The Complexity of Cross Cultural Business Communication

Xiaoran Song

M.COM, M.TESOL

Submitted in total fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

April 2017

Melbourne Graduate School of Education

The University of Melbourne
ABSTRACT

This project explores Chinese-Western business communication strategies. It is based in qualitative research, combining participant observations of business meetings and semi-structured interviews with senior managers and executives who participated in the meetings. Broadly a case study of a British organisation’s subsidiary companies in China and Australia, as an ethnographic researcher, I seek to understand the meaningfulness of Chinese-Western business environments. I am particularly interested in why Chinese and Westerners communicate in particular ways, what are some implicit reasons governing their communicative behaviour and what the strategies are involved in successful business communication and management. I achieved this by observing and analysing the actual communication of Chinese and Western participants in business meetings, and follow up reflections, initially explored through analysis using Hofstede’s (1980, 1988) dimensions of national cultural value differences, to see if any evidence could be found for these. Then, interview data was screened to consolidate explanations for communication in the meetings and to consolidate participants’ experiences and reflections on cross-cultural and international business communication and management, to identify other differences.

The findings show, first, that Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences do not provide effective guidance for understanding cross-cultural business communication, particularly Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural value differences in Chinese culture. Instead it is the *sameness* that provides the conceptual bridge and the common ground for communicability and manageability. The second significant finding is that the dynamism and fluidity of the concept of ‘culture’, especially the *difference* at the individual level that creates difficulty and confusion for cross-cultural management, but this challenge can be controlled by managing expectations before and during business communication, and by enhancing understanding and management of people (both insiders and outsiders) in the same business context.

Based on these two findings I propose a pedagogical framework for business communication within management training and workplace learning. The central concept of this framework is that the *sameness* in intercultural business communication and management can be explicitly identified, elicited, encouraged and further developed; and that *difference* and expectations can be negotiated.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that

i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Ph.D. except where indicated in the Preface.
ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.
iii. the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words.

Xiaoran Song
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my friends and colleagues who live and work in different cultures: because it is you all who inspired my interest in exploring communication across cultures.

I would like to thank the University of Melbourne and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education for giving me the opportunity to conduct this Ph.D. study, as well as the most invaluable and rewarding learning experiences I have received – throughout the years studying at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, from my Master’s to my Ph.D.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Joseph Lo Bianco, the Past President of the Australian Academy of Humanities, and Prof. David Beckett, Deputy Dean of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, for their continuous support of my Ph.D. study, for their patience, and their consistent encouragement and immense knowledge. Their guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my Ph.D. study and my future academic career.

My sincere thanks also go to Prof. Dianne Mulcahy, the Chair of my Advisory Committee, for her insightful comments and encouragement, and also for her patience, understanding and support through my Ph.D. journey.

Endless thanks go to all the participants in my fieldwork in Beijing, Shanghai and Sydney, for providing me the opportunities to join their team, to observe the business meetings and to learn about their invaluable experience and reflection on international business management.

Last, but not the least, I would like to thank my parents, for supporting me spiritually throughout my research and thesis writing, and my life in general. My forever interested and always enthusiastic mother: she was always keen to know about my progress and achievements. My forever encouraging and helpful father: he was always proud of my research and has provided me with moral and emotional support in my life.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT**.................................................................................................................. I

**DECLARATION**........................................................................................................... II

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**.............................................................................................. III

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**.............................................................................................. IV

**LIST OF FIGURES** .................................................................................................... VII

**LIST OF TABLES** ...................................................................................................... VIII

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS** .............................................................................................. IX

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION** .............................................................................. 1
  1.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1
  1.2 The Research .......................................................................................................... 3
  1.3 The Context ............................................................................................................ 5
  1.4 The Researcher ...................................................................................................... 8
  1.5 Significance of the Study ...................................................................................... 8
  1.6 Thesis Structure .................................................................................................. 10

**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW** ................................................................. 12
  2.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 12
  2.2 Conceptualisations of Culture ............................................................................ 13
    2.2.1 The ‘Emic’ and The ‘Etic’ ............................................................................. 13
    2.2.2 Flux and Elusive ......................................................................................... 14
    2.2.3 Culture and Language ............................................................................... 15
  2.3 Conceptualisations of Identity ........................................................................... 16
    2.3.1 Sameness and Difference ......................................................................... 16
    2.3.2 Hybridity and Plurality ............................................................................. 17
    2.3.3 Identity and Language ............................................................................. 19
  2.4 The Works of Hofstede ...................................................................................... 20
    2.4.1 Conceptualisations of Culture by Hofstede .............................................. 20
    2.4.2 Dimensions of National Cultural Values ................................................. 22
    2.4.3 Critiques of Hofstede ............................................................................... 24
  2.5 Consideration of Culture and Business Relations ........................................... 26
    2.5.1 Culture and International Business .......................................................... 26
    2.5.2 Intercultural Business Communication ............................................... 27
    2.5.3 Studies about Intercultural Business Communication .......................... 28
  2.6 The English Language ....................................................................................... 31
  2.7 The Dynamic Workplace .................................................................................. 33
  2.8 Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 35

**CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY** .................................................................... 38
  3.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................... 38
  3.2 Methodological Approach and Ethnography .................................................... 38
  3.3 The Field Work .................................................................................................. 40
    3.3.1 The Case Study .......................................................................................... 40
    3.3.2 Participants .................................................................................................. 41
    3.3.3 Data Collection .......................................................................................... 42
7.2 Hofstede’s Dimensions of Cultural Value Differences ........................................180
7.3 The Challenge of Cultural Differences and Business Communication ..........185
7.4 The Challenge of Capturing the Dynamic Nature of the Workplace ..........187
7.5 The ‘Third Place’ in the Workplace ..............................................................191
7.6 The Pedagogical Framework .......................................................................195
7.7 Limitations, Possibilities and Implications ................................................198
REFERENCES ..................................................................................................201
APPENDICES .....................................................................................................213
  Appendix I: Hofstede’s Dimensions of National Cultural Values ..................213
  Appendix II: List of Codes .............................................................................220
  Appendix III: Sample Plain Language Statement .........................................224
  Appendix IV: Sample Consent Form ..............................................................225
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 THE STABILIZING OF CULTURE PATTERNS ................................................................. 22
FIGURE 2 SUMMARY OF KEY STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION ..................................................................................................................... 30
FIGURE 3 THE ROLE OF COGNITIONS AND AFFECT IN INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS .............. 192
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 TOTAL NUMBER OF DATA COLLECTED ................................................................. 43
TABLE 2 TOTAL NUMBER OF DATA ANALYSED .............................................................. 45
TABLE 3 BEIJING DATA ..................................................................................................... 45
TABLE 4 SHANGHAI DATA ............................................................................................... 45
TABLE 5 SYDNEY DATA .................................................................................................... 46
TABLE 6 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT BJ1 ........................................ 52
TABLE 7 INFORMATION ABOUT JW .................................................................................... 56
TABLE 8 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT BJ2 ........................................ 58
TABLE 9 INFORMATION ABOUT BB .................................................................................. 63
TABLE 10 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT BJ3 ..................................... 66
TABLE 11 INFORMATION ABOUT CD ............................................................................... 73
TABLE 12 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT SH1 .................................... 87
TABLE 13 INFORMATION ABOUT RB ................................................................................ 100
TABLE 14 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT SH2 .................................... 104
TABLE 15 INFORMATION ABOUT MX ............................................................................... 109
TABLE 16 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT SH3 .................................... 117
TABLE 17 INFORMATION ABOUT RE .............................................................................. 126
TABLE 18 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT SYD1 .................................... 136
TABLE 19 INFORMATION ABOUT GH ............................................................................... 144
TABLE 20 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT SYD2 .................................... 148
TABLE 21 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS IN UNIT SYD3 .................................... 157
TABLE 22 INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEES IN UNIT SYD3 .................................. 167
TABLE 23 EVIDENCE FOUND FOR HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONS ....................................... 182
TABLE 24 COMPONENTS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY ............................................................... 196
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ELF: English as a *lingua franca*
ICC: Intercultural Communication Competence
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Lord said:

If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.

-- Genesis 11: 6-7

As the Biblical text of Genesis suggests we typically understand multilingualism as a source of confusion, or, more literally as a punishment of human vanity. This thesis explores issues to do with communication in business and suggests that much effort is needed to help people “understand each other”.

Manuel Castells is one of the world’s leading commentators on communications. Wilenius (1998) notes that Castells suggests that we live in an historical period of transformation where a new societal system is emerging characterised by two key features – informationalism and globalism. According to Castells (1996, p.1), the technological revolution that centered around information technologies is radically “reshaping, at accelerated pace, the material basis of society”. Harding (2006, p. 18) draws on Castells and suggests that information-based economic development and transformation lead to social changes which arise out of the network society and “redefine identity in both global and local contexts”. Wilenius (1998, p. 269) writes:

The emerging economy is informational in that productivity and success in competition essentially derive from the ability of economic actors to create, handle, master and apply information. It is global because the central functions of production, consumption and transportation, as well as many of the critical resources of the economy (capital, labour, raw materials, management, knowledge, technology and markets) are being organised on a global scale and through global networks.

Globalisation of markets, developments in information-sharing and international connectivity, together with demographic changes and the increased speed of population mobility, have created a situation where people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds work together to manage business and projects, resolve problems, and make decisions. This trend will only continue as informationalism and globalism continue to re-shape our workplaces and make them more hybrid and multicultural.

Innovations in information-sharing enable people from different cultural backgrounds and geographic locations to work together in ways that have never been possible
before. Earley and Mosakowski (2000, p. 46) suggest that “to ask if transnational teams exist is unnecessary; to understand their operating processes and structural conditions is of the utmost importance.” This process presents new challenges to leaders, managers and workplace trainers, as the cultural and communications environments are different, and problems in communication which people used to encounter only in international settings, now come into our daily business and organisational lives. As Caputo and Crandall (2012, p.58) write, “the dynamics of globalisation means we face a reality wherein leaders are called upon to communicate effectively in cultural situations unfamiliar to them. This situation brings new challenges for communication and leadership educators”. The new form of global workplaces also presents challenges for individuals, as suggested by Martin and Nakayama (2016, p. 14):

> One of the most important contexts for intercultural interaction in the twenty-first century is the global workplace. In fact, one might argue that the workplace is the setting where individuals are most likely to encounter persons of different cultural backgrounds – as globalisation, world immigration patterns, and technological advances shrink the cultural distances between some workers.

Alongside the development of international business and the globalisation of economies and markets, the English language has become a global language and the *lingua franca* of international business. Drawing on his earlier work in 1997, Graddol (2006, p.9) pointed out that “the relationship between English and globalisation was a complex one: economic globalisation encouraged the spread of English but the same spread of English also encouraged globalisation”, and “the global spread of English raised not just linguistic, educational and economic issues but also cultural, political and ethical ones”. As a global language, English has, without doubt, facilitated communication between people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds; the impact of this global language is not only communicational, but also cultural, political and ethical. At the same time, the question remains: can global English resolve or reduce challenges and problems in communication and management in global workplaces and multinational teams? This could be taken as a contemporary account of the Genesis dilemma and can serve to open up the communicative context with which this thesis is concerned.

With the rapid development of international trade and cooperation, cultural and communication studies have gradually gained the attention of different fields, especially in business management. From 1967 to 1972, Geert Hofstede and his colleagues conducted a consulting project for IBM in which Hofstede administrated 117,000 questionnaires to employees of IBM in over 60 different countries (Hofstede, 1980, in Orr & Hauser, 2008, p.2). Based on the findings of this project, Hofstede (1980) proposed four dimensions of work-related national cultural values: *Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity*, and
Uncertainty Avoidance. Michael Harris Bond (1987) and later Hofstede and Bond (1988) developed a fifth dimension, the Confucian Dynamism (also known as Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation) (Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2006). In 2010, a sixth dimension was introduced, Indulgence versus Restraint, based on Michael Minkov’s analysis of the World Values Survey for 93 countries. The present thesis will explore aspects of the Hofstedian framework in guiding communication in international businesses and workplaces, in particular, business meetings and cross-cultural team-work. While critics such as Castells (1996), Wilenius (1998), Harding (2006), Earley and Mosakowski (2000), and Caputo and Crandall (2012) focus on the transformation caused by information exchange and globalisation, Hofstede focuses specifically on business and interculturalism and his categorisation of cultural values tend to depict culture as a relatively static concept.

Since the economic reform in 1978, China has undergone tremendous socio-cultural and economic change. Song and Beckett (2013, p. 64) state:

In its [China’s] move towards internationalism and modernization (which we can call ‘globalisation’), its deeply-rooted old cultural traditions, its encounter with Western thought and behaviour, and the need to upgrade on all levels of civil and business practice and to adapt to the global economy, have generated a new China within a dynamic and ever-changing social and cultural environment.

After many years of isolation, and cultural and economic turmoil, the twenty-first century has seen the rise of China “once again asserting its importance in the international community” (Lasserre & Schütte, 1995, pp. xvi-xvii). China’s economic power and continuing development is attracting Western businesses and investments in diverse industries. As China and the Chinese are keen to learn from the West and to engage more in the global market and economy, so do the Western businesses which continue to engage with the Chinese people and markets, and thus target their development in China.

1.2 The Research

In light of the significant change to the world of communication and the strong surge of China as a business leader, this research project explores cross-cultural (Chinese-Western) business communication strategies. The primary research design is a qualitative examination, combining participant observation of business meetings and semi-structured interviews with senior managers and executives who participated in the meetings. As an ethnographic researcher, my project uses a case study of a British organisation’s subsidiary companies in China and Australia to understand the meaningfulness of cross-cultural business environments. The primary questions guiding the study are:
i. Can a critical analysis of key Hofstedian dimensions in the specific settings of business meetings provide guidance for cross-cultural communication and management?

ii. What are the challenges in cross-cultural business communication and management?
   - What are the factors that influence communication and management in cross-cultural business settings?
   - What are the strategies used by experienced international managers for effective cross-cultural business communication and management?

iii. What are the patterns of communication between people from different cultural backgrounds in particular business settings, and what might be the implicit reasons governing their communicative behaviour?

Answering these questions requires a research method which can capture the complexity of business communication because business is “in constant flux and is only partially predictable” (Gummesson, 2007, p. 228). Qualitative case study can best capture the process of interaction and help us understand the complexity of communication in business settings. As Gummesson (2007, p. 229) suggests:

Case study research tries to respond to complexity by providing rich and thick descriptions… But the genome of case study research stretches beyond such description. It allows the study of complexity, context, ambiguity and chaos. It allows a holistic systemic approach with an unlimited number of variables and links… It offers freedom in the choice of data generation and analytical techniques with little regulation. It is innovative, entrepreneurial and non-bureaucratic. It endorses the urgency of access to reality and has validity and relevance in focus.

In this thesis, I addressed these questions by observing and analysing the actual communication of Chinese and Western participants in business meetings, and following up reflections of participants, initially explored through analysis using Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences, and then screened to identify patterns of communication in cross-cultural business meetings.

This study adopts an ethnographic orientation. Ethnography is, as Brewer (2000) suggests, “the exploration of social and cultural meaning of a given group”. It is an approach of getting involved in a lengthy process of trying to understand the context, the people involved and the meanings given. It is the product of fieldworks which aims to interpret the giving cultures. It is thus heavily involved in the relationships and emotions of the research participants and the researcher. Koning and Ooi (2013, p. 18) advise that as interpretive researchers, our work is about “watching what happens,
listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3) and “documenting the talk and activities of everyday life” (Locke, 2011, p.615). And there are more involved. In doing ethnographically oriented researches, the researchers often need to deal with their own emotions when being engaged in continuing processes of negotiating feelings and emotions as insiders (participants) and outsiders (observers). One of the challenges for the researchers is to bring the “hidden sides of organizational ethnography to the fore” (Koning & Ooi, 2013, p. 18) and start a discussion on the product of the fieldwork. Adopting Hofstedede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences as a priori framework of data analysis allow the start of conversation – the interpretation of diverse cultural dimensions involved in the study. With a static nature, Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural value differences allow the researcher to select, analyse and interpret systematically data collected in fieldwork.

1.3 The Context

The fieldwork for this project was conducted in three subsidiary companies of a British firm in Beijing, Shanghai and Sydney. The companies concerned provide aged care services through facilities in Australia and health insurance in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Traditionally Chinese aged care has been the responsibility of the family, but since the establishment of the PRC (People’s Republic of China), health care has been managed and overseen by the government with services provided by government-owned hospitals. Now, with globalisation, demographic and socio-economic changes, both aged care and health care services in China are becoming commercialised and there is an increasing demand for large-scale quality services. Taking aged care for example, Cai, Yang and Guo (2014, p.1248) write:

Since the social and economical reforms began in 1978, declines in fertility associated with the family planning policies and growth in longevity associated with economic prosperity have received considerable attention. Population aging is becoming a key issue in China. The population of age 60, which is the average age of retirement in China, and older in China reached 185 million in 2011 (13.7% of the total population) and it is estimated that the number will increase to 400 million in 2037 (Shanghai Research Centre on Aging 2012). With a large gray society emerging in China, the care of seniors is becoming a challenge in this developing nation… For a long time, adult children in China have provided physical and financial care for their aging parents at home; however, there is considerable uncertainty as to how well the traditional support from family and children can be expected, given the low fertility rate and increased mobility of adult children.
In traditional Chinese culture, all generations of a family live together in one household. For example, in old Beijing, members of one family live in a ‘Si He Yuan’ (the Chinese courtyard house). Hence the traditional Chinese self, as rooted in Confucianism, “exists primarily in relationship to significant others in a collectivity of extended family and kinship network” (Mjeld-Mossey, 2007, p. 109). For a traditional Chinese family, the older generations are the most honoured and respected and the younger generations are expected to look after the elders. The Chinese cultural value of xiao (or filial piety) has long been considered an essential value that “holds together the Chinese familial system of elder care” (Zhan, Liu & Bai, 2005, p. 168). Filial piety in Confusionism includes honouring and obeying the elders (Mjeld-Mossey, 2007, p. 109) and old age is considered as the time when the elderly will be venerated by younger generations.

The traditional Chinese family pattern, structure and life style has been altered, mainly due to socio-economic changes and the implementation of the “one-child family” demographic policy (here after referred to as the one-child policy). In the late 1970s, two important policies were implemented in China. The first is the economic reform known as the open-door policy and the second is the one-child policy. The open-door policy led to significant economic and political reform in China, and also caused massive socio-cultural changes. At the same time the implementation of the one-child policy guaranteed a continuation of the decline in China’s fertility rate that had begun in the early 1970s (Feng, Poston & Wang, 2014, p.17). Feng, Poston and Wang (2014, p.17) suggest:

China started to implement the so-called one-child family planning policy at the national level in 1979, when 6.1 million couples who had given birth to one child received ‘One Child Honourary Certificates’ in which they pledged not to bear any more children… Since the 1990s, the percentage of all births that were one child births has exceeded 90 percent, and this has especially been the situation in urban areas. That is to say, the one-child family has become the norm for urban Chinese family. This generation of one-child families has had a tremendous influence on family structure, family relationships and family life style of all of China, especially urban China, but has also introduced problems for Chinese society.

Along with economic development, China’s urban areas, especially the major cities have been developing rapidly. As a result, there have been massive migrations within China – with young people eager to move away from their families in rural areas to major cities in order to pursue career opportunities and improve their quality of life. When young people move from rural to urban areas, their parents usually remain at home. Mjeld-Mossey (2007, p. 112) notes that “over the past few decades there has been significant migration from rural to urban settings. The urban population has increased from 19.39% of the total population in 1980 to 40.53% in 2003. The migrants are primarily younger workers who tend to leave their old parents behind in
Prior to the launching of the one-child policy, China’s birth planning had already been enforced during the 1970s under the “later, longer, fewer” campaign (Whyte, Feng & Cai, 2015, p. 159). The decline of China’s fertility rate and the change of the size of Chinese families had therefore already begun before the initiation of the one-child policy. Whyte, Feng and Cai (2015, p. 159) note that “during the 1970s China recorded a dramatic decline in fertility rates, with the bulk of decline in fertility from 1970 to the present”. On the other hand, there has been “an increase of the dependency ratio in China with the accentuation of the population aging phenomenon” (Pascu, 2011, p. 103). As the numbers of families with only one child is growing the phenomenon of the “four-two-one family” has become common. This type of family contains only a married couple who care for one child and four elderly parents, with no siblings to share the burden. The one-child policy fundamentally changed the structure of the Chinese family, with traditional multi-generation families replaced by nuclear families, and the care of elders the sole responsibility of a single child.

In March 2013, the Chinese National Population and Birth Planning Commission and the Ministry of Health merged and formed a new National Health and Population Planning Commission which announced a partial relaxation of the one-child policy (Whyte, Feng & Cai, 2015, p. 144). Although married Chinese couples are now allowed to have two children, there is little evidence showing that they will want to. Already in 2013, the Chinese government announced that adults from single children families would be permitted to have two children, but of the 11 million eligible Chinese citizens, only 1.5 million have applied to do so (Walsh, 2015, p. 24). The Chinese government still needs to confront the problem of how the shrinking younger generation will care for a growing older generation (Mjelde-Mossey, 2007, p. 107). As those parents who had children under the one child policy begin to retire, the challenge of providing care for elders in China is intensifying.

Evidence also suggests that the social value attached to the role of grandparents in China has declined (Attane, 2002, in Mjelde-Mossey, 2007, p.111). A growing number of Chinese people are accepting the concept of institutional elder care. For example, the research conducted by Zhan, Liu and Bai (2005, p.167) examined the changing cultural norm in parent care and suggested that the traditional attitude against placing parents in care homes is changing – “some adult children as well as elders are starting to express acceptance of institutional elder care”.

China is carrying out far-reaching reforms of its health and aged care services. This includes expanding medical insurance and improving the quality of rural medical care. A key element of the reform package has also been the effort to liberalise foreign investment in medical institutions and services, and the investment of private capital in retirement homes. Facing increasing demand and challenges in improving the quality of services, Chinese commercial providers of aged care and health care
services are actively seeking co-operation with Western service providers. As a result, western aged care and health care companies with expertise and experience in establishing and operating mature business and service models have become more involved in Chinese markets.

1.4 The Researcher

I was born and grew up in Beijing. I completed my post graduate studies in Australia, with a Master’s degree in Commerce from Macquarie University in New South Wales, and a Master’s degree in TESOL from The University of Melbourne. I have worked in multinational corporations in China and Australia and this has involved managing different projects, campaigns, and joint venture co-operations in sales and marketing promotions. In my professional career as a marketing expert and a consultant I have helped promote Western brands and have set up Western business operations in China.

For the past twenty years I have been living and working between Chinese and Western cultures. I have participated in many business meetings and have facilitated communication between Chinese and Western business people. My particular interest in exploring cross-cultural communication and management was developed from this experience and my previous studies about culture and language at the University of Melbourne.

In November 2010, I joined a British organisation’s subsidiary company in Sydney, Australia. This British firm manages hospitals, aged care facilities and provides international health insurance services. It has subsidiary companies in China, Europe and Australia. After consulted my PhD supervisors and obtained approval from the senior management of the companies, I did my fieldwork in the organisation’s subsidiaries in China and Australia while working for the company in Sydney. My position as an insider of the business helped open the doors of all the senior management meetings and gave me the opportunity to conduct my fieldwork as a participant observer.

1.5 Significance of the Study

International business settings and global workplaces are becoming increasingly complex and dynamic in the “movement of people around the globe and the growing diversity of world society” (Caputo, 2011, in Caputo & Crandall, 2012, p. 58). This trend will continue as globalisation of commercial markets, people’s movements, communication technology innovation and information-sharing continue to grow. This situation has led many people to treat multinational teams as “a taken-for-granted aspect of modern society.” (Harris & Moran, 1996, in Levitt, 2014, p. 9)
These changes have been noticed in contemporary research and training in intercultural competence. Scholarship in the fields of cross-cultural communication, international business management, and other relevant fields, has called for attention to the dynamics of current global workplaces. Research and studies are challenging traditional theories and frameworks which focus on understanding culture at the national level. Instead, there is a shifting emphasis to understanding the impact of culture on individual levels in the specific setting of workplaces. Martin and Nakayama (2015) suggest that traditional diversity training may be inadequate in this new global environment and businesses should, instead, look at both macro (societal) and micro (individual) issues. Levitt (2014) notes that theorists are rejecting the view of culture as primarily an external context. For example, Jameson (2007, p.202) indicates that theorists “view culture as an internal state of mind that underlies and influences the process of communication.”

By analysing meeting and interview data collected in businesses in China and Australia, this study will explore the following issues:

i. The impact of cultural factors on the effectiveness of communication and management in particular business settings and workplaces.
ii. The possibility that frameworks which focus on cultural differences at the national level, like the Hofstedian framework, can be used to guide cross-cultural communication management and workplace training.
iii. The pattern of cross-cultural communication process in particular situations of international business.

By understanding these issues, this study will identify the adequacy of traditional cross-cultural assumptions about diversity, and will explore a new conceptual underpinning for enhancing the effectiveness of communication and management in the context of international businesses.

China’s challenge in improving its health and aged care services is immense. The preceding discussions on China’s growing ageing population, development of economy, urbanization, transformation of traditional cultural values, and the changing family structure and style as a consequence of the one-child policy, evidence the complex situation that China is facing. This situation raises the following issues for Chinese leaders and policy makers to consider.

· The ageing population is growing rapidly and the lag effect of the one-child policy is already evident. There is a need to develop a viable universal national pension plan, along with quality social health and aged care programs to support the elderly in both urban and rural areas.
· The number of “empty nests” (Feng, Poston & Wang, 2014, p. 19) of only-child parents is increasing. There is a large demand for aged care
facilities to provide care for only-child parents who are now living by themselves.

- Although Chinese people’s perception about institutional care is changing, there are still a large number of families that prefer to look after elders at home for as long as possible. The differing care levels of elderly family members also needs to be considered, with some relying heavily on their children’s care and others living largely independent lives. There is a need to promote and develop quality community care and clinical service to help those elders who prefer to stay at home.

Developing a mature health and aged care funding and service provision system is the challenge that China needs to plan and work on in the long term, especially as “institutional care in China has been very limited until social welfare reforms in the 1990s” (Zhan, Liu & Bai, 2005, p. 169). Cooperating with Western health and aged care companies will help Chinese service providers establish effective care service structures and quality operational standards. An important issue for Chinese policy makers and care service providers to consider is how to incorporate Chinese cultural traditions with standard and quality care services and how to cater these services to an increasingly economically and culturally diverse population.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background of this research by outlining the dynamism and complexity of the globalised workplace characterized by informationism and globalism. Chapter 1 also explains the context of research and the research questions, and lastly illustrates the significance of this work.

Chapter 2 reviews literature and theories relevant to this study. It starts with the conceptualisation of three basic elements that are crucial for understanding cross-cultural communication: culture, identity and language, and explores their nature and interrelation in the process of communication. Chapter 2 also reviews Hofstede’s theories of culture and his dimensions of national cultural values. The cultural traits and scores defined in his framework for cultures relevant to this study are listed separately in Appendix 1. Chapter 2 also reviews recent studies about cross-cultural communication and management in the field of international business. By doing so a comprehensive understanding of how culture is approached in cross-cultural business and workplace communication studies will be established. The role of global English as the lingua franca of international business is also explored. Chapter 2 then summarises recent trends and studies in the field of communication and management which focus on dynamic global workplaces, and identifies some potentials for the fieldwork.

Chapter 3 introduces methodological approaches and the method, the design of the
fieldwork and the management of data analysis. It explains my interest in using ethnographic qualitative research in order to answer the research questions and the choice of conducting a case study with multiple sites to obtain an in-depth understanding of communication and management in the international business context. This chapter illustrates how the fieldwork was designed and how the case studies and sites were chosen, as well as how access was obtained and trust from participants was built. Data management and some limitations of this study are also discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 analyse all data collected and introduce the findings. Business meetings observed and in-depth interviews conducted with Chinese and Western business managers and senior executives in three locations are analysed separately – Chapter 4 analyses data collected in Beijing, Chapter 5 analyses data collected in Shanghai and Chapter 6 analyses data collected in Sydney. Meeting data is analysed firstly using Hofstede’s framework, then the interview data is screened to find evidence relevant to the meetings and reflections on cross-cultural management experiences. The findings are presented separately in these chapters.

Chapter 7 discusses the findings of this study. By drawing on key literature and theories reviewed, Chapter 7 answers the research questions, and addresses the main factors affecting communication in the management of international business. In identifying strategies to help improve efficiency in workplace communication and management, Chapter 7 then presents the underpinnings of a training model for effective communication and management in dynamic and globalised workplaces in the international business context.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Intercultural business communication is a unique communicative process that occurs in intercultural business contexts. It involves the basic yet complex elements of culture, business and people, intertwining in the flux of communication. In this way, the effort of trying to understand intercultural business communication should start with conceptualisations of its basic elements so that their interconnections with language and communication can be mapped out.

This chapter starts with conceptualisations of culture – the most fundamental element in intercultural business communication. The interconnection between language and communication is also discussed in order to understand how they mutually influence each other. Section 2.2 discusses identity – the complexity of ‘people’ in international and intercultural business contexts. Section 2.3 examines the works of Hofstede, his cultural theories and his conception of national cultural value differences. Hofstede’s work is one of the most well-known studies and his dimensions of national cultural value differences are widely used in business and cultural studies. In recent years, criticism of the six dimensions developed by Hofstede and his colleagues has emerged. It is therefore important to consider if his theories, especially his framework of national cultural value differences, are suitable for understanding intercultural business communication. Section 2.4 discusses culture and international business: how culture is understood in business; why culture is important for international business communication, and how culture has been approached in international and intercultural business studies. Section 2.5 considers the English language as the global lingua franca. This section asks: as language and culture are interconnected, then when English, an Anglo-Western language, becomes the lingua franca of international business communication, is it simply a neutral tool for communication or does it have an impact on intercultural business communication?

Globalisation and technical development have significantly increased the movement of people and have changed the demographic patterns of current workplaces, making them the places where people from diverse cultural backgrounds are most likely to encounter each other physically and virtually. Scholars from a number of diverse fields including cross-cultural communication, business management and training have increasingly focused on the current complex business environment at both macro and micro levels. These studies call for new resources and approaches of learning to build up competence in the “new social formations” (Rizvi, 2009). This situation is addressed and discussed in Section 2.6.

