you can question. And that's fine. If they want to operate that way, you have to adapt.

Q: So they ask you for your opinion, but its more ceremonial, like they're saying, "we want to know your opinion, we're giving you the chance, but we won't do anything about it. But we've listened."?

FE4: Yes, I agree. They do this and it seems that they don't even consider it. So sometimes when they do ask some things, like questionnaires on improvements, I sometimes just say that "yes everything's fine, move along" as I don't think much will change. It's better to seem harmonious.

Q: Whereas in America, you would be more open and direct, telling them what you really think?

FE4: Yes, but here I just tick the boxes, everything's okay. Always say something nice. It seems like respecting the position you have is more important and respecting their position is more important than trying to further develop the company or even your own interests. The job is to do your job not someone else's.

Q: So to summarise that, the western approach is that we believe our positions entails improving the company and its interests, offering more than what we are told to do, whereas in China, you do what you are asked to do, no more no less. Look after that job, don't worry about other people. We wrongly or rightly believe that everything is connected and we have an interest, we have more to offer than we are asked of or even employed for.

FE4: Yes. I don't know why we (as westerners) do that. When you consider that, it does seem a little strange.

Q: So if you ever go back to America, it may have changed your view of work? Or is it just that you have adapted.

FE4: I think it would be very strange for example, if I worked for a western company in China. It would be interesting to see how that would operate. I'm thinking like a factory or something. It would be interesting to see the opposite, the western management handling their Chinese employees. Actually I think that would be so much worse to imagine.

Q: Because it would conflict too much?

FE4: No, I'm just thinking of working conditions, and that Chinese management would be much more respectful than western management.

Q: Okay, thank you. I think your last comment sums up the interview quite nicely. Thank you for your time and opinions.