By examining and discussing in depth all the key factors involved in contemporary business communication, a theoretical framework is established for this study.
2.2 Conceptualisations of Culture

2.2.1 The ‘Emic’ and The ‘Etic’

Throughout human history, there have been various approaches trying to define the concept of culture. Tylor (1891, p.1) defines culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Departing from the traditional notions that link culture with civilization, Tylor (1881) attempts to outline a list of exotic items including practices and behaviours that differentiate the culture of one group from another (Lo Bianco, 2003). Tylor’s conception of culture emphasises the ‘difference’ between cultures. Williams (1958) sees culture as ordinary and normal and that naturally exists in the everyday life of each person. He suggests that these everyday experiences of individuals can be interpreted as cultural practices. Williams’ notion supports the ‘emic’ (insider/observed) and ‘etic’ (outsider/observer) distinctions of human behavior. Following Williams’ notion, Geertz (1973) further suggests that “differences are normal, natural and inevitable” (Lo Bianco, 2003, p.19). Geertz (1973) defines culture as “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p.89).

From Tylor to Geertz, conceptions of culture tend to agree that culture is a system of values, beliefs, knowledge, norms, practices and behaviours and that these are shared by members of the same cultural group. This system, including its elements, differentiates one culture from another. It is from this structure that the concepts of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ emerge – the ‘sameness’ within a cultural group and the ‘difference’ between cultural groups. The distinction of ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ and ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ is important for understanding interactions between people from different cultures. For any given culture, there are the ‘emic’ (insiders) and the ‘etic’ (outsiders). It is the ‘sameness’ that provides the common ground so that insiders share the same values, beliefs and behaviours. It is also the “sameness” that provides the conceptual link so that insiders and outsiders can understand each other and can interact, explore and negotiate on the ‘difference’. Wierzbicka (2012) argues that “a basic prerequisite for understanding others (and also for having them understand you) is to have some shared concepts on which this understanding can build” (p. 356). The ‘emic’ and the ‘etic’ cannot interact without the prerequisite that they share some kind of conceptual bridge. Interaction between the ‘emic’ and the ‘etic’ starts with the search for conceptual connections, the ‘sameness’, and then proceeds with understanding and negotiating the ‘difference’. Hence attempts to understand people of different cultural groups, i.e. the ‘emic’ and the ‘etic’, and then their interactions, should focus firstly on identifying the ‘sameness’, before comparing and negotiating the ‘difference’. As Wierzbicka argues, the only way to learn about human condition is “by recognizing both the diversity and limits of diversity” (p. 358).
The ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’, as well as the ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ are the two sides of the same coin. To have a complete understanding of the complexity of cross-cultural interactions, we need to look at both sides.

2.2.2 Flux and Elusive

Traditionally, the concept of culture has been linked with civilization. Arnold (1869) writes, “I have been trying to show that culture is, or ought to be, the study and pursuit of perfection; and that of perfection as pursued by culture, beauty and intelligence, or, in other words, sweetness and light, are the main characters. But hitherto I have been insisting chiefly on beauty, or sweetness, as a character of perfection. To complete rightly my design, it evidently remains to speak also of intelligence, or light, as a character of perfection”. Arnold’s view, although aligning culture in a somewhat limited way to intelligence, beauty and perfection, importantly identifies culture as a doing verb in the pursuit of civilization and towards perfection.

Clifford’s (1992) notion suggests directly the concept of culture in movement. The central concept of his approach is the idea of ‘travel’ and its effect on culture. Instead of viewing culture as a stable and homogenous entity, Clifford argues that everyone is “more or less permanently in transit” (Lo Bianco, 2003, p.21).

Williams (1976) and Bodley (1994) suggest that a working definition of culture involves: what people think; their mental process; their beliefs, knowledge and values; and what people do; the material products they produce. Additionally, Bodley recognises culture as a shared social phenomenon which is learned rather than biologically inherited and which involves arbitrarily assigned and symbolic meanings such as speech; it can be transmitted cross-generationally, and is adaptive and integrated.

Conceptualisations of culture suggest that it changes and is constructed in the movement. The word ‘culture’ originally comes from ‘agri cultura’ which means the cultivation of a field (Storeck, 2009, p. 70) and cultivation as a process means adjustment and improvement. Storck (2009) writes that culture is “a common way of life – a particular adjustment of man to his natural surroundings and his economic needs” (p. 69).

In summary, culture is a system of shared values, knowledge, beliefs, practices and behaviours and it is engaged in processes of constant change and adaptation. As Lo Bianco (2003) suggests, “culture is itself an activity that varies over time and place. Some characteristics of culture are universal (it is learned and shared, meaning that culture is always a collective activity). But culture is also moving, unstable, and variable. It is challenged from within and modified from without... The definition of culture...no matter how they differ, tend to agree that culture is not random, or idiosyncratic, or wholly personal, but that however we define culture, the entity we
are defining refers to behaviour that is patterned, learned, and social, but also changing, and constructed, sometimes ‘in the moment’ as hybrid compromises of values are produced, such as interaction between people of widely varying backgrounds interacting with each other” (p.25).

2.2.3 Culture and Language

Some conceptualisations of culture suggest that culture is changed and constructed in the moment of communication. Street (1993) views culture as “a practice, or a set of practices, things we do rather than things we are”. He describes culture as a “verb, a word that makes things happen”, that involves the role of language which is “a process of enacting the resources of meaning and signification that are available to those who are part of the language and culture system” (Lo Bianco, 2003, p.22). Kramsch (1995) defines culture as “learned, transmitted, changing but also stable activities of the groups we belong to” and identifies language as “the central vehicles of culture, as one of the culture’s most pervasive accomplishments, since all members of a culture interact with language” (Lo Bianco, 2003, p.23).

Some notions of culture incorporate language into the system of culture. Lo Bianco (2003) refers to language as a “cultural behaviour” that shares the same qualities of culture, and summarised three functions of language:

- Language as a medium to pass on and construct cultured mental mechanisms so that a cultural system is preserved through generations.
- Language as a medium to meet and interact with different cultural systems and individuals, to negotiate and absorb differences and in return feed back to a cultural system or an individual.
- Language constructs a cultural system in which process involves negotiation and renegotiation between cultures and individuals.

Pickel (2013) suggests that natural language is “the most basic element of national culture” and “a substrate in which knowledge, habitué, identity and media of communication are based” (p. 440). Pickel considers that “national cultures are intimately tied to natural languages” and “a natural language is a cultural achievement that is passed on to new generations via non-genetic mechanisms” (pp. 425 – 430). He argues that culture involves systems of symbolic representation including symbol systems of language (both natural and artefactual languages), music, etc. that are always “placed in the social context of their users” (p. 413). In Pickel’s systematic approach, language and its users, as well as their context (physical, political and economic environment) are central to the composition of culture.

These structures outline clearly the link between culture and language, and the role of language as participating in and accelerating the movement and transformation of culture. Therefore, language, as a participant in the system of culture, plays an important role in the change and transition of that culture. Hence, as Lo Bianco (2003,
p.26) suggests “in studying culture we must give central place to communication, and therefore to language, and to processes of transmission.” His argument below further explains the role of language in the formation and transformation of culture and as the medium for interaction between cultures.

…few cultures, and few languages, are ‘intact systems’, but have been influenced by other linguistic and cultural systems, and in turn influence them, some more powerfully than others. Language is unique, however, among all cultural systems, in that it not only reflects the experiences and values of the culture that it gives expression to, but it also plays a major role in forming culture. It is through language, not exclusively but predominantly, that any cultural system is preserved and transmitted, and it is through language that change is negotiated and incorporated into cultural systems (p.26).

2.3 Conceptualisations of Identity

2.3.1 Sameness and Difference

The study of culture and communication is inseparable from the concept of identity. An individual’s cultural identity is related to age, gender, profession, nationality, ethnicity, social class, and so forth. Kim (2007, p.238) defines cultural identity as broadly including “interrelated concepts of sub-cultural, national, ethno-linguistic and racial identity which defines sociological and demographical classifications and an individual’s psychological identification with a certain group”. De Vos (1990, p. 204) argues that cultural identity provides a sense of common origins, beliefs and values that serves as the basis of “self-defining groups”. Social identity theory perspectives regard cultural identity as “part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that group” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). These conceptualisations of identity capture the “sameness” of individuals with their groups, the shared psychological conceptions developed from the knowledge and value of the groups to which individuals are committed.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) proposes that an individual’s identity is composed of social and personal identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to Abrams, O’Connor and Giles (2002, p. 226), personal identity refers to “an individual’s unique characteristics, irrespective of cultural or social group”, whereas social identity is defined as “one’s knowledge of membership in certain social groups and the social meanings attached to the group” (Abrams, O’Connor and Giles, 2002, p. 226). The personal and social identities of individuals intersect and develop into each individual’s unique identity. As Erikson (1950, 1968) suggests, the process of identity development involves the two identities of the individual and of the group merging into a single identity.
Hillenbrand and Money’s (2015, p. 148) dynamic model of individual identity categorises personal and social identities into four layers: the “core self”, “learned self”, “lived self” and “perceived self”. The core and learned selves constitute an individual’s personal identity while the lived and perceived selves constitute one’s social identity. Hillenbrand and Money suggest that there is a congruence between layers of self which may vary depending on the “level of awareness of one’s different ‘selves’ and degree of alignment (misalignment) and/or consistency (inconsistency) between different ‘selves’” (p. 151).

- Core Self: the innermost aspects of an individual’s personal identity;
- Learned Self: a range of activated cognition, emotion and behaviour.
- Lived Self and Perceived Self: how an individual is seen by others.

Hillenbrand and Money’s Dynamic Model of Identity Development (Hillenbrand & Money, 2015, p.151) presents identity as a multi-layered system that people develop gradually and each individual may have different levels of alignment between the own self and the social self. Hence, there are ‘differences’ between personal self and social self, and ‘differences’ between members of the same group. These differences construct individual uniqueness. ‘Sameness’, as discussed previously, is the shared psychological conceptions developed from the knowledge and value of the groups to which individuals are committed, and provides the basis for the construction of identity. As suggested by Skökefeld (1999, p. 417), the concept of identity originally meant “sameness” and this “sameness” in psychology meant “selfsameness”. Skökefeld (1999, p. 417) points out that ‘selfsameness’ does not simply refer to the sameness of the self with others, it refers to a conscious sharing of certain characteristics (language, culture, etc.) within a group. Hence the term “identity” expresses a mutual relation in that it “connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characteristics with others” (Erikson, 1980, p. 109).

Hillenbrand and Money’s model, and other conceptualisations of identity reviewed in this chapter suggest both the “sameness” and ‘difference’. The difference between personal identity as an “individual’s unique characteristics” and social identity as one’s acknowledgement of membership with a social group, also connotes “sameness” and “difference”. Hence, in social and cultural science studies, that identity, the shared “sameness”, is often discussed with reference to the “difference” (Skökefeld, 1999, pp. 417-418).

2.3.2 Hybridity and Plurality

According to Skökefeld (1999), identity was originally understood as “a disposition of basic personality features acquired mostly during childhood and, once integrated, more or less fixed”. This suggests that identity is acquired early in life and, once established, is comparatively stable. However, contemporary developments such as
increased movement for study, work or leisure and technological advances including the internet have created opportunities for people to move and immerse into new socio-cultural environments and intensified the emergence and construction of new identities. One of the basic features of identity is that collective identities are “learned”. Then, given sufficient time and space, new knowledge and values can be gathered and as a result new identities can be constructed. Hillenbrand and Money’s (2015) dynamic model of individual identity shows this shared, stabilised component and learned and adaptive component of the concept of identity.

Globalisation is not only an economic process, but also a political and social interconnection (Esteban-Guitart & Vila, 2015, p. 17). It has two broad consequences: one is to enhance travel, migration and other socio-cultural interactions; the other is to integrate nations into the world’s economic, social and political system with new rules, patterns and regulations. Hence nations no longer stand alone and are instead participating in a global network where they engage in a process of constant mutual influence. The first consequence of this changing environment is increased interaction with other cultures when traveling and studying abroad; the second consequence is that people may confront other cultures in their daily life, without the need for physical travel. Both consequences of globalisation mean that people now have increased opportunities to learn and interact with other cultural values and behaviours. According to Esteban-Guitart and Vila (2015, p. 17) ‘transnational identity’ and ‘bicultrual identity’ are individuals who “live in between two cultural frameworks and have to establish a dialogue between the country of origin (‘there’) and the host country (‘here’). They suggest that these people have built “bicultrual and multilingual skills” into their self conceptions “through the appropriation of cultural voices that manage the origin and host lifestyles” and have built hybrid and multiple identities (Esteban-Guitart & Vila. 2015 p. 17).

The transition of an individual’s cultural identity has been evidenced in studies of the assimilation of immigrants and minority groups into mainstream society and is further evidenced in the cross-generational assimilation of immigrants (Kim, 2007, p. 243). Therefore, Kim (2007, pp. 243-244) proposes that the nature of identity is “over time, dynamic and evolving, and not static and categorical”, and that an individual’s identity goes through a transformation in intercultural encounters during which the “intercultural identity” emerges. He writes,

Adaptation as a natural process of individuals striving to establish a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment, through extensive, intensive, and cumulative experiences of intercultural communication, an individual’s original cultural identity undergoes a gradual transformation.

Having examined academic writings across disciplines, Kim (2007, p. 242) identifies four basic themes of cultural identity. These themes indicate clearly the subjectivity,
variability and fluidity of an individual’s cultural identity.

- Cultural identity as an adaptive and evolving entity of an individual;
- Cultural identity as a flexible and negotiable entity of an individual;
- Cultural identity as a discrete social category and an individual choice;
- Cultural identity as a discrete and non-negotiable social category and group right.

As people and nations engage in a more intensive process of interaction with others, the homogeneous and static notion of identity no longer applies. To understand people’s thoughts and behaviour in the current world, first we need to understand identity as a hybrid, transitioning and pluralistic concept, as Weigand (2015, p. 8) says,

Identity serves as a necessary bureaucratic category with which to organise communities. The bureaucratic category however does not settle the issue of who we are. In complex societies human beings have multiple and often hybrid identities with respect to various reference points.

2.3.3 Identity and Language

What then is the driver of identity’s construction and transformation? Martin and Nakayama (1997) consider that people’s identities are “co-created” through communication with others and propose that communication “creates and shapes” identity (p.234). Hecht (1998) suggests that “the individual’s speech community serves to create, expand, preserve, validate and perpetuate language and identity” (Martin and Nakayama, 1997 p.234). Weigand (2015 p. 7) suggests that identity is “constructed and negotiated in dialogue” in which “dialogic individuals” demonstrate their “supposed identity” and evaluate the “alleged identity” of their fellow human beings. Weigand therefore argues that identity is constructed by language use (p. 9). These conceptions also highlight the importance of the context of communication, what Hecht calls (1998) the “speech community” and Weigand (2015) the “language-in-use”. It is in the context where people engage in communication that identities are constructed and negotiated. Leets et al. (1996 p. 135) suggest that it is the “communication network that defines the individuals’ interpersonal context and identity reference” (Martin and Nakayama. 1997 p.234). Weigand (2015 p. 9) points out that identity is relative with respect to “the environment and circumstances of our actions and behaviour”. Abrams, O’Connor and Giles (2002) write, “the very root of identity can be found in the process of interaction and should be understood from a contextual perspective” (p. 234).

What then are the elements that constitute the environment and the circumstances of speech behaviour, the context of communication, or the context of language use, for identity construction, negotiation and transmission? What are the factors that we need to look at if we want to understand the interplay of people’s identities in
communication? Lo Bianco (2003) suggests that the concept of a communicative profile refers to a “collection of practices of communication that is idealized by a given speaker community” which includes the following basic factors.

- The context of the communication (the physical setting and social relationships or roles of the participants);
- The mode of the communication (e.g. written, spoken, mixed modality, etc);
- The orientations of the participants (what they are seeking to achieve);
- The level of concrete knowledge they have of each other as individuals, their social roles and the cultural stereotypes;
- Their non-verbal and extra-verbal displays towards each other;
- Their sense of face (their own and the others’);
- The extent to which they are themselves dissonant with or representative of mainstream attitudes and values within their own social group;
- How their main language achieves different speech acts (promises, threats or apologies);
- How they construct a shared sense of what their encounter will be about and their personal role within it;
- The view of the native speakers about learners and learners’ use of the language;
- The ideology of the native speakers about the language, correctness and norms, qualities and attributes, and esteemed aspects of the language.

Lo Bianco (2003) suggests that the concept of a communicative profile is central to understanding the challenges in intercultural communication because the “culturally infused idealization, beliefs and attitudes” (p. 28) that differentiate one community from another are often expressed to outsiders via the use of language. Lo Bianco’s model of communicative profiles provides a way to categorise factors that influence the construction and negotiation of intercultural identities, in a context shaped by certain “language culture” or “language ideology” (Lo Bianco. 2003 p.7).

2.4 The Works of Hofstede

2.4.1 Conceptualisations of Culture by Hofstede

One of the most notable contributions to understanding the concept of culture and to incorporating cultural concepts into empirical research, especially international business research, is that of Geert Hofstede. Hofstede (2001) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another…the ‘mind’ stands for the head, heart, and hands – that is, for thinking, feeling, and acting, with consequences for beliefs, attitudes, and skills…Culture could be defined as the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group’s response to its environment” (pp.9-10). The mental programming is distinguished by Hofstede (2001, pp. 2-3) at three levels.
• Universal level: shared by all human kind, the biological ‘operating system’ of human body;
• Collective level: shared with some (people belong to a certain group) but not all other people (people belong to other groups), including language, values and norms shared within one group of people;
• Individual level: every person’s mental programming is unique.

Hofstede develops a diagram of manifestations of culture with value (invisible) at its core and the other visible elements - rituals, heroes and symbols – surrounding it. In this diagram, “symbols, heroes and rituals are subsumed under the term practice. As such, they are visible to an outside observer; their cultural meanings, however are invisible and lie precisely and only in the ways these practices are interpreted by insiders” (pp. 10-11).

According to Hofstede:
• A system of values is the core element of culture. Values are invisible and are only evident in behaviour.
• Symbols are “words, gestures, pictures, and objects that carry often complex meanings recognised as such only by those who share the culture.”
• Heroes are “persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture and thus serve as models for behaviour.”
• Rituals are “collective activities that are technically unnecessary to the achievement of desired ends, but that within a culture are considered socially essential, keeping the individual bound within the norms of the collectivity.”

Hofstede (2001) also proposes a diagram which explains how cultural norms are reinforced within a culture, as well as how culture can be changed. Hofstede suggests, that the culture of a certain social group originates from ecological factors such as geography, history, demography, hygiene, nutrition, economy, technology, and urbanization. The core of a culture is its value system which shapes its social norms. Based on these social norms, institutions are developed and their structure and functions “reinforce the social norms and ecological conditions that led to their establishment” (p.11).
2.4.2 Dimensions of National Cultural Values

In his well-known research project for IBM global, Hofstede (1980) proposes four dimensions to characterize the national culture of a country. Hofstede and Bond then together (1988) added a fifth dimension – Confucian Dynamism (also known as Long-term Orientation). In 2010, a sixth dimension was introduced - Indulgence vs. Restraint, based on Michael Minkov’s analysis of the World Values Survey for 93 countries. These dimensions are as follows.

i. **Power Distance (PDI)** defines the extent to which less powerful members of an organisation accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This dimension represents inequality defined and endorsed by followers and leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Power Distance Societies</th>
<th>Large Power Distance Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| At work place:  
- Hierarchy means an inequality of roles, established for convenience.  
- Subordinates expect to be consulted.  
- Ideal boss is resourceful democrat. | At work place:  
- Hierarchy means existential inequality.  
- Subordinates expect to be told what to do.  
- Ideal boss is benevolent autocrat (good father). |
ii. Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV) defines to what degree individuals are integrated into groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collectivist Societies</th>
<th>Individualist Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At work place:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Value standards differ for in-group and out-groups.</td>
<td>- Same value standards apply to all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Particularism.</td>
<td>- Universalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other people are seen as members of their group.</td>
<td>- Task prevail over relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relationship prevails over task.</td>
<td>- Calculative model of employer – employee relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Moral model of employer – employee relationship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS) indicates the distribution of roles between the sexes. A masculine society tends to be driven by competition, achievement and success; a feminine society is dominated by values that emphasise caring for others and quality of life (Hofstede, 1991).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine Societies</th>
<th>Masculine Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At work place:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assertiveness ridiculed.</td>
<td>- Assertiveness appreciated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undersell yourself.</td>
<td>- Oversell yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stress on life quality.</td>
<td>- Stress on careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Intuition.</td>
<td>- Decisiveness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv. Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) defines a society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity which ultimately refers to people’s search for truth. It reveals the extent to which a culture programs its members to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured and uncertain situations. Gudykunst and Lee (2002) further explain that “uncertainty-oriented individuals are interested in reducing uncertainty, and certainty-oriented individuals try to avoid looking at uncertainty when it is present” (p.37).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance Societies</th>
<th>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At work place:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dislike of rules – written or unwritten.</td>
<td>- Emotional need for rules – written or unwritten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Less formalization and standardization.</td>
<td>- More formalization and standardization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

v. Long-term Orientation versus short-term orientation (LTO). Values associated with long-term orientation are thrift and perseverance; values
associated with short-term orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and ‘saving face’. This dimension was originally named “Confucianism Dynamism”. According to Hofstede (1994), there has been insufficient research around the implications of differences in this dimension and further research is needed that compares differences in the contexts of home, school and workplace.

vi. *Indulgence versus Restraint* (IND) defines the extent to which individuals try to control their desires. People in highly indulgent societies tend to have positive attitudes, enjoy life and are willing to realize their desires; people in restraint societies tend to be pessimistic, have less emphasis on leisure and are adept at controlling their desires.

2.4.3 *Critiques of Hofstede*

Hofstede’s conceptualisation of culture and dimensions of national cultural value differences are commendable contributions to cross-cultural and international management research. Orr and Hauser (2008) note that Hofstede’s work has been cited over 5,000 times in teaching and research materials in a variety of sectors. However, Hofstede’s theories, especially the dimensions of national cultural value differences have been critiqued. Four major problems for Hofstede’s framework are addressed here.

i. Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences have been criticized as dated and lacking relevance for contemporary culture research and management studies. Hofstede’s study is based on data collected between 1966 and 1973 - nearly fifty years have passed since the initial study. The original data therefore fails to account for the significant economic and technical development which has accelerated connections and exchanges between countries. Critics of Hofstede rightly ask how cultural values identified fifty years ago remain valid for analysing today’s cultures?

ii. Hofstede’s research method has also been critiqued. Orr and Hauser (2008, p. 6) point out that at the time of the survey, IBM employees were mostly men employed in white-collar positions and as a result the data does not accurately reflect the diversity of businesses and workers. Blodgett, Bakir and Rose’s (2008) analysis of the revision of Hofstede’s dimensions by MBA students in behavioral science suggests that Hofstede’s cultural instrument lacks both construct and face validity, and addresses the need for “a robust measure” of cultures in understanding consumer behaviour in the rapidly changing world market. Venaik and Brewer (2013) in their in-depth discussion of national cultural value dimensions in Hofstede and GLOBE’s frameworks, argue that both projects’ scores are “averages of items unrelated...
and do not form a valid and reliable scale for the culture dimensions at the level of individuals and organisations” and hence these scores “cannot be used to characterize individuals or sub-groups within countries”. (p. 469).

iii. The Confucius dimension created in 1988 is scrutinized by a number of critics. Fang (2003) critiques Hofstede’s fifth dimension because he views it as violating the core Chinese philosophy of Ying-Yang. For Fang, long-term and short-term orientations are relative, not absolute concepts. How can such concepts be measured by simple scoring? Criticism also extends to a number of other Hofstedeian dimensions. Hamden-Turner and Trompenaars (1997) for example, argue that people can be both individualist and collectivist. Hamden-Turner and Trompenaars also question Hofstede’s theories, asking “are cultural categories linear and exclusive?” The concept of culture reviewed in the previous section of this thesis suggests that culture is fluid and elusive, how then can such a fluid concept be categorised and measured by static dimensions and scores?

This chapter has revealed that both culture and identity are fluid, influenced by communication, the interaction between the ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ of individuals and cultures, and by particular contexts. The dimensions of national cultural values developed by Hofstede fail to fully account for these identifying features. In summary Hofstede fails to adequately address three key areas that are essential to culture:

- Both ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ at individual, group and national levels. Hofstede’s framework focuses mainly on differences rather than similarities, and on a national level rather than an individual level.
- The negotiation and adaptation between individual, group and national cultures; and the functioning of communication in the flux of change.
- Static scorings cannot explain the process of interaction and negotiation between cultures and identities. Hofstede’s model is based on the assumption that cultural differences are stable and measurable, yet we learn from previous discussions that culture is fluid and dynamic.

Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences have been dominant in academic, business and management studies. The national cultural value differences have been helpful for organisations to understand how cultures differentiate between nations and how these differences play out in business management in different cultural contexts. However, the framework is also criticized for its “scant attention to differences” and the “static character” of its analysis (Marrewijk, 2010, p. 31).
2.5 Consideration of Culture and Business Relations

2.5.1 Culture and International Business

As business globalises and the difference between international and domestic markets changes, more and more business professionals need to learn about, to work with and to manage professional relationships across cultures. This situation has been made explicit by Rodney Cavalier, in the Preface of the Australian Language and Literacy Council report to the Minister for Employment, Education and Training in 1993:

World industry operates across political, linguistic and cultural frontiers. If Australian industry is to be successful in this global market, it must be able to move and operate across frontiers.

Cultural understanding must permeate the company in Australia and overseas. The Australian enterprise and its traders and investors need to know how potential clients and partners think, why they act, what are their needs, and what their interests are (Cavalier, 1994, p.viii).

Conceptualisations of culture in anthropology and cultural studies have been discussed at length in the previous section. These approaches vary from linking culture to beauty and civilization; trying to capture the “emic” and “etic” distinction and the ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’; and to capturing the fluidity and other complex and elusive characteristics of culture. In contrast, Cavalier’s report focuses on rationalizing people’s thoughts and behaviour, i.e. the ability to understand people and to comprehend interactions as a defining feature of culture. Cavalier argues that “cultural knowledge” or understanding” is required in international business contexts and defines it as “an adequate historical, social religious, economic and political understanding of cultures other than the Australian culture…not only to knowing a set of facts about another culture but also comprehending rationally and consciously how other people think and feel”.

For business professionals, the ability to communicate and comprehend communication accurately is important. ‘Appropriateness’ and ‘effectiveness’ are two important parameters to measure the success of communication in intercultural business (Palmer-Silveira, 2013, p. 11). To communicate appropriately and effectively in an intercultural context requires a good understanding about the culture of interlocutors, and the values, norms, and beliefs that are at work in their communication. Lauring (2011, p. 234) suggests that “culture determines how individuals encode messages, what mediums they choose for transmitting them, and the way messages are interpreted.” Failed communication can be very damaging for business and only professionals with adequate intercultural competence can manage business in highly demanding international markets, as Palmer-Silveira reiterates(2013, p. 11).
Only those professionals who could communicate accurately, observing the intercultural rules applied in real commercial settings, will be able to survive in this global market companies are nowadays dealing with. It is the survival of fitness, of those who can get adapted to their environment, and in order to do so professionally will need to enhance their intercultural competence.

2.5.2 Intercultural Business Communication

Varner (2000 p. 39) defines intercultural business communication as “communication among individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds in a business environment” and suggests three basic elements that international business communication deals with: intercultural issues, communication and the business. Palmer-Silveira (2013, pp. 9-10) made a similar suggestion about the “communication triangle” for business:

- using appropriate business-related concepts;
- using the corresponding specific terminology;
- applying appropriate communicative techniques.

The ability to use appropriate and effective communication techniques in international business contexts requires an understanding of both the cultures and the businesses involved in the communication process. As discussed previously, for every culture there are the ‘emic’ (insider) and ‘etic’ (outsider) which underlines the ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’, and this is the same for business. Business communication is also built on the “common ground”, where the parties and people involved share some conceptual bridge or common knowledge from which they can begin their business discussions. The conceptual bridge and common knowledge exist in both culture and business contexts, for example, the basic business etiquette of greetings and exchanging gifts, the use of familiar technologies, or similar business structures and operation systems can each create a common knowledge starting point for engagement between cultures. It is the sum of the ‘sameness’ in culture and business that lays the foundation from which discussions and negotiations can emerge. Furthermore, there are business objectives and mutual benefits that bind relationships and motivate business communication. As Andrews (1999) suggests “in the international business culture, managers have many interests and reference points in common, and thus they converse easily among themselves” (Varner, 2000, p. 8).

Apart from the ‘sameness’, there is ‘difference’ between cultures and businesses. For example, the East and West both have a strongly defined concept of business etiquette but in different forms; countries may have the same industries, products and technologies but have different terminologies; companies may have the same structures but the operations are following different national policies and regulations. The ‘difference’ complicates intercultural business communication and needs to be comprehended, negotiated and managed. Another important element to be considered
in intercultural business communication is the individuals involved. Above all, it is the individual who communicates. Individuals vary, according to their age, gender, place of origin, and personalized values and experience, even within a single culture. A competent intercultural business communicator must be able to understand and communicate with people with diverse backgrounds.

In summary, intercultural business communication competence underlines knowledge and understandings about the followings.

- The business-related concepts and terminology.
- The cultural elements that affect people’s thoughts and communicative behaviour.
- The context of communication.
- People involved in the business communication, their diverse situations and backgrounds.

These elements are crucial for intercultural business communication: the cultures, the business, the context and the people involved. Bargiela-Chiappini (2004) points out that “intercultural business discourse is both culturally-situated and context dependent; the communication process is always affected by three elements (discourse, culture and context)”. I suggest that intercultural business communication is culturally situated, context dependent, and people and business oriented.

To this point, my discussion of intercultural business communication has failed to account for the linguistics. Knowing the business language and using it accurately is important for business communication. But linguistic accuracy does not equal communicative competence. As Palmer-Silveira (2013, p. 10) suggests “communicative competence is far more important for business professionals than linguistic accuracy”. Bargiela-Chiappini et al (2003) considers that “the fallacy of an exclusive reliance on competence in a lingua franca, or for that matter, in the language(s) of other parties, has meant that the concept of the business deal continues to survive within a very narrow understanding of the intercultural encounter” (p. 74). Linguistic accuracy is therefore not enough for successful intercultural business communication. Competence in intercultural business communication means being able to implement an effective communication strategy which is built on a solid understanding of the culture, business, situation and people involved.

2.5.3 Studies about Intercultural Business Communication

In the last two decades, international business research has shifted from the traditional approach which focuses on the “economic/legal issues and organisational forms and structure” into new trajectories emphasizing the importance of national cultural values, norms and beliefs (Leung et al 2005, p.357). In 2009, Ferreira et al.’s study of articles published in the Journal of International Business Studies showed that, over thirty years, “culture was the most often used environmental dimension” (as cited in Pinto,
Cultural studies achieved its status in international research largely as a result of the work of Hofstede (Leung et al 2005, p.357). By June 2010, there are more than 54,000 citations of Hofstede’s work (Tung & Verbeke, 2010). Pinto, Serra and Ferreira’s (2014) biblometric study of 502 articles published on the top seven journals of international business research suggests that Hofstede’s works still occupy a central role in culture and international business studies (pp. 342-343). A Wall Street Journal ranking of the most influential figures in management in 2008 places Hofstede in sixth place (Pinto, Serra & Ferreira, 2014, p. 353).

However, as discussed previously and also suggested by Varner (2000), Hofstede’s theories are not without their problems especially for studies of intercultural business.

- Hofstede’s framework of national cultural value difference focuses on cultural variation in general, not in business contexts.
- Hofstede’s framework fails to capture the communication process.

Additionally, Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences fail to capture individual variations and uniqueness, one of the most essential elements for understanding intercultural business communication.

Subsequent to Hofstede’s work, a number of well-known projects have attempted to identify new cultural dimensions. These include the seven culture-level dimensions developed by Schwartz (1994), Peter Smith’s analysis of the Trompenaars data file (Smith, Dugan & Trompenaars, 1996), and project GLOBE (House et al, 2004). These studies all focus on categorizing cultures at a national level and as a result the models and dimensions generated may not be as effective for understanding intercultural business communication as organisations of individuals’ actions in specific contexts.

Varner (2000, p. 40) points out that much of the research examining international issues falls into two categories, international business and intercultural communication. Varner summarised the key studies in these two categories, their focuses and problems, and this is presented in the table below. Varner’s view is, in summary, that traditional international/intercultural business literature does not focus on communication, and that traditional intercultural communication literature does not examine communication in business contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Focuses</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research focusing on international business</td>
<td>1. Discussions around communication issues in relation to negotiation or expatriate training</td>
<td>Examining the models of international human resource development; reasons of expatriate failure; global staffing, relocation and corporate</td>
<td>The emphasis of these studies is not really on communication but on functional business problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discussions focusing on cultural variables</td>
<td>Examining the national cultural value differences, cultural attitudes, including the studies of Hofstede.</td>
<td>The emphasis of these studies is not on intercultural business communication process but on cultural issues instead.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. Discussions focusing on individual factors. | Examining how culture influence individual’s directness/indirectness on communication. | The emphasis of these studies is on examining communication in general cultural context, not in business context. |

| 2. Discussions focusing on acculturation of immigrants. | Examining acculturation of immigrant groups. |

| 3. Discussions focusing on cultural variations. | Examining and comparing intercultural communication behaviour based on cultural variations. |

Figure 2 Summary of Key Studies in International Business and Intercultural Communication

Intercultural business communication is a unique communicative behaviour. It deals with a complex web of cultures, business, situation and people involved. It is different from our daily communication. Intercultural business communication competence underlines knowledge about culture, business and people involved, as well as the particular situation of communication. Varner (2000) suggests that “as the term implies, intercultural business communication deals with intercultural issues, communication, and business. It is the communication among individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds in a business environment. As such it has its own identity separate from business communication, intercultural communication, and international business” (p. 39).

Globalisation, people’s movements and the rapid development of technology have
changed businesses and workplaces. The twenty-first century workplace is “the setting where individuals are most likely to encounter persons of different cultural backgrounds” (Martin & Nakayama, 2015, p.14). Today’s workplace is global. This situation drives the shift in the field of intercultural business communication from focusing on national cultural difference to the dynamism of individual identity, and to understanding “how culture not only connects people but also defines them as unique individuals” (Jameson, 2007, p. 200). The focus of intercultural communication competence studies is also changing. Traditional intercultural communication competence (ICC) models based on Eurocentric, ethnocentric, and egocentric perspectives (Bruneau, 2002; Yep, 2000) have limited applications to today’s global workplace. Recent studies in ICC tend to emphasise the dynamic and fluid nature of culture, identity and intercultural communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2015), and to capture various elements influencing the communication process. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p. 44) suggest that “the more a model incorporates specific conceptualisation of interactants’ motivation, knowledge, skills, context, and outcomes, in the context of an ongoing relationship over time, the more advanced the model”.

### 2.6 The English Language

The growth of international trade, travel and immigration has significantly increased the occurrence of intercultural encounters. People from diverse language and cultural backgrounds need to communicate in a common language, and English fulfills the role of *lingua franca* for international and intercultural communication. The fundamental value of a common language is that it provides its speakers with effective opportunities for successful communication (Crystal, 1997, p. 67). The significance of this value further accelerated the growth of English globally.

The term *Lingua Franca* is defined by Knapp and Meierkord (2002, p. 13 in Dombi, 2011, p. 184) as “a language used for communication by individuals for whom that language is not the first language”. Noting that English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) is used often among interlocutors whose first language is English, Seidhlofer (2004) suggests a broadening of the definition of ELF to include interactions between native and non-native speakers of a given language. The term ELF now refers to “communication in English between speakers with different first languages” (Seidhlofer, 2005, p. 339). By 2006, according to Graddol (2006), non-native speakers of English have outnumbered native speakers and in eighty percent of English exchanges English is used as a *lingua franca*.

From a small island language to global auxiliary language, the spread of English is “the most striking example of language expansion” (Bhatt, 2001). The global spread of English is marked by two diasporas: the first being the spread of English to North America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand together with the movement of
English-speaking populations to these countries; the second being the spread of English to “un-English” regions including South Asia, Africa and Latin America (Bhatt, 2001, p. 529). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Bhatt (2001) noted that John Adam’s prophecy is coming true: “that English will become the most respected and universally read and spoken language in the world” (Kachru, 1992, in Bhatt, 2001, p. 529). In the process of expansion, the concept of “World Englishes” emerged representing varieties of English used in diverse socio-linguistic contexts (Bhatt, 2001, p. 527). Kachru (1992) models world Englishes in three concentric circles (summarised in Dombi, 2011, p. 184).

- Inner Circle refers to countries where English is spoken as a native language.
- Outer Circle refers to countries where English is not the native language, but a language of historical importance and is used institutionally.
- Expanding Circle comprises countries where English has no historical role and is used as a foreign language.

Graddol (2006, p. 58) suggests that the development of English has been through three stages: Old English, Middle English and Modern English; and we are now in a fourth period – after Modern English also known as the period of ‘Global English’ – English as a global lingua franca used in a postmodern world associated with new cultural, political, linguistic and economic issues.

I have illustrated in the previous section that international and intercultural business communication starts from the ‘common ground’ shared by people involved in communication. On the surface, ELF is used as a common tool for communication in international business and it enables people from diverse cultural backgrounds to discuss and negotiate in the business and professional context. In fact, the role of English in international business goes beyond a simple ‘tool’ for communication. If English serves simply as a ‘tool’ in international and intercultural communication, it would not be able to achieve its current status in international business. Every Language is deeply rooted in the ideologies of its culture and provides its speakers with “a particular set of cognitive tools for seeing and interpreting the world” (Wierzbicka, 2014, p. 16). It is the same for English. The spread of English is not an expansion of a language – it is in fact the expansion of Anglo-English ideology, which includes the migration of British people to other regions; growing economies established on the English business framework; and the spread of arts, philosophy and technologies based on the Anglo conceptualisation of the world. Wierzbicka (2014) writes,

The idea that language is shaped by culture is not new. It was one of the central themes of German reflection on language from Herder and Humboldt to Weisgerber and Spitzer, and it is alive to this day in the German intellectual tradition...like all other languages, English, too, is culturally shaped, and that this has profound consequences for today’s globalizing and English-dominated world (p. 364).
While English is a language of global significance, it is not a neutral instrument or one that, unlike other languages, carves nature as its joints, and that if this is not recognised, English can at times become a conceptual prison (p. 19).

English provides people not only a language to communicate, but also a conceptual framework through which to engage with business practices built on Western business norms. This conceptual framework limits people’s thoughts and behaviours in its own circle, but more importantly it provides a fundamental ‘sameness’ for international and intercultural business communication. At the same time, the use of English in international business limits the ‘difference’ which can grow significantly if other languages are used in communication. Hence the circle drawn by English in intercultural business communication gives business professionals a ‘safe zone’ where diverse socio-cultural values, multiples norms and multicultural identities involved in the communication process can converge over business practices and divergences can be limited.

2.7 The Dynamic Workplace

Globalisation, labour market mobility and technological innovations have changed not only the socio-economical environment that organisations operate within, but just as importantly they have changed the particular workplaces where individuals mix and companies operate daily. Twenty-first century workplaces comprise individuals that are diverse in terms of age, sex, religion, ethnic origin and nationality, and employees now have multiple identities. Technical innovation provides a global virtual network where individuals in different locations and from different socio-cultural backgrounds are connected, communicate and work together virtually. These factors have impacted workplaces making them truly ‘global’. Martin and Nakayama (2015) suggest that “one of the most important contexts for intercultural interaction in the twenty-first century is the global workplace. In fact, one might argue that the workplace is the setting where individuals are most likely to encounter persons of different cultural backgrounds” (p. 14). This diverse dynamism is an important contextual component of business communication.

Recent scholarship is challenging old notions and models of culture and communication studies which had focused on national culture and conceptualised culture as stable and static. There is now a growing focus on the dynamic and fluid nature of culture, identity and intercultural communication. Recognising that the world is increasingly interconnected and interdependent globally, Rizvi (2009) argues that this recognition of new social formations “demands new resources of learning about how our lives are becoming re-shaped by global processes and connections” (p.253). Rizvi calls for a cosmopolitan approach to learning: “if global connectivity
has become a pervasive socio-cultural condition, then attempts to understand the
dynamics of intercultural relations should no longer be aligned entirely to local and
national requirements and prejudices, but should instead seek to become cosmopolitan”
(p.254). Similarly, Jameson (2007) calls for a broad conceptualisation of cultural
identity which “should not privilege nationality but instead should balance
components related to vocation, class geography, philosophy, language and the social
aspects of biology” (p.199). Jameson (2007) claims that intercultural business
communication needs to focus more on “individual self-analysis” in these dynamic,
yet balance-able aspects. Dynamism is also acknowledged by Yuan (1997, p.311) who
argues that “intercultural communication theories should be interaction based,
emphasizing how individuals communicate, not how cultures communicate”. The
emphasis on individuals and small groups continues in Victor (1992) who sees
cross-cultural business communication “as an applied form of ethnography in which a
communicator closely observes and analyzes components of another culture” and
addresses seven variables that affect business communication as they shift across
cultures: language, environment/technology, social organisation, contexting, authority,
non-verbal behaviour, and conceptions of time (in Jameson, 2007, p. 201). Martin and
Nakayama (2015, p. 18) theorised a dialectical approach to ICC (Intercultural
Communication Competence) and identified six intercultural dialectics:
individual-cultural, differences-similarities, past/present/future, personal-contextual,
privilege-disadvantage, and static-dynamic. Given a ‘dialectic’ workplace, Martin and
Nakayama (2015) propose that one implication of such a dynamic, fluid environment
on global worker competence is a requirement for enhanced training about how to
manage increased cultural diversity in national and international contexts. They also
advocate a new approach to training on diversity management impacted by both
macro (societal) and micro (individual) issues (p. 16). Such pedagogical implications
may be significant for fieldwork in particular workplaces where individuals and small
groups interact dynamically.

The field of business, organisation and human management has also been evolving as
international demography, economy and technology have been changing. What can be
called a ‘situational’ perspective has been receiving increased attention in
management theories. The ‘contingency’ approach is situational and has played an
important part in the development of management and leadership theories. Some
decades ago Kast and Rosenzweig (1973, p.ix) noted that “the contingency view seeks
to understand the interrelationships within and among subsystems as well as between
the organisation and environment and to define patterns of relationships or
configurations of variables. It emphasises the multivariate nature of organisations and
attempts to understand how organisations operate under varying conditions and in
specific circumstances.” The situational or in particular, the contingent approach,
interprets leadership theory and research as “without the existence of any one best
style, and with the effectiveness of leadership depending on the situation” (Da Cruz,
et al, 2011, p. 11). Contingency theories used to differ depending on the variables they
focus upon, either on the macro (organisational/environmental) or micro
(employee/individual) dimensions; but recent studies have called for the integration of the two dimensions. As Hunt and Larson (1977) suggest, arguments about which approach is more valid will not bridge the gap between macro and micro theories. ‘Situational’ analyses of dynamic communication centre upon how leadership contingently emerges in particular workplaces.

Recent literature in different fields relating to workplace communication, management and practice, including culture and identity, cross-cultural communication, and leadership and management, seem to be exploring significant new directions. These directions focus on specific workplace diversity, not just on a social/organisational level but also on an individual/employee level, and on the situations of encounters.

### 2.8 Conclusion

Culture is a complex and fluid concept. Conceptualisations of culture reviewed in this chapter present radically different views of various scholars. However, studies and research in different fields, including cross-cultural and inter-cultural communication, international business communication and management, and others, have been focusing on exploring ‘differences’ between cultures. Indeed ‘difference’ is obvious. We all look different, and think and behave differently. But the concept of culture implies not just the ‘difference’, it also necessarily includes ‘sameness’, as it refers to values, beliefs, knowledge and all other capabilities and habits shared by members of a given group. The concept of identity also implies the ‘sameness’, as in the original meaning of the word identity itself (Skökefeld, 1999). As Kim (2007) suggests the word is rooted in the basic human inclination of searching for membership within a cognitive categorization or an ethnic group – it is the ‘sameness’ between individuals in a given group – the shared psychological conceptions developed from cultures of groups. I argue that ‘difference’ and ‘sameness’ should be equally important. After all, various conceptualisations of culture and identity have acknowledged not just the distinctions between people and groups but also their similarities. The ‘sameness’ between cultures and individuals seems to be an unexplored phenomenon in the context of the workplace.

Concepts of culture and identity are fluid, hybrid and transformational, and they undergo this transformation through practice and interactions. Kramsch (1995) regarded language as the “central vehicles of culture” and Jameson (2007) argues that cultural identity is negotiated through communication. Pickel (2013) systematically includes language and its users, as well as the context in which communication occurs, as central to the composition of culture. Language, contexts and participants are the basic elements of the composition and transformation of culture and identity. Recent studies, including in the areas of culture and identity, cross-cultural communication, and workplace practice and management, also emphasise the dynamic and fluid nature
of culture and identity, and increasingly focus on the dynamism of situational factors and the implicit variation of individuals/participants in situations, in order to better understand communication and to improve learning and practice in workplaces.

Workplaces in the current globalising world are dynamic and cross-cultural. Globalisation, as both the cause and effect, has largely changed and transformed our workplaces into dynamic hubs where cross-cultural encounters frequently occur between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The ‘cosmopolitan’ (Rizvi, 2009) of the current workplace requires competence to communicate and manage situations with increased cultural diversity.

Studies that focus on understanding and differentiating cultures at the national level are not sufficient to help improve understanding about building efficient practice in dynamic and cross-cultural workplaces. Hofstede’s framework is one of those studies that relies on differentiating cultural differences at the national level to categorise culture, groups and individuals. Although Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences provide a means for understanding differences on the national level and are still influential in cultural and business studies, his framework may not serve as a sufficient guide for enhancing understanding about the current hybrid workplaces. On the other hand, looking at not just the ‘difference’ but also the ‘sameness’ may help establish better and more comprehensive understandings about the individuals participating in particular business and communication situations.

Communication facilitates the transformation and composition of culture and identity. Language used in communication is not a neutral tool, instead it is the vehicle and the carrier of its culture. Language used in communication drives and facilitates the negotiation and transformation of cultures and identities involved. English, nowadays regarded as the lingua franca of international business, is one of the ways in which culture and identity is born through communication. As Wierzbicka (2013, p.364) writes, “English...is culturally shaped, and that this has profound consequences for today’s globalizing and English-dominated world”. The question of the cultural role of English is unresolved between Wierzbicka’s view that English is the carrier of Anglo-Western ideology, economy and business concepts and systems and those who take the view that English has adapted to the various contexts and new users and increasingly expresses and carries pluralistic values.

In this chapter I reviewed recent theories in the studies of culture, identity, language and communication, and intercultural business management. I have also discussed the role of English as the lingua franca for international and intercultural business communication, and the emerging views in the studies of contingency theories and workplace management. Business management and communication is heavily impacted by four basic elements: culture, people, communication, and context. To explore the complexity of cross cultural business communication, it is important to
understand these concepts and their inner relations. As summarised in this section, literature reviewed and discussed in this chapter suggests the followings.

- The concept of culture is flux and elusive.
- The concept of identity is hybrid and evolving.
- Language facilitates the interaction between cultures and identities, and helps construct new cultures and identities.
- The workplace in the context of international business is hybrid and contingent.

The four basic elements that have essential impact on international and cross cultural business communication are all conceptually flux or contingent. Therefore a systematic framework is needed to analyse meeting and interview data collected. Among the frameworks and theories used in cultural studies, Hofstede’s theories and his dimensions of national cultural value differences are the most well known and are still widely used. In this study, Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural value differences are used to analyse spoken data collected in business meetings and interviews.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes in detail this project’s methodological approach, field work design, and data analysis as well as how research rigor is achieved. Section 3.2 explains my use of a qualitative methodology and my adoption of an ethnographic orientation in order to answer how people communicate cross-culturally and why people communicate in particular ways and the challenges associated with undertaking this type of study. This section also provides an explanation of the methods used in the study: participant observation of business meetings and semi-structured interviews with meeting participants. Section 3.3 introduces the design of the fieldwork: how the ‘case’ was chosen for the fieldwork and the sites selected; how access was obtained; who participated in this research; how data was collected, how selection and analysis of data were conducted and managed; and how the findings were presented. Section 3.4 elaborates how accuracy of the fieldwork was ensured and how credibility, validity, and integrity were achieved throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Section 3.5 explains how ethics was maintained throughout the fieldwork. Finally, this chapter reflects on the complexity of ethnographically orientated researches, and the efforts being taken to overcome the challenges.

3.2 Methodological Approach and Ethnography

For many years I have been living and working between Chinese and Western cultures. This is not an easy experience because “in-between” means one does not fully belong to either side. It means having a hybrid identity, existing between the two cultures. This position involves a constant balance and requires the ability to draw on the shared culture, the ‘sameness’, when he/she is with one side and avoid the differences. Because of this personal experience I understand acutely the differences that exist between cultures - not only in language, but also in ideology, values, behaviours, ways of thinking and approaches in dealing with obstacles. This understanding about ‘difference’ was deepened when I worked for Western companies in China where I had meetings, discussions and work projects with both Chinese and Western people. How can people so different communicate and work smoothly and successfully together? How can business managers make these different people reach common understanding and work together to achieve agreed goals? Are there any strategies that can help professionals to communicate and work successfully in international and cross-cultural business settings?

Answering these questions requires a close and in-depth study of actual communication in cross-cultural business settings. Poncini (Bargiela-Chiappini et al,
writes, “in investigating intercultural business communication, I’ve been especially interested in the linguistic and interactional features of intercultural encounters in business. I think it’s important for researchers to observe and study actual communication behaviour in intercultural business settings”. I agree completely with Poncini on this and believe that how professionals communicate in meetings and at workplaces is crucial for business. For this reason I chose a qualitative method for this study. A large number of intercultural business studies used quantitative research methods to generate numerical results and frameworks, including the study of Hofstede (1980) and the succeeding project by Schwartz (1994), as well as the GLOBE project (House et al, 2004). Quantitative studies are important for business and market analysis as they build up numbers- and facts-based reports that present rational predictability which, according to Hammerich and Lewis (2013, p.7) “works well for strategy where the realm can be expressed in numbers: the price, cost, profits, market share, or a balanced scorecard”. But culture is difficult to express numerically (Hammerich & Lewis, 2013, p. 7) and numbers do not capture communication itself and the process of interaction between individuals. Intercultural business communication is tightly situated in a context which is both intercultural and business related – it is situational, procedural, contingent, hybrid and fluid – how can quantitative research capture these characters?

A qualitative approach is most suitable for this study, given the two important characteristics of qualitative research suggested by Lee (2014, p. 94).

i. “Qualitative research helps researchers address issues in a specific context in their researched disciplines.”

ii. “Qualitative research is used for addressing ‘how’ questions rather than ‘how many’, for understanding real life from the perspective of those being studied, and for examining and articulating processes.”

Answering the ‘how’ questions is not enough. More importantly an understanding of why they “rationally choose to behave in that way” (Feinberg, 2015, p. 151) needs to be established. Ethnography serves this purpose in this research project as it focuses on understanding people at their workplace, in their everyday business lives; and on “revealing implicit norms governing such behaviour” (Feinberg, 2015, p. 151). Ethnography, although considered the most suitable method for this study, is probably also the most challenging route. Gelling (2014) lists three main challenges that the ethnographic research method presents to researchers.

i. The multiple barriers that need to be negotiated and managed before accessing the site can be especially challenging in ethnographic research, including the hierarchies between different groups, the importance of not disrupting routines and protocols.

ii. Ethnography draws heavily on prolonged observation as the main means of data collection – not many researchers can afford spending significant periods of time observing and collecting data, and not many participants feel comfortable being observed for such a long time.
iii. The difficulty in obtaining acceptance and trust.

These were all indeed the challenges I faced at the beginning of the research, as well as the need to maintain confidentiality in regard to business discussions. I will explain in more details about the challenges of this research method in later sections of this thesis.

3.3 The Field Work

3.3.1 The Case Study

Some years ago, I worked for Maersk (China) for one year in Beijing, as the Executive Assistant to the President and Vice President. I had the opportunity to organise and participate in senior management meetings, especially line management meetings chaired by the Vice President. I found that, in these line management meetings, there were a lot of intensive discussions between Chinese and Westerners about a variety of business issues, both routine and contingent. A common method used in selecting cases is purposive sampling. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling aims to select information-rich cases for in-depth study from which one will be able to learn more about an issue. In my research proposal, I suggested choosing one Australian international company with operations in China, and with certain number of local Chinese employees at management level to ensure the diversity of business situation and a rich source of cross-cultural communication for data analysis. I proposed to study meeting communication and to interview meeting participants, using the following process.

- Step 1: Observing and audio-recording business discussions in management meetings.
- Step 2: Conducting semi-structured interviews with meeting participants to obtain reflective and interpretive data for analysis against their meeting discussions.

Case study is described as “a choice of what is to be studied” (Stake, 2005, p.443) and a strategy to address “how” or “why” questions (Yin, 2003, p.1). Given the considerations discussed previously, choosing an international organisation with operations in China as a case study is suitable for the purpose of this research. Stake (1995, p.xi) suggests that “case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”. It is my hope that the outcome of this research can give guidance to professionals managing business in international markets. As indicated by Winston (2006, p.43), “a key tension at the heart of case study is the relationship between the uniqueness of its terms of reference and the generalisability of its results”.

In 2011, after submitting the research proposal, I joined a British organisation’s
subsidiary company in Australia, as the Executive Assistant to the Managing Director. This organisation has subsidiary companies in Beijing and Shanghai and I therefore felt that it could be a suitable site for my research. I also felt this was appropriate for the following reasons.

- My role as Executive Assistant would provide me access to the senior management meetings and would help me build up trust with the management team.
- Being an employee of the company and working closely with the management team in Australia, I could better understand the company and could gain access to the companies in Beijing and Shanghai.

After consultation with my research supervisors, I asked for and obtained approval from the Managing Director of this British firm’s company in Australia. He also introduced me to the General Manager of the company in Beijing and the Sales Director of the Asia-Pacific region from whom I obtained approval for my fieldwork in Beijing and Shanghai. This gave me access to the international business world and to study intercultural business communication as a participant observer. At the same time my ethics application was approved by the University of Melbourne’s Ethics Committee. I then started and completed data collection in China and Australia, from June 2011 to April 2012.

In order to study actual business communication processes, I needed to observe and record business meetings and conduct interviews with meeting participants who were normally middle or senior level managers. For this kind of study, gaining access to the field and trust from research subjects could pose a significant challenge. The doors of business meeting rooms do not normally open to outsiders, and senior managers do not often have time for interviews due to their busy schedules. Joining the Australian company and working closely with the executive team gave me access to the research field, the opportunity to build trust with senior managers, and to conduct fieldwork. The data collection process for this project started about six month after I joined the company and by then I had obtained approval from the General Manager, as well as ethics approval. More importantly, by then, the business managers were already used to having me sitting in their meeting rooms. With this opportunity, the very limitation of a single case study actually turned out to be value-adding as it is “useful for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p.149).

3.3.2 Participants

Participants in this research include:

- In Beijing: the General Manager and line managers.
- In Shanghai: the Sales Director of Asia-Pacific and Sales Managers.
- In Sydney: the Executives, Directors and senior managers.

This list of participants includes key managers in Beijing (head office of the
consulting company in China), Shanghai (head office of the health insurance company in China and its Chinese partner company) and Sydney (head office of the aged care company in Australia). The Managing Director of the Australian company did not participate in this research as he was my direct report during the data collection process. Prior to the data collection, all participants were informed of the project and had a good understanding of the research and the ethical clearance obtained. Participants were informed that neither company nor individual names would be mentioned in the research. Gelling (2014, p.6) suggests that in order to access the researcher site, the researcher can discover and build up an “influential friend” to help negotiate access to the site and assist in the process of acceptance for the researcher. To achieve this I obtained support and approval from the Managing Director in Australia. He introduced me to the General Manager in China and the Sales Director of Asia-Pacific so that I could conduct fieldwork in Beijing and Shanghai. His support also ensured a smooth data collection process in Australia. The support of these ‘influential friends’ helped me access the research site and complete the fieldwork successfully.

3.3.3 Data Collection

As a participant observer, my data collection process included the following major stages.

- Stage 1: Joining the Australian company, getting to know about the research field, building up familiarity and trust with research subjects.
- Stage 2: Getting access to the site in Beijing, getting to know the Beijing team, obtaining approval for the fieldwork in Beijing, and then collecting meeting and interview data.
- Stage 3: Getting access to the site in Shanghai, getting to know the Shanghai team, obtaining approval for the fieldwork in Shanghai, and then collecting meeting and interview data.
- Stage 4: Obtaining approval for fieldwork in Sydney and collecting meeting and interview data.

After Stages 1, 2, and 3, I had a better understanding of the management teams and business operations in Sydney, Beijing and Shanghai. I had learned how the business in China was developed and how it was evolved. I also learned that a few senior managers in Sydney had experiences working internationally and one of them had been involved in setting up the company in China. Hence I considered it was not only necessary but also important to collect data in Sydney. The other consideration was that data collected in Sydney will offer an opportunity to compare communication between different participants, teams, and in different meeting contexts, and business and organisational contexts, due to the following reasons.

- Unlike the companies in Beijing and Shanghai which are relatively small-sized startup companies providing health insurance services, BPAUG
is a well established enterprise which manages about fifty care homes in Australia.

- Participants in Sydney data include Executives and Senior Managers from Australia, UK and New Zealand.
- Although there were no Chinese participants in Sydney, the data collected may be of great value for comparing Chinese-Western and Western-Western business communication, and as a reference point against data collected in China.

For these reasons, after Beijing and Shanghai, I also completed fieldwork in Sydney.

Data was collected separately in the three sites. In each site I have followed the steps below.

- Step 1: Explaining the research and ethical clearance process to participants.
- Step 2: Obtaining approval and signing the consent forms by both the participants and the researcher.
- Step 3: Observing and audio-recording the business meetings.
- Step 4: Conducting semi-structured interviews (audio-recorded) with meeting participants.

All meetings and interviews were audio-recorded. Two audio-recording instruments were used at the same time in case one instrument did not work properly. Interviews were conducted in English and were one-on-one. All interviews were semi-structured and the questions were designed to help participants explain their understandings about the meetings and tell their experience working cross culturally in international business. The interviews started with interviewees introducing themselves and their work experiences. Then the interviewer asked questions about the meeting attended and interviewees’ reflection on meeting communication and their experience working in international business. Overall, there were 26 units of data collected, including 13 meetings and 13 interviews. The data collection process started in June 2011 when the first meeting in Beijing was observed, and interviews concluded in April 2012 when the last interview in Sydney was completed. Below is a list of the timelines and data collected in three sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Time-line</th>
<th>No. of Meetings Observed</th>
<th>No. of Interviews Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>June 14th 2011 – June 30th 2011</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>June 22nd 2011 – June 24th 2011</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>June 9th 2011 – April 12th 2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Total Number of Data Collected

In Chapter 2 I suggested that the distinction of ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ and ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ is important for understanding interactions between people from different
cultures. For any given culture, there are the ‘emic’ (insiders) and the ‘etic’ (outsiders), as well as the ‘sameness’ within a cultural group and the ‘difference’ between cultural groups. Data collected in my fieldwork in the three sites offers an opportunity to observe and understand communication between different participants in different groups and business contexts. Therefore, analysis of data collected in the three sites and integration of the findings will enable cross-referencing and triangulation across communication between different interlocutors in different geographic, organisational and business contexts and will provide a fuller picture for exploring and understanding intercultural business communication from different angles.

3.3.4 Data Reduction and Analysis

When the data collection process was completed, all audio data was transcribed by an outsourced agent using computer software. I then checked these transcripts by listening multiple times to the audio recording to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions.

During the fieldwork, I tried to collect as much data as possible, to ensure that I would have a good amount of significant and relevant data for analysis. The interviews conducted were between one hour to more than two hours and the meetings observed and recorded were from one hour to more than three hours. As Turner (1983) suggests that qualitative studies “not only generates large amount of data but it generates data in a non standard format which makes analysis problematic” (Lawrence & Tar, 2013, p. 29). When I started to analyze data, the first step was to select the data to be analyzed. From the 13 meetings observed and recorded, nine meetings were chosen for analysis – three meetings from each site. These meetings were chosen for the following reasons.

i. There are intensive discussions on business and contingent issues.
ii. Six meetings were chosen from Beijing and Shanghai data because they have both Chinese and Western participants.
iii. Three meetings were chosen from Sydney data because there are intensive business discussions and the participants were experienced in international and cross-cultural business management.

Miles and Huberman (1984) describe data reduction as “the process of selecting, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the new case data” (Lawrence & Tar, 2013, p. 29). Data reduction was conducted based on the research questions – which were focused on cross-cultural business communication in international business settings; the study of communication on contingent business issues; and understanding how communication was managed by experienced international managers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Time-line</th>
<th>No. of Meetings</th>
<th>No. of Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>June 14th 2011 – June 30th 2011</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>June 22nd 2011 – June</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data analysis process was guided by the research questions and the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2. Firstly, data was organised into manageable units. According to locations and types of businesses, data was separated into three categories: the Beijing data, the Shanghai data and the Sydney data. Within each category, meetings and interviews were further separated into three units. I then coded meetings, interviews and participants in all units. Meetings and interviews were coded according to their locations, nature (meeting or interview) and participants. Units of data and the codes used are presented in the tables below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beijing Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit BJ1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-JCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-I-JW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit BJ2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-OPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-I-BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit BJ3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-TEAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-I-CD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shanghai Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit SH1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-M-TEAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-I-RB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit SH2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-M-SALES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-I-MX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit SH3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-M-BROK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-I-RE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sydney Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit SYD1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggest that “the process of data analysis in qualitative research involves working with data, organizing it, breaking it down, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others”. (Lawrence & Tar, 2013, p. 29) After grouping data into manageable units and coding them, I started analysing the meeting data, using Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences as listed in Appendix I. The meeting transcript was screened repeatedly to find evidence for the dimensions. Evidence found for each dimension were listed to see if they were in line with Hofstede’s classification for the culture in that dimension, and are discussed in the data analysis chapters of this thesis.

After analysing the meeting transcripts, I then analysed interview data, to find evidence for the following.

- Interviewee’s background and experience in international and cross-cultural business communication and management.
- Interviewee’s reflections on meeting discussions.
- Interviewee’s understanding and explanation about particular topics/issues discussed in the meeting.
- Interviewee’s further reflections on international and cross-cultural business management.

Spradley (1979) refers to analysis as “a systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole” (Lawrence & Tar, 2013, p. 29). My research then grouped the evidence that I found, and compared the reflections and discussions of participants within each data unit. This is further discussed and summarised in the data analysis chapters.

Following this procedure, I firstly completed analysis of three data units collected in Beijing (BJ1, BJ2 and BJ3). When analysis of Beijing data was completed, the patterns within the meeting and interviews are established with findings summarised in the following categories.

- Evidence against Hofstede’s dimensions.
• Power flow, workplace alignment and leadership demonstrated in business discussions.
• Reflections on Chinese-Western and international business communication and management.

All data units were analysed following this procedure. Analysis of data was organised into three chapters according to location (Beijing, Shanghai and Sydney). Findings from this analysis were then summarised in the conclusion of each chapter, and then consolidated, elaborated and expanded in the final discussions in Chapter 7.

3.3.5 Reporting and Presentation

The research and its findings were presented to audiences at the PhD Completion Seminar on July 12th, 2016. The presentation was organised into four phases. Phase 1 introduced the aims of the research, the research questions, the researcher, the background and relevant literature. Phase 2 explained methodology and approaches, research sites and data collection, as well as data analysis processes and academic rigor. Phase 3 summarised the research findings, the evidence relevant to Hofstede’s framework, and the characteristics and complexity of cross-cultural business communication. Phase 4 further revealed the research findings and significance of this research. In Phase 4, I also introduced a pedagogical framework developed from research findings to enhance intercultural and international business communication and management.

3.4 Trustworthiness

Ethnographic qualitative research has a number of key advantages including observing people’s daily interactions over a long period of time. However, these advantages can simultaneously disadvantage the research project if not managed carefully and can threaten the validity and credibility of the research and its outcomes.

Ethnographically oriented research can be fraught with issues including the need for participants to be comfortable being observed by a stranger for a long period of time. Issues may arise if participants do not communicate or behave normally or provide the researcher with their real opinions or feelings. This was a concern for me prior to the commencement of data collection. However, prior to the data collection, I had been working in the organisation for a few months and had been working with the participants in Sydney every day and had been organizing and sitting in their meetings for quite some time; for participants in Beijing and Shanghai I had already established solid relationships and was their colleague – I was one of them, an insider of their group. The importance of these meetings to business guarantees the authenticity of meeting communication. All meetings observed were line management meetings where business decisions needed to be made. Even if the participants were not used to being recorded, business still went on and they meeting objectives needed to be met.
For example, in one meeting I observed, the chair of meeting joked at the beginning “be careful, you are being recorded”, people joked about it and their discussion continued as normal. Gelling (2014, p.6) advises that “in ethnographic research it is required that researchers engage with participants in their lives for an extended period of time”. I consider this to be particularly necessary. People will often put down their guard when confronted by someone who does not have much to do with them, someone who cannot know all their secrets, someone who is not in their network of profit-sharing and competition. In my intervention in the company I held something of an outsider role. For participants in Sydney, although I organised the meetings and worked with them in the same company, I did not get deeply involved in their department business, and their direct report, the Managing Director (who was also my direct report at the time) was not involved in data collection. For participants in Beijing and Shanghai, I came from a different division of business and I was not involved in their detailed business operations. Being both an insider and an outsider helped me be accepted, helped the participants to relax and guaranteed the credibility and dependability of the data collected.

A second challenge of ethnography qualitative research, is that the researcher is the main data collection instrument. This poses a potential threat to the research project, as this individual may have an impact on data collection and analysis. As mentioned above, the nature of business meetings is to reach objectives – the fact that I was sitting in the business did not affect what people discussed in the meetings, and I could not choose what was observed and studied since I observed and recorded all key line management meetings within the data collection period. Also, to avoid bias and more importantly to learn the actual ‘thoughts’ of the business professionals, I interviewed meeting participants to obtain their reflections on meeting communication. By doing this, I wanted to minimize my impact, as the researcher, on data collection, interpretation and analysis.

Finally, in order to minimize bias and to analyse cross-cultural business communication reliably, after the fieldwork in Beijing and Shanghai, I decided to collect meeting and interview data in Sydney, for the reasons discussed in 3.3.3 (Section 3.3).

By analysing Sydney data and integrating the findings from the three sites, communication between different interlocutors, teams, groups, and in different geographic, organisational and business contexts can be compared and cross-referenced. Therefore, the data collected and the findings from analysis can be validated and triangulated, and knowledge learned about cross-cultural business communication can be deepened and broadened.
3.5 Ethics

An ethics application for this project was completed before data collection. “The Application for Approval of Project Involving Human Participants” was submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee, the University of Melbourne in April 2011. The data collection process started in June 2011, immediately after obtaining approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Before the data collection process began, I had:

- Contacted the most senior manager of each site, including the Managing Director in Australia, the General Manager in Beijing and the Regional Sales Director of Asia-Pacific, and explained to them the research, the data collection process and how safety and ethics would be obtained during the process, and obtained their approval for the fieldwork.

- Explained to all participants the details of the research, the data collection process and how safety and ethics would be obtained.

I had also issued a number of documents to all participants involved, and assured them that I would, in all aspects of this research, demonstrate integrity, professionalism, intellectual honesty and would ensure their anonymity. The following documents were provided to participants:

- A plain language statement introducing this research.
- A consent form signed by the researcher and each participant.

Samples of Plain Language Statement and Consent Form are presented in Appendixes III and IV.

3.6 Preliminary Conclusion

Undertaking research using an ethnographic qualitative approach is a challenging route to generate new knowledge. The challenges posed include: difficulties in gaining access to the research field, the time required to build trust with participants, the lengthy duration and complexity of data collection, and the impact that the researcher may have on data collection and analysis. This chapter explained the methodological approach undertaken, the effort made to ensure the integrity and reliability of the research and to avoid bias in data analysis.

Due to the challenges outlined, the ethnographic approach to generating new knowledge about cross-cultural business communication has not been adopted widely. The researcher needs to obtain access to the site and to build up familiarity and trust with participants. I achieved this, as explained earlier, by having the opportunity to join the researched firm and by purposeful planning. If I had not joined the Australian company of this British firm, I would have had to go through channels such as Chambers of Commerce to identify a research site which would have required
spending a significant amount of time gaining access and trust and I would not be able to conduct the fieldwork as a participant observer. Gaining trust and observing business meetings can be especially difficult in the business world. If I did not get approval and support from the management team in the three sites, it would have been difficult to achieve this. As a participant observer, the most important issue is to carefully manage my role in the fieldwork. Would I come into this research project with existing beliefs and views? How would I balance my role as both an insider and outsider in the fieldwork? Would I bring into the analysis my own judgments and understandings? I have made strenuous efforts to overcome or minimize these problems by carefully balancing my role in data collection, reflecting constantly during the fieldwork, and planning thoughtfully to triangulate data collected.

Reflexivity is crucial during the process of data collection and analysis. As an ethnographic researcher, I was both an insider and an outsider, in relation to the research field and the participants. As a cross-cultural communication researcher, I was both an insider and an outsider in relation to Chinese and Western cultures involved in this study. Special attention must be paid to balancing this insider/outsider positioning to ensure subjectivity. As discussed in Chapter 2, a well managed balance between the ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ positioning can help gain insights and ensure validity during data collection and analysis. Triangulation is important for such positioning. Hence in addition to fieldwork in Beijing and Shanghai, I conducted a ten-month fieldwork in Sydney. By doing so, data collected in the Western-Western business communication context and information gathered from experienced international managers would help triangulate my analysis. These considerations will be reflected in the next three chapters which analyse the data collected in the three sites.
CHAPTER FOUR: BEIJING DATA – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses data collected in Beijing. This chapter has three sections, with each analysing one data unit including one meeting observed and one interview conducted after the meeting.

4.2 Unit BJ1: Meeting with an American company and interview with JW.
4.3 Unit BJ2: Operation meeting and interview with BB.
4.4 Unit BJ3: Weekly company meeting and interview with CD.

Each unit of data has the following format:

i. **Introduction**: Introducing content, structure of the unit, participants and codes used in analysis and information about participants.

ii. **Analysis of meeting data**.

iii. **Analysis of interview data**.

Beijing data was collected in the office of BP’s subsidiary company in Beijing, China (BPBJC). BPBJC is a consulting company whose main functions are to explore business opportunities in health care and aged care, and to provide services to BP’s international health insurance customers in China. CD is a Danish national and has lived in China for 17 years. At the time of data collection, CD had recently joined BPBJC as the General Manager. Both JW and BB are Chinese. JW is a senior manager at BPBJC and BB is a manager in BPBJC’s operation team. More information about these participants is given in sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

As explained in Chapter 3, the data analysis began with a review of the meeting data, screening it to find evidence relevant to the dimensions in Hofstede’s framework. The evidence found was listed and discussed to see if it was in line with the classifications and scores in Hofstede’s framework. Then, interview data was screened and reviewed to find evidence relevant to the findings from meeting data, and the reflections of interviewees on Chinese-Western business communication and management. The findings from the Beijing data are summarised in the conclusion of this chapter.

4.2 Unit BJ1 - Meeting with an American Company and Interview with JW

This section analyses two connected sets of data, BJ-M-JCI and BJ-I-JW, centered around a meeting between BPBJC and JCI. JCI is an American company that provides hospital evaluation services. The meeting data is analysed in section 4.2.1. The information obtained from interview with JW is discussed in section 4.2.2.

i. BJ-M-JCI is a meeting between BPBJC and JCI.

ii. BJ-I-JW is an interview with JW, a senior manager at BPBJC, after the
meeting with JCI.

The first meeting considered is the first official meeting between BPBJC and JCI. This meeting was held in BPBJC’s office in Beijing. Stipulated by JW, the key aims of this meeting were:

i. To meet formally at the senior management level and to introduce to each other their current business operation in China.

ii. To discuss about the Quality Evaluation Program for Chinese public hospitals (hereafter referred to as QEP).

In this section, two sets of data are analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about the participants is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Experience working/living in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>40-50 M Danish/British (Grew up in Denmark)</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>17 years living and working in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>30-40 M Chinese</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>1 year in the UK. MBA from University of Birmingham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCIGM</td>
<td>40-50 M Chinese-American</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>5 years living and working in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCIM</td>
<td>25-35 F Chinese-American</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>Recently came to work in China</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Information about The Participants in Unit BJ1

4.2.1 Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)

Hofstede’s framework includes the Power Distance Index (PDI) which measures the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Chinese culture’s PDI is high at 80, while American culture has a PDI of 40 and Danish culture just 18. Among the four meeting participants, CD and JCIGM are the most senior – they both occupy the role of General Manager for China. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking and their positions within companies, we would expect the following characteristics to appear in their communication.

i. Polite, direct and open discussion between CD and JCIGM.
ii. Very polite communication from JW to CD and JCIGM. Less direct communication and following requests from CD.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI in the meeting communication.

4.2.1.1 At the beginning of the meeting, JCIGM raised the first question. CD answered briefly but did not give concrete information. JW joined the conversation on his own initiative and introduced previous co-operation between the two companies.

JCIGM: …that was with your sister company called…
CD: Yes that's correct, correct.
JW: …that was in last year. At that time in China we're also doing this quality evaluation program so how to deliver this in a consistent way so we have a lot of internal discussion, so ended up, you know, we're using that, you know, JCI, BP sort of co-branded consistent questionnaire. And already in China particularly for the public hospital that, you know, will be going to the reevaluation...we are going to use that, so we already work together.

4.2.1.2 When they discussed regional business, CD directly asked JCIGM why JCI had less interest in the European market. JCIGM answered and asked about responses from hospitals to BP’s hospital evaluation program in China. Without CD’s request, JW answered JCIGM’s question and explained the operational details.

CD: What is the reason for there being less interest in Europe?
JCIGM: I think that Europe in a sense is a somewhat more fragmented market. You find that a number of the countries have their own national accreditation programs...so...what’s seen to be an American product isn’t so attractive. And the other thing is that some of the drivers we’ve seen in...for example in the Middle East or in Asia, in Asia specifically like medical tourism that’s not present at all very much in Europe.
CD: Ah, no.
JCIGM: So I think there are different drivers in place and not so much in Europe. We started off very strongly in Europe, Europe was our number one market for up to now, for a long time, but I think coupled with the more challenging economic times over the last couple of years it’s been much more difficult, so the growth there is on a different kind of scale compared to Middle East and Asia which is kind of growing at pretty much the same tension compared to Europe. So, you know, we’re looking in very different region and markets, so growth strategies are kind of different. But I mean it’s interesting that BP is actually doing this for your organisation, to provide organisations on a value added basis. What’s the response like from them, what have they been saying?
JW: Well I think overall it’s quite positive, particularly for the participating
providers, they really found...because before being on board they have concerns why there is, ah, good choice to commit so much time and resource, we all know they are very busy. But end of the day they really found that, you know, they gain something in return either, you know, could be very basic sort of the clinic tours or, you know, concepts towards to, you know, some change of the mindset on the, you know, management level. So overall it’s quite good. Also, you know, as CD said we offer this with no charge so they’re quite happy, yeah, so there’s no financial burden which is... I know for some of the grade 3 hospitals it’s no problem, but for some of them it is a problem, the funding is a problem.

4.2.1.3 Following their conversation in Passage 2 and JCIGM continued to ask questions about BP’s hospital evaluation program in China. Again, JW followed up and answered questions without request from CD.

JCIGM: Right, right. What was your selection criteria behind... I mean was it like volunteer kind of thing or did you specifically pick specific hospitals to undergo this program?
JW: Well I think firstly, you know, the purpose we’re doing this is not the same as, you know, what you guys are doing, so we’re doing this as part of our work. You know, house insurance development I will say that and this is part of the reason. So when we, you know, select hospital we always keep this in mind where our potential customers would like to go. So the answer is of course the key 3A hospitals in the key sort of cities or areas where BP’s like to developing house insurance business. And of course it’s a voluntary practice, it has to be mutually agreed with that hospital.

4.2.1.4 Continuing the conversation about BP’s hospital evaluation program, CD explained the background of this program. CD appeared to have an overall understanding about the program but was not very familiar with operational details. When CD talked about the hospitals they have evaluated, he asked “what about the hospitals in Beijing?” JW picked up the question right away and gave a list of hospitals they have evaluated. Without CD’s request, JW gave the list of hospitals they have evaluated and told JCIGM that the Guang An Men Hospital wanted to use JCI’s evaluation program.

CD: I think also the criteria probably in Beijing and Shanghai will be different, we’ve only done Beijing and Shanghai so far. When the project was set up it was under a government corporation between the UK and China, what’s called a partnership in health memorandum which was signed in 2007, and this was part of it so basically we were asked by the UK government to do this as part of this corporation. And so the first hospitals I assume in this action were kind of what was presented, whereas then we went out, the following hospitals...what are the hospitals in Beijing? Sino-Japanese, Chao Yang...
4.2.1.5 JCIGM continued to ask question about BP’s hospital evaluation program in China. Again, CD answered JCIGM’s question very briefly. JW followed up and gave details on his own initiative.

JCIGM: And the, um, current quality system that you’re doing within China right now, um, is that something that you run independently from BI, the content?
CD: We write two different ones.
JW: For the eight hospitals, ah, actually as CD said we have sort of two sides of the questionnaires. One is that we call it a long questionnaire comprised of over one thousand questions. The other one has just recently been co-developed with JCI which is about over two hundred questions.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IDV.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for UAI.

Long-term Orientation (LTO)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for LTO.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

4.2.2 Analysis of Interview Data

JW’s communication in the meeting demonstrates good knowledge about the company’s business, especially in hospital evaluation programs. During the interview, JW explained in detail the purposes of the meeting which reveals JW’s significant knowledge of BPBJC’s business operations.

JW: “JCI is called in for a joint commission international. It’s a US based not for profit organisation doing the hospital accreditation and also some health care consultant services. So it’s a well known brand globally and in China as well. And the reason we would like to talk with JCI is because at BP we’re
also running a similar program as I explained to you earlier which I’m responsible in China, it’s a hospital quality evaluation program, so it’s quite similar so there are some synergies and, you know, potential opportunities for the two organisations to explore in China. Another important reason is BPIHI, the sister company or wholly owned organisation of BP group already had a partnership with JCI I think last year so they already started the partnership and exploring opportunities together, so that’s also one of the reasons we’d like to meet with them and talk, you know, about the future in China in particular… Actually this is the first official meeting we held with them so it’s truly…you know, the increased mutual understanding. JCI is quite active in China at the moment, as they just explained they have accredited up to eleven providers in China but that’s coordinated I think from their regional office in Singapore, but also with support from their headquarter in the US.”

Furthermore, during the interview, JW explained in detail his personal background which is summarised in the table below. Both JW and his wife have been studying in Western countries and JW has been working, most of the time, for Western firms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal Information</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Wife was studying in Australia (at the time of data collection).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>i) Bachelor of Industrial Design from a Chinese university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) MBA from the University of Birmingham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Jobs</td>
<td>i) An education consultancy company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) British Embassy in Beijing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Work with BP</td>
<td>Four years (till the time of data collection – joined BP in early 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position at BP</td>
<td>Senior Representative of BP China office. Mainly responsible for managing the provider quality evaluation program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 Information about JW

During the interview, JW also elaborated on his experience working with Western colleagues. JW suggested that he did not face significant challenges when communicating with Western colleagues, especially in international companies.

JW: “Actually I don’t see too much…you know, I don’t personally spend too much effort on it [finding the proper way to communicate with Westerners]. Without you asking to be honest I didn’t even notice, you know, there might be something challenging… I’m local so it’s no problem for me to communicate with all the stakeholders. And also I find it’s quite, you know, easy and straightforward to communicate with my supervisor or colleagues within BP.”

JW: “… [with] CD or even, colleagues back in the UK. I think in the work context I don’t see much challenge in terms of communication. Particularly, you know, in the multinational companies who now realise that and so people
communicate quite effectively, so personally... I don’t see much challenges in terms of communication.”

JW considered that there are differences between cultures and in the way that people behave. But in terms of business communication and management, JW felt that he would emphasise difference at a personal rather than national level.

JW: “...in terms of the culture, in terms of the ways that people communicate, the way that people, you know, behave it’s all different, I’m not sure whether it’s a gap but it’s just different, people do things differently... I’d rather take it [communication and management] as something, you know, about personality, it’s individual issue rather than culture or nationality issue. I mean people behave in different ways and of course you have to, you know, realise it and try to work in a proper approach with different personality, that’s my experience.”

Taking CD as an example, JW emphasised that personal experience, ability and personality have more impact on management and communication than cultural differences.

JW: “I mean take CD as an example, he’s been spending over fifteen years in China speaking fluent Chinese and, you know, perfectly pick up the culture things or have a perfect sense of the culture, the way of dealing with people. I don’t think, you know, in this case particularly I don’t think it has anything to do with nationality.”

Finally, because BP has a division that runs aged care facilities, I asked JW his view about institutional aged care. JW suggested briefly that Chinese people’s attitudes towards aged care is changing and he would not mind having his parents staying in quality aged care homes in the future.

4.3 Unit BJ2 – Operation Meeting and Interview with BB

This section analyses two connected sets of data, BJ-M-OPS and BJ-I-BB, centered around a meeting within the operations team. The meeting data is analysed in section 4.3.1. The information obtained from interview with JW is discussed in section 4.3.2.

i. BJ-M-OPS is a meeting, held by CD, the General Manager, attended by two managers in the operation team, VK and BB, together with CS, the office admin.

ii. BJ-I-BB is an interview with BB, after the meeting.

Stipulated by CD, the main objectives of the BJ-M-OPS meeting were:
i. To discuss the content and progress of a company presentation, which was prepared by the operation team, with assistance of CS. The presentation was prepared for submission to the head office.

ii. To discuss the “Global Challenge” event which should be included in the presentation to head office.

In this section, two sets of data are analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about the participants is presented in the table below.

BJ-M-OPS was conducted mainly in Chinese-Mandarin. All Chinese-Mandarin discussion has been translated into English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Gender Nationality Position Experience working/living in other cultures/countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD 40-50 M Danish (Grew up in Denmark) Also holds British passport General Manager for China 17 years living and working in China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB 30 – 35 F Chinese A manager in operation team None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VK 30 – 35 F Chinese Mid-level Manager in operation team None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS 25-30 F Chinese Office admin None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Information about The Participants in Unit BJ2

4.3.1 Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)

As previously discussed, Hofstede’s framework assigns Chinese culture a PDI of 80 and Danish culture a lower score of 18. Only one Danish person is in attendance at the BJ-M-OPS meeting, CD, who is also the GM and the chair of the meeting. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking and their positions within companies, we would expect the following almost opposite characteristics to be present in communication, between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. Polite, direct and open discussion between CD and Chinese employees.
ii. Very polite communication from VK, BB and CS. Less direct and autonomy. Following requests from CD.

Following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI.

4.3.1.1 At the beginning of the meeting, BB summarised her progress in preparing the presentation. She considered it impossible to fully complete her work because she had scheduled a business trip for the following week. BB explained directly that there was too much to write and she could not complete the presentation. CD asked CS to take over from BB and to continue working on it. Then, CD moved on to speak about other parts of the presentation. When CD mentioned the section about the “providers”, before he asked, VK suggested that she could do it. In this short conversation about re-arrangement of works, communication of BB and VK shows high level of directness and autonomy. They had a good understanding of the priority of work tasks, their own capacity and time table. They directly told people about their difficulties and they hesitated in taking up responsibilities they felt were beyond them. BB and VK’s communication in this passage shows high level of ownership, autonomy, initiative and very low power distance between them and CD, the GM.

BB: ...稍微写点东西就可以了。我找一些PPT照片...
    ...We don’t need to write a lot. I will find some pictures for the presentation.

CD: 那找CS帮你忙。因为现在...
    Then CS can help you. Because right now...

BB: 东西太多，我写不过来了。
    There is too much to write, I cannot cope with it.

CD: 对。这样我们...slice下星期吧。先把Work Force弄好。第二就是Providers那方面的事情。。。
    Yes, then we...we will do presentation slides next week. Let’s complete the Work Force first. The second thing is about the Providers.

VK: 那个我来补吧。我来调整一下。
    I can do that. I will adjust.

CD: 补完了Providers你跟我说，然后我来。就是...就是那个launches。
    Let me know after you complete the Providers. Then I will do it. I mean the...the launches.

VK: 对，对。那就是说我把这些东西update，然后跟你说。
    Yes, yes. So I will update it first then I will let you know.

4.3.1.2 During the meeting, CD mentioned the other two parts of the presentation - “work task” and “facilities” which VK has been working on. VK needed to clarify ‘work task’ with CD and to get more information so she asked directly. VK’s communication shows a high level of directness and autonomy.

CD: ... Work Task...还有3个Facilities...
CD: Because I think this Work Task means another thing...

VK: Which one do you mean?

CD: I will find out what it is.

VK: OK.

4.3.1.3 In this passage, CD tried to set a timeline for the completion of the presentation. Knowing that BB would leave next Wednesday, CD wanted to push the deadline to next Monday. Instead of giving this as an order, CD asked politely and inquired with the others about the possibilities of completing the job earlier. Communication between CD and Chinese staff (BB, VK and CS) shows low power distance. CD demonstrated respect to BB, VK and CS’s opinion about their work. The Chinese staff, especially CS, demonstrated high levels of autonomy and initiative.

CD: Presentation 我们差不多下星期三会有一个 draft...

By next Wednesday we will roughly have a draft presentation...

CS: 她下星期一走。She leaves on Monday.

BB: 我下星期三走。I will leave on Wednesday.

CD: 啊，那，那，我们。。 。那这样吧，星期一下午我们能完成吗？初步的，应该不需要很precise...

Ah, then, then, we...then let’s do this, can we complete it by Monday afternoon? Just an initial one. It shouldn’t need to be too precise.

CS: 应该差不多。应该差不多。It should be possible. It should be possible.

BB: 可以。Yes we can.

VK: 应该可以。It should be ok.

CD: 你们如果有 content 我们可以比较好做完。

If you complete the content, then we can complete the presentation with no problem.

4.3.1.4 In this passage, BB explained her idea about adding photos into the presentation. BB’s communication is direct and shows high level of autonomy and ownership for the things she was responsible for. CD’s answer shows respect to BB’s
BB: 这个照片正好我们放一个全的，10 个人的。然后像这种小的我觉得也挺好的。就是问一下大家你希望把你哪张照片放在那。这样到 Launch 的时候也可以用这个 PPT。

As for the pictures, we can use one team picture, with 10 of us. Then I consider also good to use individual pictures. We can ask people which photo they would like to use. Then we can also use this presentation for the Launch.

CD: 对。

Yes.

BB: 是吧。这样可能好一些，你自己觉得哪张照片漂亮，你就发给我。

Yes, this may be better. Send me your picture which you think you look pretty.

[Laughing together]

4.3.1.5 During the meeting, CD asked CS to take over from BB and to continue working on the presentation/report about the ‘Global Challenge’ event. Instead of giving orders, CD firstly explained the task and BB’s schedule. Then he inquired about CS’s availability and asked politely if she could take over the task. Communication between CD and CS shows very low power distance. CD demonstrated a high level of respect to CS’s autonomy. Communication in this passage is friendly and relaxed.

CD: CS，你有一分钟吗?

CS, do you have one minute?

CS: 啊？一分钟？有！

Ah? One minute? Yes I have!

CD: 我们有一个 Global Challenge 的东西。然后 BB 开始做一些文字。

We need to prepare something for the Global Challenge. BB has started writing the content/words.

[Staff laughing about CD’s pronunciation of “文字” (words) in Chinese]

CD: BB 她今天下午要写一些东西。她今天下午有很多东西要做完。她下星期都不在。

BB needs to write something this afternoon. She needs to complete lots of work this afternoon. She won’t be here next week the whole week.

BB: 对，星期一我就走了，4 号。

Yes, I’m leaving on Monday the 4th.

CD: 所以，剩下来的你能不能做？不用写很多东西。BB 基本上都已经写好了。你只要整理好了放进去。然后我们就一起看一下然后发过去。

So, can you complete the rest? There is not much to write. BB has basically completed it. You only need to consolidate and put into it (the presentation), then we will have a look and then send it over.

BB: 那个 Jen 已经催我了... 月底他们可能要把全球的汇总。

Jen has asked me already... they need to consolidate global inputs by end
of the month.
CD: 那你们两个一起看一下。

Then you two look at it together.

BB: 好，好。
Ok, ok.

CS: 好。
Ok.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and Danish cultures have almost complete opposite rankings in the dimension of IDV. Chinese culture is scored 20, a highly collectivistic culture while Danish culture is scored 74, a highly individualistic culture. Apart from CD who is a Danish national, the rest of meeting participants are Chinese. Based on Hofstede’s IDV ranking and their positions within companies, we would expect the following almost opposite characteristics to be present in communication between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. High level of collectivism shown in the communication of Chinese employees.
ii. High level of individualism shown in the communication between CD and Chinese employees.

Data in BJ-M-OPS shows evidence mostly in line with Hofstede’s classification of Chinese and Danish culture in the dimension of IDV. Communication between Chinese staff (BB, VK and CS) shows a good level of collectivism. We can see from their conversation in above passages that they work closely as a team and support each other. The communication of CD shows traits of individualism:

i. CD respects the autonomy of employees.
ii. CD is task oriented. Their discussion shows that CD oversaw business operation and was clear about the progress and individual’s responsibilities. It is clear that CD moved from task to task to make sure the presentation would be completed well.
iii. CD communicates directly.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
Unlike the evidence for PDI and IDV as provided above, communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and Danish cultures have similar rankings in the dimension of UAI. Chinese culture is scored 30 and Danish culture is scored 23 – both are low uncertainty avoidance cultures. Based on Hofstede’s UAI ranking, we would expect at least the following characteristics in communication between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. Less structured, flexible with rules and regulations.
ii. Comfortable with changes, ambiguity and highly adaptable.

The communication in passages 4.3.1.1 to 4.3.1.5 shows that both CD and Chinese staff are flexible in regard to work process and arrangements.

The communication of VK in passages 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.1.2 shows that VK is very structured, with less tolerance for ambiguity. At the end of the discussion in passage 1, VK summarised what she would need to do when completing her task and confirmed: “So I will update it first then I tell you”. In passage 4.3.1.2, when they discussed the ‘work task’ section in the presentation, VK firstly searched for the information she needed and then tried to confirm with CD exactly which ‘work task’ he referred to.

Long-term Orientation (LTO)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for LTO.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

4.3.2 Analysis of Interview Data

In the interview, BB firstly explained in detail her background and work experience which is summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Information</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>Beijing, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>A college degree from a university in Beijing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Jobs</td>
<td>i) First job was in an international hospital in Beijing in customer service department in 2000. Then worked in the hospital’s Shanghai branch as a trainer for one year, from 2004 to 2005. ii) Returned to Beijing in 2005 and worked in the same hospital as customer service officer. iii) Altogether BB worked for this international hospital in China for ten years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Work with BP</td>
<td>One year (till the time of data collection – joined BPBJC in June, 2011 and worked on hospital evaluation programme).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position at BP</td>
<td>Manager – together with JW managing quality service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience living in other countries</td>
<td>None. BB has been to Thailand for holiday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 Information about BB

Then BB introduced briefly her previous experience working in international hospitals in China.

BB: “Actually our department is quite special in the hospital because we are
customer service department so we have many translator in our department like Russian, Korean, Japanese, Spanish speaking from Peru and Bolivia and Chinese. So we worked in the same department, we talked to each other in Chinese and English but we still need to learn some basic words of Japanese or Korean but it’s just for fun to keep very good relationship with our colleague. Or sometimes we can even help patient with the basic words, like we can ask Japanese patient can I have your passport doc and [laughs] they will understand. So it’s very interesting and it’s quite different. But we have like team meeting or event after work so I think it’s very good, our department is like mixed culture department but it’s very good environment.”

During the interview, BB elaborated on her work experience and suggested that difficulties in communication do exist but she felt this is due mainly to differences in positions and opinions, not differences arising from culture.

BB: “Of course yeah, of course, not only the colleagues but patient. I mean western patient is more like...let me think about some example for you. [laughs] Yeah I remember that when I worked night shift in the emergency room the doctor’s Australian and there was...a patient is like very weak, so we need to...according to the hospital policy we need to collect deposit before they see doctor, but the patient is very weak and he doesn’t have any friends or family member with him, so doctor needs to give him treatment urgently but our concern is about the money because that is the request from the hospital. So doctor was yelling in the emergency rooms that “don’t ask for money, we need to give them treatment first.” But I think it’s not about, um, language or culture, it’s about role because he’s doctor and we are administration staff. So it’s quite difficult but finally we collect the money from the patient and he get the right treatment at the right time, everything is like perfect. But during that time we have a very strong fight in the emergency room.”

When being asked about the difference between Chinese and Westerners at work, BB said “I think I’ve got used to it”. BB also suggested that she prefers working with a Western male manager like CD, rather than a Chinese female manager.

BB: “I think, ah, male western manager will be...better than a Chinese female manager, [laughs] from my experience because when I work in the hospital my managers all female and some of them had secretary experience so they are too like detailed, do you understand?...So I think CD is very good manager because I think the leadership they need to understand what they need to do is to get more resources for their staff, right, and...just manage it overall not every single issue... I think I prefer male leader, western.”

Finally, during the interview, BB mentioned that communication with CD has been very good and smooth. BB suggested that this is not only because CD spoke fluent
Chinese, but more importantly, because CD knows about Chinese culture and understands local situations.

BB: “I think so far the communication with CD is very good, at least it’s much better than the relationship between me and the previous manager in the hospital because she’s Bolivian so sometimes it’s quite hard to explain the issue in English because sometimes it’s just in China, it’s not about language, it’s about culture. But here in BP office CD has been here many, many years so he...it’s not about language, his Chinese is perfect and he understand China... For example, you know in the public hospital there are always long queue there, you have to wait at the pharmacy, the cashier desk. When we tell CD that it’s hard to squeeze foreigner in doctor schedule in public hospital he can understand, but in the international hospital I worked for sometimes they try to arrange a foreigner to see doctor in the public hospital but they don’t understand, they said go ahead please make an appointment for that foreigner in the public hospital, we told them no way, there’s no appointment for the public hospital, they don’t understand, they thought we pay them and then we can make an appointment in advance and make sure that the foreigner can access the facility to the doctor right away. But CD understand that, we don’t have to explain that to him...because he [CD] went to see doctor in public hospitals so he knows exactly the situation.”

4.4 Unit BJ3 - Weekly Company Meeting and Interview with CD

This section analyses two connected sets of Data, BJ-M-TEAM and BJ-I-CD, centered around a weekly meeting of the BPBJC team. The meeting data is analysed in section 4.4.1. The information obtained from interview with JW is discussed in section 4.4.2.

i. BJ-M-TEAM is a meeting, held by CD, the General Manager, and attended by most of the employees of BPBJC.

ii. BJ-I-CD is an interview with CD, after the meeting.

BJ-M-TEAM is a weekly company meeting held in the BPBJC office. The meeting is chaired by CD. Stipulated by CD, the purpose of this internal meeting is to discuss various operational issues including daily businesses, the staff training schedule in head office, the rewriting of the staff handbook, recruitment, and other IT and administrative issues.

In this section, two sets of data are analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about the participants is presented in the table below.

BJ-M-TEAM was conducted mainly in Chinese-Mandarin. All Chinese-Mandarin
discussion has been translated to English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
<th>Experience living/working in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>40-50, M, Danish/British (Grew up in Denmark), General Manager for China</td>
<td>17 years living and working in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>30 – 35, F, Chinese, Manager of Quality Evaluation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MG</td>
<td>30 – 35, F, Chinese, Manager (operation)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VK</td>
<td>30 – 35, F, Chinese, Manager (operation)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>35 - 40, F, Chinese, Finance Manager</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>25-30, F, Chinese, Office admin</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>30 – 35, M, Chinese, IT Manager</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Information about The Participants in Unit BJ3

4.4.1 Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)
As already discussed in this chapter, there is only one Danish person in attendance at BJ-M TEAM, CD, who is also the GM and the chair of the meeting. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking and their positions within companies, we would expect the following almost opposite characteristics to be present in communication between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. Polite, direct and open discussion from CD to Chinese employees.
ii. Very polite communication from all Chinese employees. Less direct and autonomous. Waiting for and following requests from CD.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI.

4.4.1.1 At the beginning of the meeting, CD mentioned the training schedule. This training had been planned but the time needed to be confirmed between BPBJC and the head office in the UK. CD’s communication in this passage is very open, direct and shows respect to employee’s own work schedule and opinion. He told the team directly about his own preference but also pointed out that it is not ‘just about himself’. He explained the situation and asked for the preferences of all involved in
the training program. The communication of Chinese employees including MG, BB and VK, are also very direct.

CD: Practically, 我们决定把英国的 training 往后推。哦...所以，机票什么时候要开始订。

Practically, we have decided to postpone training in the UK. Em...so, things like flight tickets need to be booked at some point.

MG: 已经定了往后推是吗?

Is it confirmed that we will postpone it?

CD: 肯定是要往后推，但是具体时间还没有定。今天下午会定。有两个可能性，一个是 7 月 4 号到 8 号，或是后面一个星期 7 月 11 到 15... 我个人希望是最后一个，但是...不只是我个人[Laughing]。这个是看什么时候最方便。我昨天问了 BPIHI 他们希望是哪个星期。然后我们自己看。BB, VK, MR, 你们这两个星期有什么 preference 吗?

It will definitely be postponed, but the exact time has not been decided. It will be decided this afternoon. There are two possibilities, one is from July 4th to 8th, the other one is the week after, from July 11th to 15th. Personally I will it will be in the week after, but...not just about myself [Laughing]. It depends on when is the most convenient. Yesterday I asked BPIHI which week they like. Then we will decide for ourselves. BB, VK, MR, what is your preference between these two weeks?

VK: 我应该没问题。

I should be ok.

CD: 应该没问题，ok。那我就是...BB, 你跟 PE 联系一下，确定一下她有没有 [preference]....

[You] should be ok, ok, then I... BB, you contact PE to confirm her [preference]...

BB: 啊，好。有可能后一个星期会好一点。就是 11 号那一周。

Ah...ok. Probably the week after would be better. The week of 11th.

CD: 对，对我个人来说。那是因为我家里的一些事情[Laughing]。所以不太会决定这个 training 的时间。如果其他人都是这样我们再看。

Yes, it would be good for me. That is because I have some family things [Laughing]. So I am unlikely to decide the time of training. We will see what other people prefer.

4.4.1.2 In this short passage, CD and Chinese staff talked about re-writing policy in the staff handbook. The communication of CD shows a high level of directness.

CD: Staff Handbook 呢，你们三个先做...包括 Staff Benefits 应该是怎么样。如果其他人有什么 input，就给 CS, LU 和 VK.

As for the Staff Handbook, you three start first, including the Staff Benefit. If anyone have input, give it to CS, LU and VK.

CS: 恩。

En.
VK: 因为我们现在已经做到那个 Leaves...
Because we have started doing the Leaves...
CD: 对，好...Ok, 行。对，这个 Leave 会有一些变化，比以前稍微少一点。
Yes, yes...ok, ok. Yes, the Leave will have some changes. It will be less than before.
[Team laugh together]
CD: 没有。会正规一些
No. It will just be more formal.

4.4.1.3 The team discussed the issue of a confidentiality check. The communication of CD shows respect toward Chinese employees’ opinion. The communication of Chinese employees, especially TL, shows initiative, ownership and autonomy.

CD: 还有一些 practical 的东西 documentation 做。我们要单独做一个 confidentiality 的东西。这个是保险公司的要求。TL, 这个 confidentiality, 你有什么 input, 你以前看过没有, 就是...
There are some further practical documentations to prepare. We need to have a separate thing about confidentiality. This is the requirement for insurance companies. TL, regarding this confidentiality, do you have any input? Have you seen any before...?

[Mobile phone ring]
TL: Sorry.
CD: 这个 confidentiality, 这个保密的东西,你有版本么? 还是我们要找律师做一个? 你不是说保险公司会要求比较严么
Do you have any sample (version) for this confidentiality [documentation]? Or shall we find a lawyer to prepare it? Didn’t you say that the requirements for insurance companies are more strict?
TL: 我们那个 200 多页的，先看一下吧。
We have one which is about 200 pages. Let’s have a look first.
CD: 那是整个 Policy。那个不只是保密，这是整个我们的 ...
That’s the complete Policy, not just the confidentiality part...
TL: 我原来有份银行的，但是 ... 那个 ... 我再看一下。
I have one from the bank, but...that one...I need to have a look again.
CD: 我有一份，那个 LS 以前给我做的。那我觉得这个东西你可能要看。
I have one which was prepared by LS. I think you may need to look at it.
TL: 现在就是有两个问题。一个是 Security 的东西。它有一个是 Operation 的一个 background 的调查，可能会需要。
There are two issues now. One is the Security documentation. Part of it is the background check for operation team which may be required.
CD: 什么 background 的调查?
What background check?
TL: 就是比如说这个员工，你的 operation 那边的平台那多了一个家庭背景的调查。
For example, for the staff, the operational side require a family
Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

As pointed out in Section 4.3.1, the IDV difference between the Danish and Chinese cultures is high. Based on Hofstede’s IDV ranking, we would expect at least the following characters in communication between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. High level of collectivism shown in the communication of Chinese employees.

ii. High level of individualism shown in the communication between CD and Chinese employees.

Communication in passages 4.4.1.1, 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.1.3 shows that CD’s communication is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish culture. CD is direct, task oriented and respects employee’s management/scheduling of their own work.

Unlike the support for IDV as provided in CD’s communication, BJ-M-TEAM does
not provide clear evidence for Chinese employees’ communication in the dimension of IDV.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and Danish cultures have very different rankings in the dimension of MAS. Chinese culture is scored 66 which is a masculine culture, and Danish culture is scored 16 which is a feminine culture. Based on Hofstede’s MAS ranking, we would expect at least the following characters in communication between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. Communication of CD shows that CD values life/work balance, equality and makes decision by involvement of and discussion with the team.

ii. Communication of Chinese staff shows that they are success driven.

Data in BJ-M-TEAM shows evidence that communication of CD is in line with the characteristics anticipated by Hofstede’s MAS ranking for Danish culture.

i. Emphasise work/life balance. In Passage 1, CD mentioned that he hoped to go to the UK later for family reasons. This does not directly imply that CD has a work/life balance. But this does show that CD has put effort in managing work and family life.

ii. Value equality and involve colleagues/employees in decision making.

The following passage provides further evidence.

4.4.1.4 When discussing HR issues in the meeting, CD announced that the company would recruit a new receptionist. He suggested that the receptionist would take over CS’s current work so that CS could do some more ‘qualified’ work.

CD: 到新办公室我们会专门加一个人在前台。她的 headcount 是从 Operations 出来，所以她也要做 providers, scan...之类的（工作）。所以 CS 可以做一些更 qualify 的工作。

We will add a person at reception after we move into the new office. Her headcount comes out of Operations. So she will need to do the providers, scan...that sort of work. In this way CS will be able to do some more ‘qualified’ work.

CS: Thanks! 谢谢！

Thanks!

CD: 所以这个我们要开始找。这个不需要很多的 experience。一个刚毕业的都可以，主要是应该会说英文。如果有认识的人可以推荐。认识的人一般都比较好。

So we will need to start to look for one [a receptionist]. This person doesn’t have to have lots of work experience. A fresh graduate will do. Able to speak English is important. If there is someone you know you can refer to us. Generally it is good to have someone we know.
Unlike the support of MAS as provided in CD’s communication, there is no clear evidence found in the communication of Chinese staff for the dimension of MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and Danish cultures have similar rankings in the dimension of UAI. They are both low uncertainty avoidance cultures. Chinese culture is scored 30 and Danish culture is scored 23 in this dimension. Based on Hofstede’s MAS ranking, we would expect at least the following characteristics to appear in communication between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. Less structured, flexible and comfortable with changes and uncertainty shown in CD’s communication.
ii. Flexible, comfortable with changes and ambiguity, and highly adaptable shown in Chinese staff’s communication.

Communication in passages 4.4.1.1, 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.1.3 around training schedule and the staff handbook issues show that both CD and Chinese staff are flexible, comfortable with changes and highly adaptable. This provides evidence showing both CD and Chinese staff’s communication in line with Hofstede’s classification for the dimension of UAI.

Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation (LTO)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and Danish cultures have very different rankings in the dimension of LTO. Chinese culture is scored 87 which is considered a very pragmatic culture, and Danish culture is scored 35 which is considered a normatic culture. Based on Hofstede’s LTO ranking, we would expect at least the following characteristics to be present in communication between CD and the Chinese employees.

i. Communication of Chinese staff showing flexibility, adaptive to change and show perseverance in achieving results.
ii. Communication of CD showing normative thinking and focusing on achieving quick results.

The passage below is the only evidence found in this data unit for the dimension of LTO.

4.4.1.5 During the meeting, CD and Chinese staff discussed the staff handbook. The communication of CD in this passage shows his consideration for the long term which is not in line with Hofstede’s ranking for Danish culture in the dimension of LTO.

CD: 我们要做一个真正的 Staff Handbook, 那我们 ... CS, LU 已经开始看这个东西。我们有香港的，但是这个有些东西不适合中国。然后，VK 带了一个可以参考的，但是那个有一点儿太...strict... 我不是很喜欢那个。[laughing] 如果有什么 Google, Siemens... 如果它们有什么员福利什么东西，拿过来看一下有什么比较 ...
We need to prepare a real Staff Handbook. CS and LU have started to look at it. We have the Hong Kong version, but there are something that are not suitable for China. Then, VK brought one which we could reference. But that one is a little bit too...strict... I don’t like it very much. [Laughing] If there are something like Staff Benefits from Google or Siemens, we can have a look.

CS: 西门子的是最好的。  The Siemens one is the best.

LU: 他们说进了西门子就可以养老了。  They say once you join Siemens you could retire.

[Team laughing together]

CD: 如果西门子是最好的，那我们觉得对就用。我们现在定的东西都是很长时间也要用的，所以要做的对，不要老改这个东西。

If the Siemens one is the best and we consider suitable, then we use it. The version we produce now will be used for a long time, so we should do it correctly, and we should not change it again and again.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

4.4.2 Analysis of Interview Data

The interview started with CD responding to my questions and then in the second half of the interview, CD further reflected on his experience working in China and talked about cross-cultural business communication and management. At the beginning of the interview, CD introduced his background and explained why he chose to study Chinese and came to live in China. CD’s background and experience in China is summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) A degree in Chinese studies from the University of Copenhagen. CD chose to study Chinese because: he wanted to get out of Denmark and study in another country; and there were very few people doing Chinese studies in Denmark at that time. CD spent most of the time in China while he was still enrolled in Copenhagen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) Did a one year management training programme in China sponsored by EU.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| iii) Studied Chinese for two and a half years in Chengdu, China. CD chose to study in Chengdu because there weren’t many Western people there. As CD described “If I’m in Beijing I’d
be ... with 3,000 foreign students who all speak English and all drink cheap beer and eat cheap food and have fun. If I do the same in Chengdu there would be no foreigners around. We were I think about 20 English speaking foreigners, the rest were Japanese and Korean, so Chinese was the language you had to function, both with the foreigners and with the Chinese.”

| Previous Jobs | i) Worked for an European medical group in China from 2002 to 2008.  
ii) Worked for another European medical assistance company in Shanghai from 2008 for two and a half years. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of Work with BP</td>
<td>Six months (till the time of this interview). Joined BP in November 2010 as the General Manager to set up a medical service company and to support all BP businesses in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position at BP</td>
<td>General Manager of BP’s consulting company in China.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Experience living in other countries | i) 17 years studying, living and working in China. Came to China the first time without knowing anything about China. Then traveled to China a few times before enrolled in the university in Chengdu.  
ii) The UK, Italy, China and other countries in Europe. According to CD: “I’m half Danish and half British, I have family in the UK, I have family in Denmark, my wife’s family is in Italy. There is a base in each of these countries. Of course stronger in Denmark than the UK or Italy where I haven’t lived. But it’s difficult for me to say now where is more home, here or Denmark.” |

Table 11 Information about CD

CD explained that he didn’t plan to stay in China for such a long time (17 years). CD considered that if China had not been so fast-changing, he wouldn’t be attracted to stay here for so long.

CD: “I never planned to stay that long. And I don’t have any plans for how long I will stay. We’re just setting up a new operation now that will take four, five years before that’s operational, or fully established and mature, and then we’ll have to see after that... I think if China had not been changing as fast as it had I probably wouldn’t have stayed that long, but what’s made the longer stay in China interesting is that China 17 years ago was very, very different from what it is today. If it had been 17 years ago what it is today, I would probably have left after a few years, and at the same time if I came in now and it didn’t change the next years I probably would also have left. ”

CD’s experience shows that he is comfortable with change, happy to confront unknown situations and does not have a strong need for structure or predictability, which is in line with Hofstede’s ranking for Danish culture in the dimension of UAI
During the interview, CD explained how works are organised at BPBJC and how employees are encouraged to pursue more suitable jobs. CD’s view shows a combination of the traits in the dimensions of MAS and UAI identified for Danish culture in Hofstede’s classification – value equality, less need for structure, comfort with changes. CD’s comment also indicates that workplace culture may vary depending on the size of the organisation. CS can be given the opportunity to do “more qualified works” because CD values equal opportunity for employees and more importantly because the small-size operation at BPBJC allows employees to pursue more suitable jobs.

CD: “This is a service company so it can afford being a little bit relaxed. ...If I had to go into a company where I had to be in a dark suit and tie everyday 9 to 5, I don’t – probably I could do it, but I wouldn’t enjoy it the same...”

CD: “Well, you have to know that all of these people here know me and they know that I forget, I am not going to get anything of this done if I was to do it, they have to do it, and the nice part is now because we are in the process of building up the company, everybody can define their own role. Everybody can take – I mean, if you take responsibility for something you own it and it’s yours... So if you want to be on the service team or the operational part, you can do that. If you want to be administrative, you can do that. I mean, CS is fed up with sitting at the reception, she wants to do something else. So we get another receptionist in and she will then get to the opportunity to choose what she wants to do. So, you can only do like that when you are small. You can only do like that in the start, once we reach a certain size, when we reach about 30, 30 plus staff, you can develop that culture then in your departments.”

CD also talked about BP as an international organisation and its operation in subsidiary companies. Although BP has a strong British corporate culture, CD felt that the operation in subsidiary companies is largely dependent on the local leadership, said that it “depends on the person”, and these companies’ work cultures are “localised”.

CD: “I think first of all, BP as a global company or as an international – we are not a big multi-national, we are only in nine countries with corporate entities - does not, I would say, have a very strong British corporate culture. The local companies are very local. ...if you go to the Hong Kong office there are very few western people working there now. It is pretty much all Hong Kong Chinese. ...The Indian operation is a new company, relatively new; started last year. All the staff, pretty much all the management apart from two, are Indian. So I say we have a strong UK identity and the British brand is
important, globally. I met all the managing directors in Beijing. They had a conference here last year and they are very, very different, and they all run their companies very, very differently and very much according to the local way of doing things. So, it very much depends on the person. So we have a global responsibility, but I will say that the culture, the work culture within the office is localised somewhat, but it depends on the management of each business unit.”

During the interview, I asked CD if he could tell me his opinion about cultural differences. CD answered:

CD: “What is the difference? If I could pinpoint that I would write books about it and be very, very rich. But of course there are differences but I think they are very difficult to define.”

Then CD elaborated on his experience working across cultures and summarised the dynamics of cultural differences at workplace which he felt may impact management.

i. City differences.

CD: “The differences, if you look at China first, the differences between cities, it is very different managing a team in Beijing from managing a team in Shanghai. It’s not a question of Beijing or Shanghai culture, but in Shanghai the costs are higher, the costs of living are higher; standard of livings are not really that much higher for the same type of position it is pretty much the same. So there is a lot more pressure on people in Shanghai. You can feel that. Also they are more say, mixed, who is from Shanghai, who is from outside. There is more migration into Shanghai than into Beijing, at least of the staff pool that you hire from, from international companies. So that’s one part.”

ii. Generation / age, language and originality

CD: “The next part is generational. Working in China with people, I’d say I’ve had staff all the way from just graduated up to 60 plus. Working with someone who is 50 to 60, working with someone in their 30s to 40s, working for something in their 20s to 30s is very, very different. ...so you have an age issue, you have a language issue – no, sorry, age issue and originality, geography.”

iii. Gender

CD: “Then you also have the gender issue. There are very different work ethics and work styles between men and women in China and it becomes very clear I think, especially in foreign companies, where you very often will see a higher proportion of female mid-level and top-level managers than you will see in
Chinese companies. Not because foreign companies hire differently but because foreign companies look at performance in a different way.”

iv. Personality

CD: “...when it is a small entity like this, there is very much a personality issue involved, and you heard when we had the short team meeting earlier. I mean we have to hire a receptionist. I prefer hiring people that are introduced. I don’t like advertising... I don’t like soliciting applications. If someone comes up and knocks on the door and asks if we have a job and the person has the right profile or is interesting, I have no problem, I will hire them right away. Otherwise I go through network and ask around…”

Considering the relation between national culture and corporate culture, CD suggested that while the national cultural value difference exists, companies also have their own cultures. He explained this by using Maersk (the Danish shipping and logistic company) as an example.

CD: “Maersk is very special for a Scandinavian company in having the same kind of – for many years that was the only company – there were only two companies in Denmark that had regulations about how you had to dress, that was Maersk and the Danish Bank in which Maersk owns a pretty big share. Scandinavia is a country where you will see CEOs go to work like this wearing their sports clothes, whatever, but not at Maersk. You would get fired for that at Maersk. There are lots of stories in Demark about Maersk. ...He [the “old Maersk” – the owner of the company] is tough. Apparently, the story is, I don’t know if it is true, that once he fired one of the lower rank. Because in front of the Maersk building in Copenhagen is this big lawn, and apparently he walked from one part of the building to another outside and crossed that lawn...it was hot. So he took his jacket off, not the tie, just the jacket, while he crossed the lawn and put it back on, but the old Maersk saw it from the window and fired him. It is a very good company to work for but you have to fit into that culture, and that is exactly why a company like Maersk has that culture because they have decided many, many years ago that we want people who fit into this.”

In the interview, CD suggested that the workplace is complex and dynamic. He suggested that we should not generalise or overuse cultural differences when attempting to understand workplace behavior and interaction.

CD: “…there are a lot of cultural issues, but again I wouldn’t say there is one Chinese cultural issue. Again, it depends on age, where people are from, gender... I think it’s very difficult to say. I mean, you have workplace politics, you have organisational internal issues in all cultures. It is very easy to
generalise and say that maybe foreigners do one thing.”

CD explained his opinion by comparing Chinese culture and European culture.

CD: “if you look at Europeans now, I mainly work with Northern Europeans and it’s very different if you go to Southern Europe. I have worked with Scandinavians, with Germans, Dutch, Belgium, this area, so North-Western Europe. But it’s very different when you go to France or Italy for example. Now Northern Europe is very individual, people are more - and it’s a question of the way its education is built up, more pro-active, more individual. …whereas in Southern Europe it’s much more hierarchical, and much more like I think the way I see traditional Chinese companies... If you look at China and compare it to Europe, it is pretty much the same size, with as diverse a population. And if you look at Europe you talk about Italian management style, French management style, German management style, you will have lots of people already defining the differences there. So there would be equally big differences in China.”

CD pointed out that companies in Asian countries may have a similar Confucian inspired culture which protects the “boss”, but he considered the same face issue and the protection of “CEO” also exist in Western corporations.

CD: “If there is one thing that I think is common in, not just China, but maybe East Asian management cultures, at least the Confucian inspired areas, so apart from China, Korea and Japan, one thing there maybe is, is the kind of the protection of the – it still goes back to the face issue, the protection of the CEO. So you will very often, number one, in a meeting, if a wrong decision is made the subordinate would be sacrificed, and sometimes that’s kind of a ritual sacrifice. But I think...if you look at a Western corporate organisation, it is exactly the same. I mean, the CEO always can wipe the blame off on middle-level management and get rid of that and survive until it becomes really biggish.”

CD further suggested that politics, networks and relationships exist in both Asian and Western cultures.

CD: “I have a friend in Japan that I used to visit a lot who spent quite a lot of time in Japan. Her father was a High Court judge and, I mean, whatever you needed was basically there, not because there was corruption, not that we would get things, but if you needed something, because as a High Court judge you know everybody or know someone in all fields of life and you meet up and exchange favours. Exactly as Guanchang [官场 network of government officials] in China, and I will say it was actually stronger in Japan than in China. But again if you look at the workplace with your inter-work – with you
political playings and relationships, I mean, it is exactly the same in the West, and I mean BP is an old, large company, this is a very political company, which is why I fit in well out here because I don’t fit into the big corporate structure.”

CD considered that Chinese companies and Chinese people are nowadays more risk-taking, target oriented and individualistic – they are not as collective and conservative as defined by some business and management studies.

CD: “...very often in literature on management in China you will see Chinese doing it. They are not individual, individualistic, they’re not risk-takers, and they don’t make decisions, which all of that is bullshit. ...but, because if you look at the way Chinese has developed, if you look at the way private Chinese entrepreneurs work, if you look at the way that in general workings even the state owned companies work, there are a lot of risk-takers, there are a lot of individual people out there doing crazy stuff and trying out things. I mean, lot of it is people trying first and they see how it goes, so I think it is very dangerous to try to generalise. You have targets in Chinese companies. I mean, very, very specific. This is the target you have to achieve. This means you have to – you measure on this and that. Most Chinese corporates today have that.”

CD further explained some recent social changes in China.

CD: “Some years ago you would have, not just in the workplace but in all aspects of life, you would have a large relationship, a network, the whole bunchy thing, but that again is becoming less and less dominant I would say, not just in the workplace. Relationships are important anywhere in the world. But in China 15 years ago, 10 years ago, there was a shortage of a lot of things. You could only get a job if you knew – or you could only get into university if you knew someone, you could only get a job if you knew someone, you could only get an apartment if you knew someone. Today, university is still difficult, jobs, less so, because the younger generations are getting smaller so actually there is a shortage of workers in some sectors and some areas. Now you can get a house if you have money. So you don’t need to rely on – and you feel that a lot of things are now available in a different way. It is more transparent, now we can buy things with money, you can access it in a different way, whereas before really the only way you could get it is through the back door. You still have a lot of back door, I mean, there will always be that, but it exists in the rest of the world also. It is more ritualised in China, and in Japan and in Korea.”

In the interview, I asked CD if he had experienced any disagreement or conflict in business communication that was caused by cultural differences. CD suggested that he had not had any face-to-face “upsetting or hostile arguments”, instead he had many
frustrating meetings which he considered caused by difference in expectations and a lack of thorough communication beforehand.

CD: “I haven’t really been in any upsetting or hostile arguments. I have been in lots of discussions and some of them quite animated, but not hostile. Normally when you have these meetings you have a number of people participating so very often someone will step in and kind of defuse, but I have never been in meetings I would say with negative discussions. I have been in a lot of very frustrating meetings but that is very much due to the fact that maybe the two sides have different expectations. So, not only what they are trying to achieve of the overall corporation…but also as to what is to be achieved out of this meeting, and it especially involves frustration on the part of the foreign side.”

CD explained in details that difference in expectation can be caused by lack of knowledge about the situation, having different agendas or expecting different outcomes.

CD: “No, as I say the frustration is equal [for the Chinese and foreign sides] but of course I have been more exposed to the foreign side, but it is especially relevant when you deal with companies that doesn’t have a presence here and they fly in, or they fly executives in, who has come in for a few days, have a few high-powered meeting, and they have an agenda of what they want to achieve. It is also something I experience at BP sometimes. They have an agenda of what they want to achieve at this meeting. But the opposite side does not necessarily have the same agenda, and is not informed of their agenda of the visiting party, and so maybe the visitor is expecting one outcome and the host is expecting something completely different, because the communication prior to the meeting has not been good enough.”

Reflecting on the unsuccessful discussion BPBJC had previously with a potential partner, CD recommend that before coming into a meeting, people should communicate to understand the meeting agenda and to align their expectations.

CD: “If you communicate an agenda and they don’t want to discuss this then obviously it is not the right partner, so why have the meeting? We don’t want to meet just for small talk every time. If they cannot make decisions, if you have given them the agenda up front and they say they can’t make a decision then they can come back with their revised agenda, and everybody knows what we can discuss, how far we can go and whether or not we can reach what our company can reach at that meeting. We have been through a series of very frustrating meetings with a potential partner over the last six months, and to a large extent the frustration has stemmed from the fact that we were at one stage in our planning and process, they were in another stage and so our
expectations were different, and because we had intermediaries it was very
difficult to align those expectations, and I think it is only now that we are
aligning them.”

CD further suggested that people have different workplace challenges, difficulties or
frustrations in different industries and businesses.

CD: “I would assume if you were sourcing, buying, having goods
manufactured, you probably would have a completely different set of potential
fields of argument because if I have had something produced and the quality is
not good enough or it is not ready on time, there is a very obvious issue and I
am upset because I am losing money and I want to be compensated, and the
other party will be upset because they will not make their margin, and then
there is plenty of space for very hostile arguments but I have not been in that
field.”

Furthermore, CD told me that he had not have any arguments during work time and
when talking to people face-to-face.

CD: “Most of the arguments I have had has been remote, it has been on the
phone, more when I have been – again when you do medical assistance, it is
very much if something happens now you have to solve it now. And if people
have promised to deliver a service and they have not been able to deliver then
I have had some. I have been - I have made, as I say, managers of
international clinics in Beijing, cry by shouting at them on the phone. I can be
very blunt and very direct and very, very unpleasant to deal with if I have to
but it has never been face to face, it has always been on the phone because it
has been at night or it has been at the weekend, it has been when cases have
happened, and they never happen 9 to 5.”

When I asked CD’s opinion about cultural differences at work places, he suggested
that the difference is difficult to describe.

CD: “I think also I’ve probably been here [China] too long, it’s very difficult
for me to say, to generalise on Chinese versus foreigners in the workplace.”

He considered that Chinese are in general more modest at workplace. But he wanted
to build up a company culture at BPBJC which is more active, dare to venture and
take up new responsibilities.

CD: “I would say one thing though where I see a difference. Where Chinese in
the workplace are a bit more modest, so whereas you will very often see -
again more back to a European tradition, “If I think I can do that, I’ll say,
‘Yeah, I can do that, no problem’, in order to get ahead and get up there.” But
my experience is that, in this context, if people are not sure they can do it, they will not stick their head out the same way always until they have a certain experience build-up, and what I want is I want people to take chances. I want people to take that jump and say, “Maybe I cannot do it, but I try anyway”. If I can develop that culture, then I am happy but that is more a question of the company and the team culture, it is nothing to do with local culture. Some people fit in and some people don’t fit, it will be the same in Europe or China.”

CD considered that management style and company cultures varied between Chinese companies.

CD: “There is a very big difference between how a stated-owned enterprise is managed, as to how are some of the young, new Chinese companies, whether large or small, are being managed. There is the entrepreneurs, they are self-taught, but then they have done all the MBAs, they have done all the things, and they are very structured. So you have these kind of companies in China, you have the old traditional state-owned companies, you have people with no education starting their own companies. If you go back a little bit to the early part of the reform period, the people who jumped ship [started their own business] basically and went out and set up small companies, admittedly, but they were the people who had the least to lose. Whereas when you are looking at the early 80s when the reform started a lot of people who secured state sector jobs, they were not the ones who went out and started up private companies and private business, it was the people with nothing to lose. It was the people who had no education, out of prison, and then they became rich of course.”

CD concluded that each organisation has its own “management style”. Among the Chinese companies, each one may have “a very unique culture”.

CD: “I think back to the management style, even with - I have dealt with most of the large Chinese insurance companies, and each of them has a very unique culture, China Life is one, PACC is different, Ping An is different again. Of course you have more of a hierarchy, you have more – let’s say for the senior management it is kind of a bigger position in China, visually, I mean. You have a bigger office, you have a bigger car, you have more secretaries, you have more drivers than you would probably see in Europe today, unless it is really large corporates, but when you go to the US you have a corporate jet if you are the CEO. There is still face issues and hierarchical issues, but I think it is disappearing actually, the privately-owned new companies founded by young entrepreneurs 10 to 15 years ago. It is very, very different. So, again, I would hesitate to say this, it is very distinct.”
Based on his experience living and working in different cultures, CD suggested that individuals in workplace should try to understand, accept and adapt to differences.

CD: “I spent time in other countries outside of Europe before coming to China. I spent about half a year in India, I spent about half a year in Bolivia. I’ve never had a culture shock. I mean, cultures are different, yes, and you watch and you learn and you adapt or accept at least that things are different. I’ve never had a problem with that. I’ve actually found it quite interesting.”

During the interview, CD gave his comments on health care, health insurance and aged care in China. According to CD, most of the hospitals in China are public. There is only a very limited number of private and “high-end expat-oriented” facilities. Clinically, all the main hospitals are “very, very good” – they range from “reasonably good, standard average European or US level, up to the state of art”. Administration of the hospitals is “fairly good”. Whereas, care and service in the hospitals is not on a European or US level – as CD explained “there’s simply not been a priority, it is only becoming a priority now” because “China has come from behind [the Europe and the US] and done a lot in a very short period of time”. The main problems of health care in China are insufficient capacity and lack of funding as the hospitals are financed by very limited government subsidies. CD considered that China will need to encourage private medical provision to provide clinical services in order to take up the care of the “20% of the population who can pay for their own treatment, or pay for private medical insurance that would sponsor private treatment”. Regarding health insurance, CD considered that it is not yet a mature business in China. The concept of private health insurance is still new in China since health insurance has been provided wholly by the government. Even till today, the four major private health insurance companies in China are still owned significantly by the government – “all of them are state related or state backed”. Regarding care for the elderly, CD suggested that there is an increasing focus in China on developing quality aged care facilities. Overall, CD considered that “hospitals, clinics, wellness, aged care, there’s great potential in all these sectors in China.”

In section 4.1, communication of JW demonstrates good knowledge about BP’s hospital evaluation programme and its cooperation with JCI. During this interview, CD also mentioned the meeting with JCI and explained further the purpose of the meeting.

CD: “I have not had any contact with JCI or exposure to JCI. But BPIHI has a corporation with JCI. JW has met with JCIM before. There are obvious synergies between the two companies, JW and JCIM have already touched base on that previously. So for me it was the first meeting, and it was the first meeting also with JCIGM on board. So taking it to a level where we can actually start talking business, whereas on JW and JCIM level previously it’s more been building a relationship, but now it’s like well, how do we take it
CD considered there were possibilities for BP and JCI to explore other ways of further cooperation. But he also suggested this will very much depend on JCIGM. CD’s reflection below shows that he was pleased to know that JCIGM was entrepreneurial and open-minded, and BP and JCI could have further meetings to discuss their future cooperation.

CD: “But it’s very much depending on the persons, if JCIGM hadn’t been, he’s very entrepreneurial, very business minded, has a very good outlook, he definitely knows the area. So it could go two ways basically, either it can be he’s a nice guy but he’s just looking at the accreditation business. In this case he was also I think very open minded we shall have to be in this market and ready to explore different ways of working. I like them both as persons, so that also meant that we moved further than otherwise we would. And we have a hospital evaluation programme which is important to us but it’s not moving as fast as I would like to see it. JCI is doing a more comprehensive thing, it’s their business. And they’re supporting us to do our evaluations programme. We might want to merge these to somewhere up the line if we want to have a closer affiliation, which would also help them, because again it’s difficult to sell an accreditation without, or it’s easier to sell if you have the tie in with insurers. And you can say well, if you’re accredited you will get a larger proportion of insurance, or you will get on to the insurance providers’ lists of approved hospitals for instance. So there’s a lot of synergies. JW sent a brief summary yesterday to our group medical team and to the BPIHI’s medical director, who is very, very positive and will want to meet with them when he is out here in July. So there will definitely be follow up meetings.”

A part of BPBJC’s functions is to support BPIHI (BP’s international health insurance business division) to provide services to customers in China. Therefore, CD and JW could get involved in the discussion with JCI. At the time of this interview, BPBJC was planning to expand in order to provide more support to BPIHI, as CD explained below.

CD: “The only business we have in China now is BPIHI, who has 8,000 members and policies that are sold abroad. And now in order to expand on that niche market has launched a product together with the Chinese insurer YC based in Shanghai where we are selling the same suite of products basically to expats and local high network individuals. The service operation we’re setting up now would be supporting initially just BPIHI business. So we’d be doing provider management, claims adjudication and some back office support for the international members. We’ll be doing the front end customer service in Chinese and English for the domestically sold policies. As well as the claims processing.”
4.5 Preliminary Conclusion

In this chapter, three units of data collected in Beijing have been analysed. The participants involved in this data are Chinese, Danish and American. Firstly, communication in business meetings was analysed based on Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value difference and the findings are summarised below.

i. Deviation of Chinese participants’ communication from Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of PDI. Evidence found in Unit BJ1, BJ2 and BJ3 shows that communication of Chinese participants (JW, BB, VK and TL) is not in line with Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in PDI.

ii. Evidence found in Unit BJ2 and Unit BJ3 showing communication of Danish participant (CD) is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish culture in the dimension of IDV. Evidence found in Unit BJ2 showing communication of Chinese participants (BB, MR and CS) is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of IDV.

iii. Deviation of one Chinese participant’s (VK) communication from Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of UAI. Evidence found in Unit BJ2 showing communication of VK is not in line with Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in UAI.

iv. Evidence found in Unit BJ2 showing communication of Danish participant (CD) and other Chinese participants (BB and CS) is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish and Chinese culture in the dimension of UAI.

v. Evidence found in Unit BJ3 showing communication of Danish participant (CD) is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish culture in the dimension of IDV.

vi. Evidence found in Unit BJ3 showing communication of Danish participant (CD) is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish culture in the dimension of MAS.

vii. Deviation of Danish participant’s (CD) communication from Hofstede’s classification for Danish culture in the dimension of LTO. Evidence found in Unit BJ3 showing communication of CD is not in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish culture in LTO.

viii. No evidence found for the dimension of IND.

In two interviews conducted, two Chinese participants (JW and BB) suggested that they did not face significant challenges when communicating and working with Westerners. One Chinese participant considered that personal experience, personality and difference in positions have more impact on management and communication than cultural differences. The other Chinese participant considered that challenges in communication can be caused by difference in positions, not just language or culture, and knowledge about local situations is very important for smooth communication in the workplace.
In the third interview, the Danish participant (CD) suggested that culture in the workplace is dynamic and that difference exists at a number of levels including city, gender, age/generation, language, originality, and personality – all these have impacts on business communication and management.

The Danish participant (CD) considered that although international firms have their own corporate cultures, their subsidiary companies may have their own unique cultures which are more localized and very much dependent on the local leadership style.

Reflecting on the meeting BJ-M-JCI, the Danish participant considered BP and JCI would explore more ways of cooperation, because JCI’s General Manager is entrepreneurial, flexible and open-minded.

The Danish participant (CD) also suggested that people should not exaggerate national cultural difference and should not explain everything by the difference in national cultural values. As he said, “It is very easy to generalise and say that maybe foreigners do one thing.”

The Danish participant pointed out that as a small-sized company, BPBJC can be flexible and encourage employees to try out new roles. Therefore, he wanted to build up a culture at BPBJC which is more active, adventurous and willing to take up new responsibilities.

The Danish participant (CD) reflected, based on his experience working in different cultures, that frustration in business communication is often caused by difference in expectations and a lack of thorough communication prior to the interaction, not difference in national cultural values.

The Danish participant (CD) advised that exposure to different cultures and experiences traveling, living and working in different cultures can help build up an open, receptive and adaptive attitude towards cultural differences which is important for communication and management in cross-cultural and international business.

As a consulting company, BPBJC’s functions include exploring the Chinese market, identifying possible business opportunities in health care and aged care, and providing services to BPIHI’s customers in China. In the interview, CD, the General Manager of BPBJC, explained the overall situation of health care, health insurance and aged care in China, as well as BP’s plan to expand its health insurance business by forming a partnership with a Chinese company in Shanghai. The next chapter will discuss fieldwork conducted in Shanghai with BPIHI’s China sales team.
CHAPTER FIVE: SHANGHAI DATA – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses data collected in Shanghai. This chapter has three sections, with each analysing one data unit including one meeting observed and one interview conducted after the meeting.

5.2 Unit SH1: Sales team meeting and interview with RB.
5.3 Unit SH2: Sales managers’ meeting and interview with MX.
5.4 Unit SH3: Meeting with a broker and interview with RE.

Each unit of data has the following format:

i. Introduction: Introducing content, structure of the unit, participants and codes used in analysis and information about participants.
ii. Analysis of meeting data.
iii. Analysis of interview data.

Shanghai data was collected in the office of YC, BPIHI’s partner company, in Shanghai, China. BPIHI is a business division of BP whose main function is to provide international health insurance services. BPIHI had reached a joint-venture agreement with YC, a Chinese insurance company. As CD explained in the interview (Section 4.3, Chapter 4), BP planned to expand its health insurance business by forming a partnership with a Chinese company. BPIHI and YC had recently launched their joint health insurance product in China. Participants in the data collection were staff of BPIHI and YC including SP, RE, RB and MX. SP and RE are BPIHI’s Sales Managers in China who report to RB. RB is BPIHI’s Sales Director of the Asia-Pacific Region. SP, RE and RB together form the China sales team of BPIHI. SP and RE work closely with MX, a Sales Manager at YC. RB, SP, RE and MX together represent the joint sales team of the BPIHI-YC partnership in China. RB, SP and RE are British. MX is the only Chinese in this team.

As explained in Chapter 3, the data analysis began with a review of the meeting data, screening it to find evidence relevant to the dimensions in Hofstede’s framework. The evidence found was listed and discussed to see if it was in line with the classifications and scores in Hofstede’s framework. Then, interview data was screened and reviewed to find evidence relevant to the findings from meeting data, and the reflections of interviewees on Chinese-Western business communication and management. The findings from the Shanghai data are summarised in the conclusion of this chapter.
5.2 Unit SH1 - Sales Team Meeting and Interview with RB

This section analyses two connected sets of data, SH-M-TEAM and SH-I-RB, centered around a meeting participated by all members of the BPIHI-YC sales team.

i. SH-M-TEAM is a meeting within BPIHI-YC sales team.
ii. SH-I-RB is an interview with RB, BPIHI’s Sales Director of Asia-Pacific Region, after the sales team meeting.

Stipulated by SP and RB, the key aims of the SH-M-TEAM meeting were:

i. To report to RB about current sales and promotional plans and activities.
ii. To discuss promotional strategies and the development of sales channels.
iii. To discuss relationships with brokers in China.
iv. To discuss reporting issues with the head office in Brighton, UK.
v. To discuss relevant Chinese government regulations.

In the first half of this meeting, the three British participants, RB, RE and SP, discussed the sales and promotional issues and relationships with brokers. MX joined the second half of this meeting.

In this section, two sets of data are analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about participants is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
<th>Experience working/living in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>40-50, M, British, Sales Director of Asia-Pacific, Four and a half years in Hong Kong and three years in Beijing before.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>30-35, F, British, Sales Manager, Spent childhood in Taiwan and speaks some Chinese-Mandarin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>25-30, M, British, Sales Manager, Two and a half years in China. About two years in Hong Kong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX</td>
<td>25-35, F, Chinese, Sales Manager, None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 Information about The Participants in Unit SH1
5.2.1 Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)

As pointed out in Section 4.2.1 (Chapter 4), the Power Distance Index measures the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Chinese culture’s PDI is high at 80, while British culture is just 35. Among the four meeting participants, RB is the most senior – he is the Sales Director of the Asia Pacific region. RE and SP work on similar roles but with difference focuses – RE is focused more on sales and broker relationships, while SP focuses on promotion, overall strategy and management. MX is the only Chinese participant in this meeting. Both SP and MX are females. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking and their positions within the company, we would expect the following characteristics to appear in their communication.

i. Polite, direct and open communication between RB, RE and SP.

ii. Very polite and less direct communication from MX to other participants.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI in the meeting communication.

5.2.1.1 At the beginning of the meeting, SP raised the issues which she would like to discuss in meeting. RE responded directly. In this conversation, both RE and SP are very open and direct. But RE’s communication is more resolute.

RE: So we’ve got to do this ten thousand life plan [A sales plan which targets at selling ten thousand YC-BPIHI insurance policies one year] at this brainstorm right?

SP: Yeah. What I thought would be useful this morning is, um, like two things I’d like to get out of it, one is the alignment of…just like how the different broker channels, obviously there are a lot more Chinese brokers coming on the scene now as we want to do trying to fast track, ‘cause China growth was very much about expat brokers and expat incumbent go for expats and I appreciate that there needs to be marketing funding behind all that and RE sent me through a couple of possible marketing proposals, and now we’ve got China fast track which is through a very different channel and a very different target group.

RE: And also my understanding is that China fast track is, you know, that’s what in theory would unlock the potential.

SP: Yeah and I think there are some benefits by doing China fast track which will impact China growth in a way but I just want to make sure they’re all aligned and I have to go and ask for money now for marketing and I want to make sure that the business understands very clearly that this is not from the same part as China growth because they need to throw some weight behind this.

RE: I mean, you know, on this marketing bit OK, I don’t think it should be
completely up to you to try and fathom out where the marketing spend should go to get this growth because now that ML’s on board I think you should recommend that when China fast track is launched as in we know exactly what the changes are...that day we spent in here I was very clear about exactly what we need to do, what we need to change, you know, those points. But today as I sit here I’m a bit confused as to how many of those points we are actually going to deliver. So my thinking is we need to see what we deliver and then as part of this ML on our team need to look at this as marketeers and we need to say look we need ten thousand lives, they need to get involved with this.

5.2.1.2 When they discussed sales and marketing issues, SP and RE firstly talked about the overall situation. RB also joined the discussion. Their communication in this passage is open, equal and direct, with no sign of a clear hierarchy. But the communication of RE and RB is more resolute.

RE: But we need to identify all of these though right, so the ones that you’ve mentioned still go in that we’ll get signed off.
RB: Yeah I mean we can’t complete discount the expat side of things. But now I understand that you understand that. I think things like this ‘iBuy’ thing [a marketing channel] I think it’s so straightforward and it’s already generated a large amount of business without us having to do anything. I think if we stuck the...advertised on a website, paid 500 a month, we’d start off doing three months, we expect to get this many lives, easy.
RE: Sorry are you gonna take us through these?
SP: I think we should like go through all of them and I’m trying to articulate them through a spreadsheet so I can get this into like a business case and ask for the money. I’ve got like marketing support from BPIHI, not ML directly because she’s got other priorities. But, um, now I just want to get some marketing initiatives going from July 1st because, you know, it’s...not just the marketing.
RE: I’m in agreement, I totally agree that if we’ve identified things locally let’s push for it, but I also think we’ve got to push back and say we want a proper marketing...we want somebody over here for marketing to at least...
RB: Someone’s got to come and have a look I think.
RE: ML I would push for as well at some point, you know.

5.2.1.3 During the meeting, their discussion moved from sales and marketing issues to the migration of customers from the old health insurance product to the new BPIHI-YC joint product. Their communication in this passage is still open and direct. Again, RB and RE’s communication is more resolute. While SP raised the issue in this conversation she largely stayed silent throughout the subsequent discussion.

RB: I’m gonna go and see one of our brokers RA which you can come along
too. I just need to have a catch up with them and discuss what’s going on with our migration stuff….
RE: Who’s that? [RB: DD bought.] OK I’ll come along as well and see DD.
…
SP: But we need to go through the list. Where I’m coming from is we’ve got so much pressure from compliance and YC, they’ve got to see a plan to get this done.
RE: The what sorry?
SP: The migration, we’re still talking about this migration.
RB: I think we need to sit down in front of that list, have you got all of those groups then? [RE: Yeah.] So we’ll sit down in front of that and we say OK for groups over a certain amount of lives I’ll deal with direct already, I’ll deal with personally, if there’s a broker involved then we have to refer it to the broker...
RE: Are you sure you want to deal directly with these?
RB: Yeah, for the big one…if there are… I mean I’m saying, you know, there are groups of twenty five, thirty plus which are direct already, there can’t be a huge amount of them…
RE: No I wouldn’t have thought so.
RB: …maybe ten and I think I should be emailing them all directly because there’s no point in us giving a broker the opportunity to give the business to someone else.
RE: I see what you mean, yeah, ‘cause there’s no one you trust enough to just completely focus on…
RB: There’s a balance, like SP was saying obviously we can’t do all of it because we just don’t have the resources, but for those groups I think we should…
RE: Well it’s your call, you’ll know so it’s your call.

5.2.1.4 In this passage, RE and RB discussed about relationship with brokers. PP, one of BPIHI’s biggest brokers had stopped supporting the sales of BPIHI’s product in China due to BPIHI’s servicing problem in China. RB tried to get some support from PP, using his personal relationship. RE and RB’s communication in the passage is open, direct, and equally strong.

RE: PP have stopped supporting us pretty much.
RB: Well yeah, instead of giving us thirty lives a month they’re giving us ten, and actually the rule in the office at the moment is don’t touch BPIHI until they sort their shit out. But I’ve spoken to a couple of the guys over a beer and said look I’d appreciate if you carried on supporting me so we’ve still got some business coming in through that way, but the official line in the office like I said is no not until they sort their servicing out which to be fair it’s difficult to argue with ‘cause you see some of the stuff they’re putting up at the moment.
RE: Is it DD who’s the main guy that will...
RB: For that kind of thing yeah, for the sales stuff.
RE: ...so I need to see DD while I’m here if that’s OK.
RB: He’s not around at the moment.
RE: ‘Cause I want to work out what we need to do other than...how do we get closure on this, do I get PC to speak to DD or...
RB: I mean it’s just things are just getting cocked up and getting lost and that sort of thing. ...other than telling them to pull their finger out and give priority to this business that’s coming in from China I don’t know what we can do.

5.2.1.5 In this passage, SP, RE and RB discussed online marketing promotions suggested by two brokers, MY and AB. RB, SP and RE’s communication in this passage is open and direct. But RB and RE’s opinions are more resolute.

SP: So why don’t we support both [marketing activities].
RB: I think at the end of the day we’re the ones paying for this right?
SP: Yeah we can support both ‘cause... I mean it’s five hundred quid a month, it’s not gonna break the bank, we can support both, and so AB is like safe in the knowledge that like no one’s getting cut out whatever, that’s fair.
RE: So what are AB doing and what are MY doing then?
RB: It seems to be exactly the same thing except...well they’re the ones that suggested this link...
SP: There would basically be two banner ads, I haven’t even seen the banner ads yet.
RE: But they both will have separate ads.
SP: We’re talking about just ads, like click through ads.
RB: It wouldn’t be anything to do with the broker, we would do it with the ‘iBuy Mama’[a marketing/sales channel] so we’d have an advert that clicks on that you go through to the Chinese equivalent of YouTube or it could go through to our email address ... 
RE: Or their website sort of thing.
RB: ...yeah on the ‘iBuy Mama’website, not on the AB website, not on the MY website.
RE: Got ya, OK, and they just both wanna do...
RB: They both want to do pretty much exactly the same thing, but we can do it and then tell them yeah, yeah we’ve done it but we can’t give exclusivity to you for these members.

5.2.1.6 Following their discussion in the previous passage, RB, RE and SP further discussed their relationships with AB and MY. BPIHI wanted to promote its own product through online marketing tools but not the brokers. Hence RE and RB were discussing how to carry out the promotion under the ownership of BPIHI without harming relationships with MY and AB. RB, SP and RE’s communication in this passage is all open and direct. RE is concerned about their relationship with AB.
While SP considered that MY knew Chinese market better than AB. Both RE and SP’s communication is strong.

RE: Well this is what we need to think about in terms of distribution management before we agree to both, we need to position this with LL.
RB: We can disagree to one, the better proposal, we’re paying for it, we say yes we’ve done it, we’ve also done this thing where you go through a link to...
RE: There’s no way we can agree to MY and not AB.
SP: Yeah but… I appreciate this, but ultimately what I see is the opportunity cast is all of your other business interests, like it’s a relationship pool, but in the Chinese market MY will do a much, much, much better job.
RE: I understand that but there’s a distribution management piece here.
SP: Yeah, so you let me know but...
RB: Well we can follow MY’s recommendation if that’s the best one, put all that stuff on the website and then just tell AB and MY separately that it’s been done.
RE: No we have to be up front with AB I think on this.
RB: It’s not gonna affect them in any way because we can’t give them exclusivity anyway...
RE: They’ll think we’re going behind their back, you know the issue they have with us.
RB: But it’s gonna be more business for them as well, and the fact is we can’t give exclusivity to one of these brokers...
RE: Yeah I know, but I think we should still over like a beer or whatever with LL say look, you know, other brokers are requesting the same thing.
RB: Oh yeah we need to let them know that.
SP: Yeah but MY are going to be writing advertorials and they’re going to be managing the whole sort of chat forum thing, these are all very, very entrenched ways of selling which is a lot more interesting than just the basic put through.
RB: On these little blogs or whatever there were the advertorials, would they have a link to MY’s website?
SP: We’re not allowed to, it has to be neutral.
RB: Fine yeah, that’s fine then I think.

5.2.1.7 Continuing on from their discussion in 5.2.1.6, this conversation focuses on the relationship between two brokers, MY and AB, and BP’s strategy in handling its clients once MY and BP separate from each other. RB, SP and RE’s communication is open and direct. RE’s communication is the strongest.

SP: When are they going to get divorced MY and AB?
RB: About two weeks after this is launched probably.
RE: I don’t think they will unless MY don’t want to, that’s the danger here for AB.
RB: So then what would we do if this relationship does break down, what do we do with the clients.
RE: Well we can’t do business with AB until they find a solution.
RB: So what would we do with the existing AB clients…?
RE: Well AB can’t do business with anyone then, so they will be the ones under the greatest pressure.
RB: So will we pass them over to MY those existing customers and let them...
RE: I don’t think…I think…put it this way, PA will find another solution quickly, he’s not just gonna stay offshore ‘cause he’s got portfolio with different companies, he has to be onshore, he would have to find another solution quickly…and if he didn’t then we’d have to have that conversation about these, you know, what do we do with the clients.
SP: Well you let me know ASAP, it’s the broker distribution relationship I appreciate that, but YC are very keen for us to start to think marketing wise in January ‘cause it’s been quiet since we launched...
RE: Don’t disagree...
SP: …and this is a quick way to put it on.
RE: …we’re not in disagreement here.

5.2.1.8 In this passage, SP, RE and RB discussed about the recruitment of a BDC (Business Development Consultant) for China market. This position will come out from the sales headcount hence will fall into RE’s responsibility. RB, SP and RE’s communication is open and direct. But power shifted to RE when he explained that this BDC will be under his responsibility. RE’s communication is the strongest in this passage.

SP: So are you saying that you would like to choose the Chinese person [the Business Development Consultant which BP plans to recruit for China market]?
RE: Say again?
SP: Would you like to choose the Chinese person?
RE: Well I’d like to be involved but I can’t, you know, I mean I think we need to...
RB: Us three and MX I think need to make the decision, it should be a local hire obviously.
RE: But it would be a sales head count ultimately so I need to be involved just to see the person.

5.2.1.9 In this passage, RE and SP discussed the distribution issue. RE and SP’s communication is direct and open. But RE’s communication is very strong and decisive.

SP: I mean like, you know, this is what I want to spend more of my time on RB, you know. I see it as interfering in your distribution channel, I don’t want to do
it but I’ve got all this pressure from head of compliance...
RE: It’s not interfering but it’s just...
SP: No I just...the thing is I can’t be spread so thinly, you know.
RE: But what you’re describing there is definitely under...well it’s under my remit, it’s distribution, and it’s like agreeing new distribution arrangements, that’s definitely, but it does cross over, let’s not dance around, ‘cause we’re developing China and it’s not a time to be precious, not time for me to be precious saying you’re stepping on toes OK, it’s not, that’s what my point was earlier; we just need to talk about everything we’re doing so we’re watertight. And I definitely think I need to go out and meet these characters just to do that ‘cause I will have to meet them regularly going forward if we can pull this off. I mean it sounds great, it sounds exactly the sort of thing...
SP: But I don’t know, it’s like I was told to come up with a distribution plan and...who signs this off, and I sent it to you and it’s like I don’t know like who owns distribution and like TI was like yeah I do, I agree this is great and then he’s like oh, like two weeks later get RB on board with this, and I don’t know, like we’re really running out of time. And like I’m being asked articulate ten thousand lives, break it down to individual and like company sales...[laughs] yeah.

5.2.1.10 MX joined the second half of this meeting. In this passage, they discussed the licensing problem. RB, MX and RE’s communication is very open and direct. But MX’s communication is stronger and more powerful.

RB: They’re part of the PP family basically, but I think when they first started off they were called GA weren’t they, that’s what the original business model was based on, and I think in China they’re licensed as GA.
MX: Why don’t they get like a broker licence in China?
... RE: So what’s the...just so I understand ‘cause I can speak to...
MX: Like AB... AB do not have a licence, AB use MY’s licence.
RE: Because I think for broker licence I think you have to put down a lot of [Money] deposit yeah or something I think otherwise they would do it.
RB: ...what I want to understand is what is the problem with the licence they have at the moment, why are we putting ourselves at risk by doing business with them because of the nature of their licence.
MX: Actually...we tell everywhere and CIC...we work with GA not PP.
RB: Right, that’s the only problem?
RE: So is it because we’re calling it PP?
RB: We’re not actually, we’re calling it GA.
MX: They still have like an email...it’s still with PP. I mean the government is not doing something it does not mean that they will...
RB: So is it the fact that they’re trading under a different name than GA?
Things like the email addresses, stuff like signs...
RE: Yeah I’m trying to understand…
MX: And also they’re still…GA is like a part time agency in China, actually for part time agency means that you have some other main business, right, this insurance is just a part time business, it’s not your full time business, but actually this is their whole business, something like that.
RE: So where is the risk then…
MX: The risk is you lose the Chinese licence…if the broker or agency doing something wrong they will punish the company…
RB: It’s actually the same company GA and PP.
MX: …different in this certificate. I think they know that.

5.2.1.11 Continuing their discussion of the licensing problem, SP, RE, RB and MX talked about the potential risks. RB, SP, MX and RE’s communication is open and direct. MX and RE speak more than other meeting participants and their communication is also more resolute than others.

MX: But it’s a little bit different is that…MY is the broker and so they have the broker licence to do business in China and…[MY] just use their own partner…GA, and they do a lot of offshore business which is forbidden in China. We cannot say that we are one hundred percent safe to work with GA…we’re still a little bit worried about that.
RB: Yeah that offshore business goes through the Hong Kong office, they’re not in the Chinese… I don’t know if that’s relevant.
MX: But, you know, every broker…everyone in this area, in this field…because of competition or something, what if someone report to CIC, we can never guarantee that…
RE: But how do we… just so I understand as well, so we are dealing with GA, that’s who we do business with, right. Is it YC’s responsibility then because we…GA have a part time agency so that’s fine, OK that’s not a problem, but the problem is you’re saying is the part time agency is really for companies or businesses that have another line of work and they do…
…
MX: Actually it’s… I cannot say it’s not our responsibility or it’s our responsibility, it’s the government’s responsibility, but until now no government go to there to have a look or to see what’s their main business…
RB: But how would we get in trouble then if it’s not our responsibility to know whether they’d have a…?
MX: No because the Chinese insurance market is not…the CIRC they know some rules, it’s brokers’ fault to cause the problem, they will punish the broker…and the insurance company…the CIC thinks not legal, it’s not legal…
RE: I understand, it’s the worry, it’s the unknown isn’t it ‘cause maybe we will get in trouble, maybe we won’t, but we don’t know.
MX: Yeah we don’t know, no one can guarantee that we will not be in
trouble ...
SP: But it's also we're not bringing the sales through the doors and LE can then say what is worth the risk is where we've got all those benefits coming out of it, but that's the problem.
RB: Especially recently.

5.2.1.12 In this passage, the participants discussed the migration of current clients to the new BPIHI-YC health insurance product. They also talked about sales volume. Communication of all participants is direct and open. However, MX expresses very sharply and strongly her opinion on these two issues.

SP: Yeah, and the same token the whole migration piece unfortunately was revealed that migration was taken out of scope for China growth about two years ago, so suddenly there is the expectation of LE that we are migrating like large volumes. Now I believe that in the long term we'll be migrating more and more, that at the moment we have these groups that we urgently need to migrate...
MX: ...cannot wait for one more day...
...
MX: And for direct sales... the only thing is that the sales number is very bad now, I'm just worried about it because... YC's not going to make a lot of profit from that, now LE is paying a lot of attention... where he lose his... we will have no one to support us from YC.
RE: This is why China fast track is so important as well isn't it because that's basically why we're saying we need it 'cause that will unlock the business.
...
MX: ...whatever is... I mean... make all sales looks good. This is the key point.
RB: It's a tricky position though, a lot of these groups I think will make a fuss, I think a lot of them just have a negative opinion of dealing with Chinese companies, so we've got to try...

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and British cultures have almost completely opposite rankings in the dimension of IDV. Chinese culture is scored 20, a highly collectivist culture; while British culture is scored 89, a highly individualistic culture. Apart from MX who is Chinese, all meeting participants are British. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to be present in their communication.

i. High level of collectivism shown in the communication of MX.
ii. High level of individualism shown in the communication of RB, SP and RE.

Unlike the evidence for PDI as provided above, data in SH-M-TEAM does not show evidence of collectivism or individualism. Instead, the following passages show evidence of workplace alignment.
5.2.1.13 In this passage, RE and SP discussed sales and promotion issues. In their conversation, both RE and SP were trying to align with each other.

RE: It just worries me a bit because China and Australia are number 1 and 2 markets for the whole of the business and I know marketing, I’ve been through a restructure and that won’t be completed until July something. But I think if we’re going to such a big project it shouldn’t all have to rest on your shoulders to come up with a whole plan for this.
SP: No but it’s not though, it’s not because I’ve got this guy in marketing, I’ve got GD, I’ve got you guys. We’ve also got our brokers who’ve come through with good articulated marketing plans with projections so that makes it a lot more straightforward when we ask for money because we’re detailing what’s our China investment of doing this marketing initiative. We’re also coming into quarter 3 of this year, we have to go for marketing things that will give us quick wins and a lot of that is web based and we know this.

5.2.1.14 In this passage, SP and RE discussed issues that they needed to report to the UK head office, including the recruitment of a Chinese BDC (Business Development Consultant). Again, both SP and RE’s communication shows that they are trying to align with each other on the reporting issue.

SP: We’ve got to be sort of strategic about this, and my role here has been defined to an extent but it’s very new because we have this whole commissioning thing now, and so I’ve got to sort of strategically build something that I can hand it over to sales. So yeah I am encroaching your territory a bit but, you know, we all want the end goal, right. And I have like the really annoying job of having to articulate this to the business, a business that only sees numbers, they are very, very transactional about this, whereas your business is all about relationships and relationship building. It’s about looking someone in the eye, having the decency to say like LL, like we’ve got this other thing on the Chinese broker, we’re going to sort this out. So we have to come to some kind of compromise and also my head is on this as well, you know, I need to set something out that’s going to give quick returns in the first year and I can hand it over, it’s a new thing.
RE: It’s not the encroachment, it’s that we need to be watertight us three on this, on everything we’re doing because if we’re not it’ll be problems because it’s not just this, us, there’s actually new Directors in and, you know, they’re having a bun fight, I don’t know when it is, in the next couple of weeks about exactly how they carve up their own responsibilities and stuff. So I think we just need to be watertight on what it is. So if IM speaks to me I can say well this is what we want, a, b, c, we want to this, and if similar speaks to you you give exactly the same answer, you know, that’s just our responsibility I mean. But anyway, so on the BDC thing then just to close it off, that will go into this
Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and British cultures have the same ranking in the dimension of MAS. Both cultures are scored 66 which indicates that they are success driven. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to be present in their communication.

i. Highly success driven.

Data in SH-M-TEAM shows evidence in line with Hofstede’s classification of Chinese and British culture in the dimension of MAS. For example, in passage 5.2.1.2 which has been discussed in the dimension of PDI, SP, RE and RB agreed that they needed marketing promotions to support sales. RB, SP and RE’s communication in this passage shows that they are all target driven and they are willing to ask and push for help when needed. As evidenced in the following communication between RE and RB.

RE: I’m in agreement, I totally agree that if we’ve identified things locally let’s push for it, but I also think we’ve got to push back and say…we want somebody over here for marketing to at least…
RB: Someone’s got to come and have a look I think.
RE: ML I would push for as well at some point, you know.

Passage 5.2.1.12 which has been discussed previously, also shows evidence for the dimension of MAS. In this passage, SP, MX, RE and RB discussed the migration of customers to the new product. The communication of MX reveals that she is highly success driven. This is particularly evident in the following exchange:

MX: …cannot wait for one more day…
…
MX: And for direct sales… the only thing is that the sales number is very bad now…
…
MX: …whatever is…I mean…make all sales looks good. This is the key point.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for UAI.

Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation (LTO)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and British cultures have different rankings in the dimension of LTO. Chinese culture is scored 87, a normative culture with long-term orientation. British culture is scored 51, which is regarded as intermediate because “dominant preference in British culture cannot be determined”. Based on Hofstede’s LTO ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to be present in their
i. Long-term oriented, strong propensity to prepare for the future, and perseverance in achieving results in the communication of MX.

ii. No clear evidence in the communication of RB, SP and RE in this dimension.

Data in SH-M-TEAM shows evidence not in line with Hofstede’s classification of British culture in the dimension of LTO. The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of LTO.

5.2.1.15 In this passage, SP, RE and RB discussed two problems: BPIHI not having insurance underwriting, nor CMS (Customer Relationship Services) in China. These problems have negative impacts on the sales of BPIHI products through brokers in China. RB’s communication in this passage shows that he is long-term oriented, not just focused on resolving the current problem.

SP: We need to have underwriting in this country.
RE: What I think...we can't wait for CMS, if they’ve really stopped business like that we need to do something like now, someone needs to take ownership in Brighton like to account manage this...you know.
RB: GR’s been very good, you know, we’ve been compiling that list of problems and sending them over to him and he’s sort of taking it on board, and I’m sure in the short term he can help deal with these sort of things on a case by case basis...
RE: Yeah, so what we need...you’re right, he is good...but what we need is somebody senior to pick up the phone to DD from Brighton and say look, I know you’ve got issues at the moment, this is what we’re doing, we’ve got GR who blah, blah, blah, does this, dah, dah, dah, does this, so we’re now on your case, start supporting us again and we’ll, you know.
RB: If I do that right now and things haven’t sorted out then...cry wolf and they won’t touch us again.

5.2.1.16 In this passage, RE and SP talked about the need for more sales people to join the team and share some of the team’s workload. RE and SP’s communication shows that they are long-term oriented.

RE: That’s why we need a Chinese BDC up to speed as well to help, you know, that person can then help train these people can’t they. I mean it’s not gonna happen in the short term but once they’re in place that would...
SP: Yeah. I mean MX and I were speaking about this, like it’s almost...the next six months there is like a real...I’m doing like a hundred a day plan ‘cause it has to be transitional and there’s that succession planning, we’re phasing people into the business doing certain roles and as the business matures a bit we may need like someone else and we’ve really got to look at it like this because we can’t get RE stretching from expat brokers and dealing with
Brighton stretching all the way back dealing with Chinese brokers and dealing with and the YC office. Just like as capable as you are that’s too much of an ask so we’ve got to pad this out with people who are being smart about it. I mean the demands on your time this summer if you are going to do like all the migration, all the broker training, keep Pacific Prime happy, blah, blah, blah, you will have no life.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

5.2.2 Analysis of Interview Data

The interview started with RB responding to my questions and then in the second half of the interview, RB further reflected on his experience working in international business and talked about cross-cultural business communication and management. At the beginning of the interview, RB firstly gave information about himself and his family which is summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position at BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience living in other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 Information about RB

Then RB elaborated on his experience working across cultures and explained his opinions about cultural differences. He suggested that people should not over emphasise or generalise on cultural difference. Difference at the individual level is also important for business communication.

RB: “I’ve put a lot of thought to this [cultural differences]... I think the mistake is to generalise when you’re talking about this topic because, you know, if you look at say Hong Kong brokers you’ve also got to look at individuals who are different like with any background, so western brokers individuals are different, one broker might be different from another, you know, so it’s really difficult to try and understand what the common sort of theme might be running through like a western broker or a Chinese broker, you know, rather than what the individual people’s kind of way of working is like. But what I do see in Hong Kong is that people tend to work very late at night, local brokers. But also what I’ve seen is that the level of detail that Hong
Kong brokers and individuals like to go into is really minute detail, go into the real fine detail, and that's a big difference between like the western brokers that I deal with…or find it very easier to go to say yeah let's not worry about that, park that to one side and are able to just not worry if things are not a hundred percent right. But in Hong Kong and I suspect in China as well is every bit of detail is gone through and worked on which takes times.”

Then, RB compared cultural differences at workplace between China, Hong Kong and the West.

i. Difference in expectations

RB: “There's different expectations. I mean if you put the language aside which sometimes can be a bit of a challenge there are different expectations. I find brokers in Hong Kong, China and Singapore, local brokers, expect things to be done more quickly than say western brokers. Western brokers will still demand things but they may be a little bit more understanding if you explain that it might not be ready straight away or whatever it is, so expectations are a little bit different.”

ii. Difference in attention to detail

RB: “I think there's a cultural difference there about having to make sure every detail is right, and I think if you dig really deep there's maybe a lack of trust somewhere because I think there have been more companies and businesses that cheat people in the past in this part of the world than maybe in the west because regulations came into play many years ago, a long time ago in the west which helps to control this. And so people in the west generally have a trust just in their mind like yeah they can't possibly be cheating a company that big or this kind of mentality. But I don't think people in China have that level of trust and so I think that is part of the reason why they have to go through every bit of detail. I find it in my own team in Hong Kong, like my office manager that works for me will go through things in the minutest of detail, and actually for me sometimes that can be quite difficult to work with because I'm the opposite, and that's just one of the examples.”

In RB’s view, Chinese people, especially Hong Kong Chinese pay high attention to all details which is, in his understanding, due to the “fear of making a mistake” or the fear of losing their job.

RB: “Actually I think in Hong Kong in particular it's done out of fear rather than confidence, so I think it's a fear of making a mistake because it's quite an aggressive way of working in Hong Kong is that people are scared to make a mistake because I think they will almost consider that they will lose their job
or something like this. And actually when I’ve seen how local kind of people are managed I understand why they think that way because sometimes it’s very harsh the way people are managed.”

iii. Difference when working in the “grey area”. Western people are more comfortable working in the “grey zone”.

RB: “I think there’s another point here as well OK, in my experience mainly in Hong Kong working that I’ve kind of discovered that local people feel uncomfortable working in a grey area. They’re very good at following a list of rules, so they feel very happy if they understand like these are the rules or this is how to do things in black and white. Any grey area in between and they feel uncomfortable to make their own decisions. And that’s where I find actually western people operate in more comfort is actually in the grey zone, and perhaps less comfortable in the bit where everything is in black and white. And I’ve spoken to my wife about this before because this kind of example comes up quite a lot because I find myself being involved in things at work that I think actually you can deal with that, don’t worry about it, make the decision, but they won’t. And my wife will say the way she was brought up at school as well is how everything is quite rigid and the learning process is just keep reading the same thing until you remember it word for word, and this type of mentality almost comes in that you have to be rigid and just follow exactly what the rules say. You know, I might be exaggerating a little bit but this type of situation can come up.”

RB suggested that there is the need for checking and digging information when communicating across cultures, in order to ensure accurate understanding.

RB: “[In the meeting] RE probably making sure and MX making sure that they both understand each other because in the past, you know, there’s been miscommunication. I think that’s one point so it’s like almost going over the top in trying to make sure we both exactly understand what each other is saying. I think that’s one point. The other point I found is that sometimes you have to do or I have to do a lot of digging if I’m speaking to maybe a Chinese business person to really understand what they are really thinking, whereas a western broker or business person will probably find it more comfortable to come out straight away with what the issues are or what any problems are, and sometimes you have to really dig because they might not feel comfortable in coming out with problems or their own thinking straight away. It does vary from person to person, as I say we’ve got to be careful not to generalize here.”

RB considered that his strategy of working between Chinese and Western cultures is to try to adapt to Chinese culture and to find “a middle ground”.

102
RB: “I’m a westerner representing a western company in China, I have to learn how people are here, it’s not right for me to try and put my way of working and stamp that onto people here. I think we need to be mindful of how things are done here and trying to maybe adapt and maybe try and find a middle ground. When we find the middle ground I think that’s where you can do business ‘cause you understand each other a bit.”

Elaborated on BPIHI’s strategy for the Chinese market, RB further explained his view of finding “a middle ground”.

RB: “I think the point is we cannot just come into China with the same mentality and the same way of doing things and expect big results. And the bit we were talking about [in the meeting] was one of the possible distribution arrangements we have is to pitch our product as a lifestyle choice, you know, and it linked to this health card through one of these brokers. And the issue is that what MX was saying is that when we train their distribution who will be selling these products we need to train them not the way we have always done our training, we have to train them differently, because the way we’ve always done our training is this is the product, these are the features, these are the benefits, you know, and that is the product. Where actually what she’s saying is we need to think about this slightly differently so that we’re highlighting what it really means to you from a lifestyle perspective if you have this product, and it is not about the detail in the table of benefits, it’s a wider thing. So that was the point she made and I agree with that so it’s trying to find middle ground. I don’t think we can either be very British about it or very Chinese, I think it’s in the middle that we need to find.”

RB emphasised that a flexible personality is important when working in international business. He suggested that for Westerners to work in China, flexibility is important, not only in communication, but also in adapting to different aspects of daily life.

RB: “I’ve seen people when I recruit or when I’ve got somebody like RE here, it’s probably more important than previous experience to look at how flexible somebody is as a person because I’ve seen a lot of people come into China to do a job and then leave three weeks later and it’s because they’re not flexible enough, not just in business meetings which they find difficult because they can’t adapt and be flexible, but just in the way of life here. That’s a big part of it as well is appreciating how things are done here, what’s important to people here like food, and the whole kind of culture that’s very important as well and etiquette and protocol which can unfold a business meeting. I’ve seen it before where you can have maybe a good business meeting and you go for a lunch and if somebody from the west is still not thinking and understanding how you have lunch around a big table, some of the small points, or what you say, it can actually still cause damage at that point.”
5.3 Unit SH2 - Sales Managers Meeting and Interview with MX

This section analyses two connected sets of data, SH-M-SALES and SH-I-MX, centered around a meeting between RE and MX.

i. SH-M-SALES is a meeting, between RE, BPIHI’s Sales Manager and MX, YC’s Sales Manager.

ii. SH-I-MX is an interview with MX, after the meeting.

Stipulated by RE and MX, the key aims of this meeting were:

i. To discuss the migration of customers from the current BPIHI health insurance product to the new BPIHI-YC joint product.

ii. To discuss relevant Chinese government regulations.

In this section, two sets of data were analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about participants is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Gender Nationality Position Experience working/living in other cultures/countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE 25-30 M British Sales Manager Two and a half years in China. About two years in Hong Kong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX 25-35 F Chinese-American Mid-level Manager None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 Information about The Participants in Unit SH2

5.3.1 Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s framework

Power Distance (PDI)

As pointed out in Section 5.2.1, the PDI difference between the British and Chinese cultures is high. Although they are both Sales Managers, there are gender and nationality differences – RE is a male Westerner and MX is a Chinese female. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to appear in their communication.

i. Direct and open communication from RE.

ii. Modest and polite communication from MX. Less open and direct.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI in the meeting communication.

5.3.1.1 At the beginning of the meeting, RE and MX discussed renewing customer
memberships. RE is more experienced with international insurance business and more familiar with the product and foreign brokers. RE and MX’s communication is equally open and direct.

MX: OK how much we should...which one we want to do direct business?
RE: I think we should yeah separate them between broked and direct business and then in terms of size.
MX: There’s not so many brokers, I looked through this list very carefully, there’s a couple want direct business first, OK?
RE: Ok.
MX: First, more than twenty lives [people covered by insurance policies].
RE: I’ll contact directly.
MX: Second, it’s in Shanghai?
RE: Yeah if it’s in Shanghai and they’re an expat group then I think they should be referred to somebody like DB.
MX: I mean for more than twenty lives and located in Shanghai we will take care as direct?
RE: Sorry it’s direct yes. So I will email them if they’re expats. If they’re Chinese nationals then I think it’s best that you guys email them directly, OK?
MX: Ok, yeah.

5.3.1.2 RE and MX then discussed if they should give a Chinese customer to a broker. RE wanted to suggest ST. MX directly expressed her disagreement. MX’s communication is stronger in this passage. Both RE and MX’s communication is open and direct.

RE: Well he’s Chinese, maybe we could give him to a broker like IM, the ones, the dental clinic. If you send an email to...
MX: ST. No.
RE: Why not?
MX: I don’t think it’s a good idea. We cannot give this one to this broker, because it’s all very small group and the broker don’t has the motivation to work very hard to get all this business to us, not easy, it’s not a good idea to give this...and we just give like OW total member lives like twenty or thirty.
RE: I think they will, they’re hungry for the business, they want whatever they can get.
MX: But I don’t think ST...
RE: OK well if you don’t think, you know, you know ST better than I do, if you don’t think ST’s the right person to deal with...
MX: At this moment.
RE: Fine.

5.3.1.3 When discussing about their brokers, RE and MX had the following conversation. It is clear that RE tried to align with MX’s opinion about selecting the
brokers. The communication of both is very open and direct. MX’s communication is especially sharp and strong.

RE: It’s up to you, you know, if you’re happy with it then fine but obviously I need to take your considerations into account and if you were not happy about it then I wouldn’t give them the business.
MX: Look I’m happy with any broker who can maximize the renewal.

5.3.1.4 In this passage, RE and MX discussed the Chinese government’s regulation for insurance companies. The regulation does not allow companies in China to sell overseas insurance products in China. On this ‘principle’ issue, MX expressed her opinion sharply and firmly. RE’s response to MX shows respect and understanding. Both of their communication is open and direct. MX’s communication is more resolute.

MX: I think for offshore business…we have to have our principles, REALLY! [MX raises voice] I’m serious, BPIHI cannot do anymore offshore company business. Some individual offshore business maybe it’s very different culture. But for company business, never…never do this in China anymore! …Because CIRC called our Chairman. You work with BPIHI, you should be careful!
RE: Okay, Okay.
MX: We are under a lot of pressure.
RE: Yeah well if necessary then we will put pressure on these groups to go onshore and we will explain to them that if they don’t then they are breaking the law. Is that the case, they’re breaking the law?
MX: Yeah.
RE: OK well then we have a responsibility to let them know that. And these group secretaries, if they’re sensible people will respect that fact and go along with what we’re suggesting. Right? …I think we need a list of all the groups that are renewing between now and...
MX: OK. There are something…don’t feel like upset, MX’ crazy, something. [RE laughing] But for this matter I’m serious, really...
RE: I know it’s very important.

5.3.1.5 In this passage, RE and MX continued their discussion about relevant regulation. MX readdressed strongly that BPIHI and YC could not sell overseas insurance product. RE tried to tell MX that they need to have BPIHI’s head office understand fully about the regulation. MX’s Communication is very strong and direct. RE’s communication is clear and straight forward. MX’s communication is more resolute.

MX: …they are already here so I don’t care whether we lose this client or not, but no offshore company business [MX raises her voice], this is very important.
RE: I think what the bottom line is that these groups do not take out the onshore plan then they’re breaking the law, so we have a responsibility to let these people know what the situation is and to transfer them onto a legal plan that’s regulated by the CIRC in China, right? So if the people in BPIHI, you know, don’t let you wipe your bottom unless you use regulated toilet paper then how can they allow this to be skipped over. If compliance saw this I’m sure they would be, you know, we’ve got to do something about this. And what amazed me was how we got an email from somebody saying oh yeah but it’s difficult because of this, the fact is that these people will be breaking the law and I think that’s how we have to position it with them, so we will be in trouble, our partnership with YC will be in trouble if we don’t do this so we’ve just got to find a way and we’ve been managing that.

MX: If we really lose a company like more than fifty lives [people covered by the insurance policy] because they don’t want to work with YC-BPIHI…I mean BPIHI lose this client. If you need to provide explanation to RB or to…whatever I can provide this explanation to them.

RE: Just say that we...

MX: …this is a bottom line and this is the rule…we will never break it, we will never cross this line.

RE: Fine, yeah fine. I’m with you but you’ve got to position it with the UK and with our customers as if we don’t do this it’s illegal, you have to do it, OK? And you’ll still be getting the same servicing, you’ll still be able to speak to the same people, nothing will change.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and British cultures have almost completely opposite rankings in the dimension of IDV. Chinese culture is scored 20, a highly collectivist culture; while British culture is scored 89, a highly individualistic culture. Based on Hofstede’s IDV ranking, we would expect the following almost opposite characteristics to be present in communication between RE and MX.

i. High level of collectivism shown in communication of MX.
ii. High level of individualism shown in communication of RE.

Data in SH-M-SALES does not show clear evidence of collectivism or individualism. The communication of RE and MX in the meeting shows evidence of workplace alignment. For example, in passage 5.3.1.3 discussed previously, RE tried to align with MX by saying “if you’re happy with it then fine but obviously I need to take your considerations into account and if you were not happy about it then I wouldn’t give them the business”. In the following passage, MX tried to align with RE by saying “even though I think I work for BPIHI”.

5.3.1.6 In this passage MX attempts to explain to RE the targets that she needs to meet for YC. MX tries to align with RE by explaining her position in relation to both BPIHI and YC. RE’s response shows understanding and the same attempt to align
with MX.

MX: So the only thing... even though I think I’m working for BP but I’m still an employee of YC, I have to try to maximize or pass the benefit here, so all these migration is my first and most important target.

RE: Yeah. But it’s our target as well, OK, I want to do everything I can to get all this stuff on shore, not just for you guys, but being selfish for me because that’s my target as well so I’m incentivized to get this done, OK? ‘cause my target is China, these go onto my China targets.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
In Hofstede’s framework, both China and the UK are masculine societies. With the same score of 66, both cultures are success driven. Based on Hofstede’s MAS ranking, we could expect the following characteristics to be present in communication between RE and MX.

i. Highly success driven.

Passage 5.3.1.3 which was discussed in the dimension of PDI, also shows evidence for the dimension of MAS. It shows clearly that MX is highly target driven, which is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of MAS.

Passage 5.2.1.6 which was discussed in the dimension of PDI, also shows evidence for the dimension of MAS. It shows that RE is also highly target driven, which is in line with Hofstede’s classification for British culture in the dimension of MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for UAI.

Long-term Orientation (LTO)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for LTO.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
In Hofstede’s framework, Chinese and British cultures have opposite rankings in the dimension of IND. Chinese culture is scored 24, a very restrained culture which does not emphasise leisure and indulgence. British culture is scored 68, an indulging culture which emphasises leisure and enjoyment. Based on Hofstede’s IND ranking, we could expect the following characteristics to be presented in communication between RE and MX.

i. Hard working and happy to sacrifice leisure time for work in MX’s communication.

Data in SH-M-SALES shows evidence that MX’ communication is in line with
Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture. RE’s communication in the following passage shows that he appreciates life-and-work balance but this cannot be regarded as evidence for indulgence.

5.3.1.7 In this passage, RE and MX talked about ED [a Chinese broker]. ED once called RE at 11.30pm on a Sunday night, for an issue that was not very urgent. RE found this annoying. However MX thought that ED was hard-working and she liked this broker for his dedication.

RE: OK well I need to complain to him [ED’s superior at MY] about ED.
MX: No, ED work very hard.
RE: As long as he works hard that’s fine, but he can’t call me at 11. This bloke calls me at 11.30 on a Sunday night.
MX: No he work very hard and even though our service is very bad until now and he complain a lot and he still keep giving business to us. And he worked really very hard, he emailed us, sent a short message...and unfortunately he sent a short message to RE at 11 o’clock in evening.
RE: Not just one, he doesn’t call me during the week, he only calls me at the weekends late at night.
MX: He also call me. [laughs]
RE: He needs to understand that there are limits.
MX: I just wonder what you become very crazy person.
RE: Depends when it is, if it’s 8 o’clock then it’s fine, if it’s 11.30 at night that’s too late.
MX: What if it’s something urgent?
RE: Somebody’s dying, yeah OK you can call me at 11.30, but if you want a membership pack then no. I’m never gonna agree with you on this.

5.3.2 Analysis of Interview Data

In the interview, MX explained in detail her background and work experience which is summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Information</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>Henan Province, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Bachelor and Master degrees from Chinese universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Jobs</td>
<td>None. Joined YC in Shanghai after graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Work with YC</td>
<td>Four years (till the time of data collection).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position at YC</td>
<td>Sales Manager, Department of Accident and Health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience living in other countries</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 Information about MX

During the interview, MX explained to me how she worked together with SP, RE and
RB on the BPIHI-YC joint product.

MX: “SP, RE, it seem like we work together to push this project and they want this project to be successful in China. But I have to report to YC, yeah, I don’t need to report to BP, I just work with them, it’s like a partner…”

According to MX, they had worked together for about two years and they worked very closely on this joint project. Their communication in the meetings also shows that MX, SP and RE worked closely together. But during her interview, MX explained that she occasionally felt conflicted about helping a Western company make money in China.

MX: “I don’t know. But anyhow I already overcome this kind of stuff, whenever I have this kind of feeling I just talk to myself like you are not like someone important like the Mayor of Shanghai or like someone important in the government stuff, you’re just ordinary person so you... I work not only for the company, maybe part for myself or for my family to improve myself, my capability, and maybe to make more money and to improve the quality of life for my family. This is my husband told me that, because I talked with him that...it’s just like...I work for YC and I’m Chinese and... I worked very hard actually, a lot of people think I work for BP, the first like impression is like I work for BP. I worked very hard with BPIHI to make this project successful which BPIHI will be very successful in China and make a lot of Chinese money, and YC is not going to get a fortune from that, sometimes I just feel sorry for my company... [YC is not going to] make a fortune from that because it’s a fronting business and sometimes I just...feel sorry for my company, or for myself because I help this foreign company to come to China to make a fortune...something like that, I have this kind of feeling....we really pushed it very hard to make it successful, to make more money. Sometime I just have this kind of feeling that I think maybe I just think too much, it’s not my responsibility to think something like that, if the government allow this kind of UK company or USA company come to China do business like this, it’s not my responsibility to take care of this, they make a lot of fortune from China...”

In the interview, MX explained her opinion about the difference between Chinese and Western cultures and businesses.

i. Direct communication is encouraged in Western culture.

During interview, MX explained that she could communicate directly in the meetings with RE, RB and SP.

MX: “I’m quite open to talking with RE and SP, mainly because my major is English and culture and I know that the Chinese people sometimes they just feel like modest...for example, they want to say that OK this iPad is not good
enough, ...they may say oh it’s beautiful, it’s pretty, whatever. But because I know the western culture, I know what we want especially we want the same target, we want this project to be successful I have to tell them everything quite frankly and not just heard something and say something very gentle because they will not know that this is the point I comment with them, I speak something quite openly and frankly and straightforward...”

ii. More hierarchy in Chinese companies

MX: “I think business context there’s a major difference, or my experience is that for the Chinese companies... just as I mentioned before, it’s like the level or class or what is very obvious, some is a leader, some is the general manager, some are just a department general manager, it’s obvious...something like that, you have to know there are some rules or potential rules, you cannot cross these rules. If I talk with the Chinese I will not talk something like that, especially if I have meeting in the office with other...like the manager or other different department, no you cannot talk something like that. ...I mean if I am having a meeting with other department in our branch office or in the head office I will not behave something like that... it depends because the Chinese culture is like if they are your boss you cannot speak something like quite frankly, quite straightforward, they will think who do you think you are, something like that, you have to respect them, you know, you have to give them a lot of faith... I think business context there’s a major difference, or my experience is that for the Chinese companies...as I mentioned before, it’s like the level or class or what is very obvious...”

MX said that she could talk directly with everyone in BP or BPIHI, whereas in YC, the only person who can talk is the “big leader”.

MX: “...it’s normal that in Chinese meeting, for example if we have a meeting with BP and there’s a lot of big leader and also some colleagues there, who is talking all the time from YC, it’s the big leader, not me, not my boss, it’s leader, the high level big leader just talk with BP.”

MX: “[But]...people from BP everyone could talk, everyone could express their ideas, I think this is a kind of culture difference. I talk with...the Director of BPIHI, it’s very...high management, RB’s boss’ boss... I could also be very open and frank and straightforward, I know it’s their culture... But this is the best culture if work... I mean if I am having a meeting with other department in our branch office or in the head office I will not behave like that... ”

iii. More politics in Chinese companies.

MX: “Politics...the Chinese company always has some politics...and the people
just…like fighting or what, say something bad behind someone’s back which I
don’t like. But I think the foreign company they still have but not as much as a
Chinese company.”

iv. In Chinese companies people push off responsibilities due to fear of making
mistake.

MX: “…in the Chinese business context like people just push out their
responsibility. If there’s a decision to make no it’s not my decision, they just push
out the responsibility. But for the foreign company they also push but not so hard
like the Chinese - they take part of the responsibility, they are not willing to take
everything but at least they take the responsibility to do something…Chinese just
afraid to take this responsibility because…they are afraid of making some
mistake. …for YC like we are a new small company and the competition is tough
so we have to fight hard to get more business or to get everything done. So if
people make some serious mistakes it will not be easy for them to report to the
head, to the boss…”


Elaborated on the argument she had with RE, MX suggested that Western
business people like to plan ahead but Chinese business people are used to
contingent management and problem solving.

MX: “I don’t like that kind of argument, I just want to talk with them and
communicate with them and seek RE’s understanding because RE said this
morning that let’s do the migration now. …I understand that RE is worried about
it what was a fifty lives… You know for the westerner they are good at planning,
all the time planning, but for the Chinese what we are doing is we are just doing
and we solve the problem during the process, we don’t plan all the time because
we always said like 计划赶不上变化 (plans cannot catch up with changes).”

I asked MX what kind of company she would like to work with, a Chinese company
or a Western one. MX pointed out right away that she preferred to work in Western
companies. MX’s reflection below shows clearly that she prefers direct
communication, less hierarchy and good cooperation with colleagues in resolving
work problems.

MX: “For me obviously the western, I think I’m more suitable for the foreign
cOMPANY.”

MX: “Yeah, if they [Westerners] are manager, for example if they want to talk
with this lady and she’s the head of this department, maybe it’s not right that I
talk with her, maybe I will ask the head of other department to talk with her
otherwise she will feel who do you think you are you talk with me, something like
that. But some of them [Westerners] they’re just very nice so...just talk with employees, it’s OK for them to talk. But some of them just don’t so should be careful what kind of person you are dealing with. If she’s quite sensitive to this so you just don’t talk with her. If she is not it’s OK you can comment with her and to solve the problem. Because my work style is that work is solving all the problem because after solving work problem you will help another problem, it’s just like life, especially work it’s solving all kind of problem. So the reason I talk with you or the reason I comment with you is to solve the problem, even though sometime, you know, maybe it’s not your responsibility or if someone else causes the problem, but if it’s my fault first I admit that it’s my fault and I apologise and that solve the problem. If it’s not my fault, if it’s someone else’s fault OK let him or her know that. I think they work together to solve this problem. I don’t like the work styles like OK it’s his fault, ask him to solve all this problem, because if he cannot what if this problem need like several departments to work together to solve. I just want to solve the problem and finish the work.”

There is evidence found in meeting communication showing power shifts between RE and MX. MX explained why she has been straightforward and strong when talking with RE about the regulation issues.

MX: “...because I’m still working for YC, I hope to maximize YC’ benefit here and...because in China as I showed you yesterday is that if you are company or you are organised or whatever in China you cannot sell offshore business, it’s illegal here, which RE has no idea what’s going on. He was keeping sending offshore business and that’s why we kind of like arguing. I said this is pretty simple that definitely no company offshore business in China because they will be jeopardize or whatever, it will destroy our partnership because the CIRC will punish YC because they [BPIHI] are not the insurer. We [YC] got licence here, we will be punished if they are still doing something like that, so this is quite a serious. ...And I still think RE has no idea, he just does not have the sense of this legal stuff here... I talked with SP and SP said definitely no, because this is the bottom line, you know the CIC is the government regulator; they will punish us, the CIC ask the Beijing branch office stop to do business of accident and health insurance for six months because there’s something wrong”

MX: “…until now I worked with BPIHI...this is the most serious argument I had with them, because...this is really serious cross my mind. I want him to know that this is really serious. ...I don’t like that kind of argument, I just want to talk and communicate with them and seek understanding...”

In the interview, MX also suggested that BP, as a “quite conservative” British company, still has a long way to go in understanding the Chinese market. MX considered her role as to help BP learn about and adapt to the Chinese market.
MX: “Sometimes [I was] a little bit frustrated, not angry, because I worked with BP a long time, like more than three years and even longer than SP and RE. And I realise that step by step that for this UK company, they come from another country, they always think everything they are doing is right, you have to do according to my rules, based on my rules, and they think that they know this market because they are successful everywhere, use the same business model like Australia, Hong Kong, everywhere in the world, they think they will be very successful in China using the same business model. But the truth is the Chinese market is really, really unique and deliberate...that’s why Google is successful everywhere but Google go back to Hong Kong, leave mainland China, there are a lot of difference here. ...So I think BP is learning and BP have to learn if they really want to be a very international company, BP cannot say that I just give up Chinese market...BP still has a long way to go to learn about this Chinese market....because I think I know their [BP/Western] culture better than they [BP] know our culture so I already do some things step by step. I just give you example like, at the very beginning when BP came to China...for the premium rate table...they just want to use USD rate table. And at that moment I talk a lot to them please use RMB because a local currency is very important because Chinese government have a lot of restrictions or rules about foreign currency in China so it will be very difficult for a customer to pay the premium, this kind of stuff, but they just don’t listen, they think RMB is not international currency, USD is the international currency and then they don’t want afford the exchange risk, so I said OK that’s the market, teach you the lesson.”

MX: “So step by step. But anyhow...there are people there, just because they don’t know the Chinese market it does not mean that they’re not willing to help. If you tell them...what not working here, why, all this is reasonable, they will accept your idea but it will take like a long time.”

During interview, MX explained her opinion about RE as a British person working in China.

MX: “…yesterday a kind of argument with RE because this is the bottom line, this is something about legally stuff, it’s not just stop the business, this is quite a serious. I already talk with BPIHI’s head of the legal department, but RE is always... I mean RE is a good guy but...he just don’t get the sense of this legal stuff here, because he was doing a lot of offshore business in the last two years he just joined BP so he has no idea, I cannot blame him for this because he does not know that. But I still work for YC, this is like bottom line, you cannot cross that. ...RE I think is the last person that has no sense of this legal, I talk this with the big, big boss and the head of legal and the head of commercial finance and also RB and SP, they all say this is quite reasonable. Because it’s already we launch our product January, this...should be done long time ago...”
At the end of the interview, MX described RE as an “Asia Pacific foreigner”.

MX: “Because he stay here, he stay in Asia Pacific for a long time especially Hong Kong and China, so he just like kind of Hong Kong and the Chinese foreigner.”

As shown in 5.3.1.7, MX and RE talked about ED who contacted RE late in the evening. During interview, MX explained the background of this issue and her opinion on this.

MX: “I was just joking, I was joking with him all the time that he complain about that a lot, because for example like this evening ED just text him and tomorrow morning we will go to a meeting, now he was like crazy RE, he was like crazy, just I can’t believe that Edward text me, blah, blah. No but ED has company quotation, it was quite urgent at the moment...he just could not contact RE and he leave the message, RE just did not answer him. So I called RE, I said you must answer this broker, if you just feel uncomfortable and I can tell ED, I can remind him that don’t send the short message to RE, if you have anything contact me, yeah I can also help you.”

MX insisted that RE needed to adapt to the Chinese culture of hard work.

MX: “…he [RE] couldn’t understand like when a broker text him 11 o’clock...he was very mad and upset and he want to report to his boss, I mean the broker’s boss. But if the broker called me or text me 11 o’clock if I’m still awake, even though I feel a little bit upset but I still feel like this broker works hard to sell our product, I feel happy to some kind. But for him not seem happy, he feel like only upset because this broker just bother him…”

MX: “I understand him [RE] that he want his private life and his working life is totally separate, but in China especially like the city and Beijing or Shanghai the competition is tough, it’s not possible, it’s not possible.”

MX considered that RE would gradually adapt to the Chinese working culture.

MX: “RE will be used to that. The broker, like DD’s boss came to our office yesterday and, during a meeting actually I asked him what if your client call you at 2 o’clock in the evening because he had been in China for eight years, he said I will never turn off my cell phone, 24 hour for our client, he can call me whenever he want. Actually most of the client will not call you in midnight, yeah so but at least he’s like already a Chinese foreigner, he’s used to this kind of stuff here. It will take time, RE will be used to this.”

Finally, MX told me that Chinese people, except those living in big cities like Beijing
and Shanghai, generally have negative views about the insurance business.

MX: “I did not tell my parents or my brother or sister...it’s a shame, you get a Master degree, you work for insurance company, it’s kind of...in Beijing, Shanghai it’s just OK this kind of thing, but in my home town I can tell you, you say that you work for insurance company they will say oh insurance... I did not tell my family that I work for the insurance company. During one Spring Festival my sister just found out because I talk in the phone with some clients about a claim. She has a part time job work for some insurance company to sell the auto insurance, and she said you work for insurance company, and I told her that I don’t need to go on the street to find someone to buy the insurance, I work mainly in... a broker or company, and she just comfort herself that OK no matter what kind of job you are doing at least you can make some money. This is the idea of the insurance in China...the reputation is very bad, you talk about insurance then people think you are lying all the time, you are cheating...this is just an idea help you to understand what’s the people’s idea of the insurance especially in...not say like Beijing, Shanghai, some other city.”

5.4 Unit SH3 - Meeting with a Broker and Interview with RE

This section analyses two connected sets of data, SH-M-BROK and SH-I-RE, centered around a meeting between RE, MX, and DD (the manager of one of BPIHI’s brokers).

i. SH-M-BROK is a meeting, between RE, MX and DD.

ii. SH-I-RE is an interview with RE, after the meeting.

Stipulated by RE, the key aims of this meeting were:

i. To discuss the migration of current BPIHI members to the new BPIHI-YC joint health insurance product. BPIHI had some customers in China who were under BPIHI’s international health insurance policies. After BPIHI and YC reached the joint venture agreement, the two companies together launched a new international health insurance product in China. This product was very similar to the previous product but it was insured by BPIHI and sold by YC, which made it a legally “on shore” product in China.

ii. To discuss relevant documentation issues, e.g. how to prepare the notice letters and how to send these to customers.

iii. To discuss relevant operational issues, e.g. how to use BPIHI’s customer management system.

iv. To discuss Chinese government regulations for insurance companies and broker companies.

The first half of the meeting was a discussion between RE and DD. MX joined the meeting later and left the meeting shortly before it was completed.
In this section, two sets of data were analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about participants is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
<th>Experience working/living in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>25-30, M, British, Sales Manager</td>
<td>Two and a half years in China, About two years in Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX</td>
<td>25-35, F, Chinese, Sales Manager</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>30-35, M, Australian, Sales Manager</td>
<td>About 3 years in China</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 Information about The Participants in Unit SH3

5.4.1 Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)

As pointed out in Section 5.2.1, the PDI difference between the British and Chinese participants is high. The three meeting participants worked in similar positions within their companies. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to appear in their communication.

i. Direct and equal communication between RE and DD.

ii. Less direct communication from MX.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI in the meeting communication.

5.4.1.1 At the beginning of the meeting, RE asked DD what he has learned from SP or MX about the migration of customers. Communication between RE and DD is open and very direct. RE’s communication is more resolute.

RE: *Anyway, yeah mate, I have spoken to SP and MX about some of these groups that we are migrating. What exactly has she told you about this?*
DD: *That they’re renewals basically and need to be brought over, well I don’t know if the word is need, ah, suggesting and…*
RE: *Actually they have to be, we need to get them all on shore.*
DD: *That was gonna be one of my questions for what is the communication? I know you wanna bring them on, whether you… this is the first I’ve heard that they have to come onshore…*
RE: *Exactly yeah.*
5.4.1.2 In this passage, RE and DD continued their discussion about the migration issue and communication to customers. Their communication is open and direct. It is clear that they both wanted to align with each other.

**DD:** I think the main point and probably one of the points you want to cover immediately is…we’re only proposing one insurance company and we’ve got no issue with it.

**RE:** Yeah. And that’s why your name came up straight away…we know that you’re only looking at us so we know that we can trust you with that sort of stuff and we’d be very happy for you to look after this business.

**DD:** We’d love to.

**RE:** Yeah I was hoping you’d say that. I mean you know what it’s like at BP; we don’t really do much direct stuff, there’s one group in there which I have to deal with directly because they’re one of these people who unreasonably perhaps as it is say look I’m not going through a broker because I don’t trust them or whatever; see those ones fine, but all the other ones I want to give to brokers and you’re the first person I’ve spoken about this to so just keep it under your hat for now in terms of discussing with other people and stuff.

**DD:** OK, I guess that’s also part of the communication. We just need our guidelines really, that’s it, we want to give you…we want to give BP and YC a very good experience here and I’ve absolutely no issues on one show, if they say can you give us something else or even if they say we’re not gonna buy BP; can you give us something else, we can just say no, that’s the only discussion.

**RE:** Excellent, that’s good to hear, that’s fine.

5.4.1.3 In this passage DD suggested to RE that they meet on a regular basis. RE and DD’s communication is open and direct. RE’s communication is more resolute and also demonstrates leadership when making decisions.

**DD:** The only thing I suggested with MX was…she was talking about bccing [Blind Carbon Copy] on emails and I know that SP wasn’t all that comfortable, it’s not really that we have a problem with it, it’s just we’ve never done it before...

**RE:** You don’t need to copy us in on everything you say but you can just give us an update.

**DD:** Well that was gonna be my suggestion, why don’t we catch up, you know, I’m not sure the volumes, I’m not sure if it’s one per month or fifty per month or a hundred per month but if it’s gonna be any sort of volume let’s catch up once a week and go through and we’ll show you everything.

**RE:** I think once a week would be a good idea beginning...

**DD:** Especially for the first month or two yeah.

**RE:** What I’ll probably do is tomorrow I’ll send you the information regarding the five groups and their contact details and everything. Most of them are sort
of around the sort of five to fifteen members, there’s one which is slightly larger, it’s about thirty, um, which obviously is a bit of an intensive to work to getting that one as opposed to the others, but if you can just, you know, just keep us informed as to what’s going on with each group perhaps once a week. I think some of them have got a start date of the 1st August so...

DD: So there’s no rush on this stuff, good.

RE: Not a massive rush but, you know, we do need to get onto it pretty quickly ’cause YC are champing at the bit.

DD: I was a bit worried it was gonna be July 1st, August 1st that’s fine.

5.4.1.4 In this passage, RE and DD discussed the procedure of migration. Their communication is open and direct. Again, RE’s communication is more resolute.

DD: One of the things which we finished the meeting on was that MX and SP suggested they were gonna come up with a communication...everything you’ve basically said to me we want to have that in writing and we’ll even come back and question you probably a little bit more on things like payments from off shore accounts, how does that work to really dig that up so we fully understand it before we start pitching that.

RE: What I’ll do is we put this list of...we’ve got a pretty good idea once we’ve actually got this list, I’ll send it through to you probably tomorrow morning and along with that I’ll answer all the questions about the off shore payments, you know, anything you need to know specifically about the group, all that information in terms of how they pay and everything like that. I can’t give you like a census or anything or claims details until they actually appoint you because we will need to have an appointment, that’s just for our records so we know that you’re doing the work.

DD: OK that’s interesting. Yeah any of this sort of stuff, it would be great to get that list of guidelines and what you’re wanting and details for how to handle it. From there we’ll come back to you and then if it requires another meeting we’ll have a quick meeting straight after. Things like those off shore payments and getting the appointment letter... I’ll have a good think about how we want to run that and communicate.

RE: Great. If you need me to come along to see any of these groups with you I’m quite happy to do that. All the ones we’ve chosen are in Shanghai so it won’t involve going to Beijing or anything like that.

5.4.1.5 In this passage RE and DD continued discussing the detailed work of the migration process. RE intended to give more customers to DD’s team and therefore felt that DD should consider having more people join his team. They also talked and joked about a colleague of DD’s. Their communication in this passage is very open and direct. It shows clearly that RE and DD get along very well and DD is keen to please RE. RE’s communication demonstrates leadership.
DD: I guess you’re probably looking to stage this, see how we go with the first five, see how the communication works, and then we can start...
RE: If it goes smoothly then we’ll give you more and more because the way it works with BPIHI is people renew all the way through the year;...all our renewals are on July the 1st or the 1st of September.
DD: We’re very happy to get involved in this.
RE: And, you know, if going forward we had sort of a larger and larger number of these members that you were looking after you’re confident that you’d have the capacity to service them all? I know it’s basically you, GL and GA.
DD: We have another guy now starting.
RE: What, GB?
[RE and DD talked and joked about GB, DD’s new colleague who once got drunk and lost his shirt, jacket and wallet.]
RE: I mean I have no doubt that you’re capable of handling this sort of volume but if, you know, going forward if we’re talking more and more groups, more and more lives, talking hundreds or whatever, you’re confident that you have the capacity to...
DD: We’ll let you know when we’re out of it but this is pretty easy stuff and there’s so little work involved in that we’re not gonna be...if we were going in and we could offer them other options then there’s gonna be...a shitload of work but this is easy. It’s making contact, get in, get in for a meeting, make them comfortable, maybe if they have any follow ups...they’ve got to change their census whatever we throw that back at you, come back and there’s really not that much involved so I’m very confident, you know, five groups we can knock that over very quickly. We’d like to increase the volumes, we’d like to get maximum volumes and we’ll do everything we can to make you guys comfortable and push more out of us.

5.4.1.6 Following their discussion in passage 5, in this passage, DD told RE directly that he wanted to get more business from BPIHI. RE’s response showed that he was also happy to increase his work with DD. Their communication is both open and direct. RE’s communication is slightly stronger. Communication in this passage clearly shows affiliation and alignment between RE and DD.

DD: Our next job is to make you guys comfortable and give us more.
RE: Great, that sounds good, OK. Next stage is for me to put together this list of groups I’d like you to get in contact with and then, you know, be up to you how you want to contact them, do we email or phone, as long as you let me know what’s going on then no problem with any of that stuff. I know MX’ saying that she wants to be bcc’d on everything, if you’re not comfortable with that I think an update once a week is fine.
DD:...actually, we’re looking for the guidelines from you guys to tell us what to do or what not to do, but I think the first round is, um, I’m not sure what
you’re gonna give us in regards to decision makers or contact points?
RE: Be the Group Secretary in every instance, yeah.
DD: OK, alright. Generally we’ll run all of our renewals by starting with a
call, we try to personalise it and get the call in, try to dig up in the very first
chat if there’s an issue which you don’t get over an email. So secretary….I’m
just guessing you’re going by whatever it is on the application form as the
group manager, OK so in some cases it could be the general manager of the
company, some cases it’s gonna be a BD manager or an HR manager,
sometimes it’s just gonna be a secretary on the front desk…so…we’ve got to
try to find our way to a decision maker in there.
RE: You’ll be contacting the group secretary because that’s the only details.

5.4.1.7 DD had previously helped another insurance company to migrate their
customers to a new product. RE asked DD how they undertook this process at that
time and how they approached the customers. RE and DD’s communication is open
and direct. RE’s communication shows that he trusted DD’s knowledge and judgment
when communicating with the clients.

RE: OK, when you did it with ITG did ITG get in contact with the group first?
DD: …well when ITG came in, you know, the broker I was working at before,
we were pretty much the only broker selling this stuff anyway into China,…and
I was the one doing all the selling anyway so most of the accounts were my
accounts. …When we were doing it it was,…I just got in contact with the
regular contacts or maybe I came across them in a general sales call but I’m
always looking for a decision maker in there. And this’ll be the same
here…well we’re gonna feel it out, if we feel it’s just gonna be a simple
renewal just run it through the secretary, we’ll run it through the secretary, but
if we feel it needs to be escalated we’ll try to get the secretary, set up a
meeting, we’ll be bringing the higher person along… I guess if you want to tell
us when you wanna be joining any of the meetings, you know, any time it’s
over twenty members you want to join every meeting or whatever you can let
us know when we set that sort of…
RE: I think I’m happy for that to be your decision, if you think it’s gonna be
beneficial for us both for me to be there then I’m absolutely happy to do it.
DD: I don’t think it’ll be beneficial absolutely for you to be there on every
meeting but, you know, that almost defeats the purpose of having a broker
doing this for you.
RE: Well yeah I do actually quite like going in front of the clients. I think for
people that are worried perhaps about using a broker ‘cause you do get these
people who say well, you know, why do I go through a broker, are you gonna
charge me more or whatever the hell these ideas about what it’s like to go
through an intermediary… I think it’s quite useful to have someone from the
provider there presenting a united front about it.
DD: Well maybe we could feel it out in those first calls or first emails and just
say yeah if you’d like us to join let us know and we’ll try to set up a mutually convenient time and bring you along.
RE: Yeah we’ll perhaps do that.

5.4.1.8 MX joined in the middle of the meeting. RE, DD and MX continued to discuss the migration issue. Communication between them is open and straightforward. RE and MX demonstrated leadership in their communication.

RE: Hello, you’re already here.
DD: [speaking to MX entering room] How are you, nice to see you.
MX: Fine, nice to see you too.
RE: We just told them about what we’re intending to do in terms of migrating the groups and stuff. Is there anything you want to add about the migration stuff. I mean we just spoke about the very basic stuff in terms of the fact that DD would keep us updated what was going on, the fact that he’d emphasise the importance of going onshore with YC-BPIHI and how he wouldn’t put forward the proposals of any other insurers.
MX: ...very, very, very quickly like today or tomorrow.
DD: Very, very. [laughs]
RE: He’s hungry for the business.
DD: Yeah it’s great. Yeah we just suggested we’ll try to catch up at least... ’cause I think in the initial stages a lot of the communication will be over the telephone, so we’ll probably look to catch up at least once a week and give all the feedback to make sure you guys are happy with what we’re doing, share with you, ah, we’ll basically run you through all the accounts.
MX: OK so we will prepare later, send the letter to customer, to company, they’re actually also broker?
RE: I think it should be up to the broker to make the contact with the group.
MX: Most of them are direct.
RE: Yeah for the direct ones that we want to deal with still directly for whatever reasons like the ones I was telling you about earlier like the very big group that didn’t want to use a broker I will contact them, but I think the broker should be contacting the ones that we want to pass to them in the first instance.

5.4.1.9 In this passage, RE and MX discussed communication to customers, while DD listened. RE and MX’s communication in this passage is very open and direct.

RE: So you think that we should give DD a letter for each group, this should be passed on by DD and then say look I’m gonna be dealing with this?
MX: You know this is what we should do. I want to discuss with you whether we should...if they send the letter to the company said...they will prefer broker to come back to you, something like that, then we discuss it later.
RE: OK. The way I imagined it was, you know, DD would contact the client
and say this is the situation, I’ve been given your contact details by...

MX: Which is fine by me, which is fine by me.

5.4.1.10 In this passage, RE, DD and MX discussed in detail communication with customers, including the notice letter and how to contact customers. Their communication is open and direct. Both RE and MX demonstrated leadership in decision making.

DD: Alright, I was thinking that…I’m not sure what you’re gonna be providing or what you’re expecting or what you’ll come to agreement internally but there will be a formal proposal prepared, like what you give to us in preparing us for other accounts with rates and everything. I think it would be good for us to have a cover sheet when that’s provided to us, there could be a standard template and maybe just changing a name before we pdf it and it will have dear client or dear xxx, we’re pleased to be offering you this great solution and this is your same plan BP through YC and we’re working with YC for this distribution. For us I think it’ll be good... I’m not sure whether we’ll present this in the meeting.

RE: Yeah I think maybe if I was a client that perhaps would look better if it was coming directly from YC-BP and recommending your services basically.

DD: It doesn’t have to be sent directly from YC or BP to the client...

RE: It’ll go through you yeah.

DD: ...but it makes it very official that this is who we are and why we’ve been appointed or why we’ve been appointed by BP-YC to handle this, now would you be happy to appoint us back to handle it, with your permission we will need your appointment and then we can handle this renewal for you...

RE: I think that’s a good…I think you’d be looking at it from the client’s point of view that’s the most comfortable way of doing it.

DD: That’s how I feel as well...

[RE and DD discussed in detail about communication to clients.]

DD: ...yeah certainly the letter I think is a must. If what you’re saying is about their details on the premiums and maybe it’s got census details I’m not sure, maybe that you don’t want to share. I think that’s your internal decision, I think the letter’s a great idea for us to be taking in there.

RE: Yeah I’m happy to do that. OK we’ll do that. Are you happy with that?

MX: OK. So for the first term you contact the customer just send the letter or other renewal proposal?

DD: We’re gonna call them I guess.

MX: So will you know how to begin to prepare all this quotation.

RE: For these groups that should be very easy to get hold of off our system area ‘cause the renewal premiums should already be available so I can just ask JN to get things done.

MX: OK.

DD: I think it’ll be a phone call followed by a meeting, maybe an email, we’ll
try to push for a meeting rather than an email because we want to sit in front of them. So we’ll probably be physically handing that letter to them.

RE: So I’ll get the letter drawn up then, it’ll be a standard letter for each group.

5.4.1.11 This passage takes place toward the end of their discussion about communication to customers. MX tried to align with DD by telling him that YC and BPIHI trusted him. Similar effort was found in RE’s communication with DD in 5.4.1.2 when RE showed his trust and tried to align with DD.

RE: I’ll give you the letter tomorrow and just let me know whether you think for these customers they should be contacted by us in the first instance in terms of through an email or a phone call or whatever.

DD: Let’s have a look at that letter first and we’ll cover that, yeah, we’ll work it out.

RE: Alright, good stuff. Anything else?

MX: Guarantee this client will come to us.

DD: We’re not gonna guarantee it’s gonna come to you, we’re gonna guarantee we won’t offer any other...

MX: I know, I know, that’s why we come to our...

DD: But we’re certainly gonna guarantee we’re gonna try, we can guarantee we will absolutely try our best to keep it with, ah, to keep it with you guys.

…

MX: Yeah, we trust you, that’s why, you know, we come to you.

DD: We’re very happy, we want to make you guys trust us more so you’ll give us more.

MX: Good, OK.

5.4.1.12 Before leaving the meeting, MX voiced her concerns about the time frame for the project and pushed for more actions. MX’s communication is very strong and direct.

MX: So hopefully, not hopefully, definitely we will begin to do this renewal of membership from next Monday.

RE: Yeah, absolutely.

DD: I won’t say definitely, we want to have a look at what you’re providing us, get the systems right, but basically as soon as you give us feedback we’re gonna start working with you to make sure our communications are getting ready...it’s got to be next week so...

MX: OK, if June the 15th or 14th is too late now. [DD: Sorry?] I mean even later or next month is too late, if the renewal it is in the middle of next month is that too late or not? Is renewal like twenty five days, twenty days?

DD: It just comes back to what we mentioned in the meeting, it does get... we’ve got to be careful, it can be rude or it can be impolite...
RE: It’s a bit tight isn’t it?
DD: ...impolite to push clients...
RE: I think you’ve got to give them at least six weeks.
DD: We’re happy to do everything but, yeah, the six weeks is a good...that’s comfortable.
MX: Well that’s why I want more business here, that’s why.
RE: OK let’s try. [laughing]
DD: I’ll let you guys handle that one...

5.4.1.13 At the end of the meeting, RE and DD worked through BP’s customer management system. It is a very relaxed conversation and their communication is open and direct.

RE: Hong Kong, when I left to fly up yesterday...it was, um, 8.30 in the morning it was 37 degrees, it was horrible... When I got in this morning I had to lock the door and sit here because I was just drenched in sweat, sweat is disgusting, I was sweating like through my suit, it was horrible. I’m extremely fit that’s why. What are your log in details? I can’t log in.
DD: It’s my email address.

... 
DD: [inaudible] Did you use it [BPIHI’s customer management system] much.
RE: I was shown how to use it but I just...
DD: We were shown how to use it over in...
RE: To be honest strictly between us because people in Brighton love this thing but I absolutely hate it. I don’t suggest it to a lot of brokers because...well they’re just so who the fuck do you think you are telling me how to sell insurance, it’s a very common problem, a common perception of BP that we’re an arrogant bunch of sods and this sort of thing is just an absolute classic example. OK, um...
DD: I’m fine with it...

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IDV. But evidence found in both RE and MX’s communication showing workplace alignment, as shown in 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.1.11.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for UAI.

Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation (LTO)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for LTO.
Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)  
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

5.4.2 Analysis of Interview Data

During a separate interview conducted after the meeting SH-M-BORK, RE explained his personal background which is summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Information</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>College degree from the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Jobs</td>
<td>Had worked for an insurance broker in London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position at BP</td>
<td>Sales Manager, Chinese Market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience living in other countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two and a half years in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>About two years in Hong Kong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 Information about RE

RE had worked for BPIHI in China and in Hong Kong. In the interview, RE reflected on this experience and talked about his understanding about China and communication with Chinese people.

i. Difference between the “real China” and the China in the eyes of people in the UK. RE considered that it is important for Western companies to respect Chinese culture and try to adapt to it.

RE: “I think a lot of people in the UK as an example of a country in the West see what’s happening to the Chinese economy when they’re eating their cornflakes watching the news in the morning and they think oh OK this is a huge opportunity because there’s a burgeoning middle class segment out there and that’s exactly who our customers are supposed to be and they think just by turning up in China they’re gonna be able to sell our products left, right and centre, and the fact of the matter is it’s much more complicated than that. Things in China as you know only too well work very differently than they do in the rest of the world. I mean if you contrast Europe to say South America or something, even those two communities if you like are much more similar in terms of the way business is done and the way people act in terms of culture than a place like the UK is to China, it’s very alien and it’s really about adapting to what the Chinese market requires as opposed to the other way around. I think sometimes UK companies or... I keep saying UK companies, western companies come here and they expect Chinese people just to buy their products because they think they’re great, but actually the companies that come here and are successful are the ones that respect the way things are done here and adapt according to the market which is what we need to do.”
ii. Difference between communicating with Chinese and British – Chinese people compromise more easily but are also more demanding.

RE: “I always get a response from people that I work with here [China] even if it’s not the one that I want, they always get back to me. In fact it’s the people in the UK who might…you know, you just hit a brick wall with and don’t get anything. I think also you get your own way in China in a different way than you do in the UK. This is slightly going off on a tangent but it’s sort of related. In the UK if you don’t get what you want and you make a big fuss about it people will just say fine, go away then, I’m not bothered, I’m not being spoken to like that. If you’re staying in a nice hotel or something in China and you make a fuss about something you always get what you want and you get what you want by throwing your toys around and being childish and shouting basically. In the UK I think sometimes when I speak to them I’ll accidently come across quite aggressive in trying to get what I want, and that doesn’t work with them. I’ve noticed that you get your way in different ways in China and the UK and, you know, the way I act out here sometimes is a bit sort of UKish and when I go back to the UK people think I’m being a bit Chinese or I realise that I’m being a bit Chinese about things.”

RE: “I think probably the Chinese are slightly more demanding in terms of what they expect not only from the product but in terms of sort of turnaround times and stuff like that. They think if they pay a lot of money for something, and actually I agree with them completely, they should have service which is very, very quick, very, very efficient, and when they don’t get that they vocalize it very, very quickly, which I think is fair enough, but you’ll notice with western customers they won’t chase you twice a day for something like that, they’ll send you one email a week and if you explain sorry we’re having problems with our systems whatever they say OK don’t worry about it, as long as I’m covered or whatever, whereas Chinese people can be a lot pushier about that. But I don’t really have a problem with that like I said because I think with the premiums that we’re charging people should be getting that kind of service and it’s good to know when customers are upset because then we realise that we have a problem, we have to formulate a way of dealing with it.”

iii. Chinese people communicate differently in written and verbal communication. RE suggested that Chinese people can be very direct in written communication.

RE: “I think most Chinese people probably…this is generalising but face to face are probably a little bit more Confusian if that’s a word in terms of sort of holding back perhaps and not being so direct. It’s funny how in emails they’ll be very, very direct about things and very demanding, and then you meet them face to face
or speak on the phone and they’re really lovely about everything. I don’t know why that is, maybe it is a cultural thing… You haven’t got the whole sort of gambit of emotions when you’re dealing with somebody over email and you don’t have to deal with their reaction face to face, I think a lot of the time you can be rude and just send the email and that’s it, and then face to face you need to be a bit more tactful. And also if you’re a good negotiator and you’re good with people you can sort of disarm them and make them understand what you’re saying a bit better than just putting it down in black and white on a piece of paper… I don’t know if that’s a uniquely Chinese thing, I do find it with the western brokers as well to an extent but I think it’s more pronounced in the Chinese.”

iv. Reflecting on his experience working with Australian brokers, RE suggested that Australians are more direct when compared with Chinese and British individuals who can both be reserved and less straightforward. Communication between RE and DD in the meeting also shows that RE was happy working with DD.

RE: “...in fact I love dealing with Australian brokers, they’re a really good group because they are very direct and they expect the same from you, so if you’re honest with them they don’t get upset with you, even if you’re giving them bad news they seem to be quite reasonable ‘cause, you know, they are very direct and they expect that kind of directness and honesty from other people and if they get it then they’re respectful of that. I think English people can be quite Chinese in a lot of ways and they’re not being so...like being quite reserved in front of people sometimes, but then sort of going off behind their backs and saying what an idiot and we’re not going to do what he asks and all this stuff.

RE: “It’s a very different culture in a lot of ways Australia to a place like the UK, even though they’ve got such close sort of cultural ties historically, it’s a very different environment to be living in and I think it sort of creates quite sort of direct outspoken people... I’m not entirely sure of the reason why but that’s definitely my experience of them.”

v. RE suggested that when communicating with MX, he would consciously ask, check and clarify to make sure that they both understood each other accurately.

RE: ‘I’m trying to be extra clear because the language thing, because sometimes I think I say things and I’m probably being arrogant but I think I’m absolutely right and she’ll disagree with me and I’ll feel that she’s disagreeing with me because she doesn’t understand what I’ve said, ‘cause a lot of the time she’ll then repeat exactly the same thing back to me. So when I talk to her in that kind of situation I just need to be very clear which is why I say are you OK with that, you know, do you think this is the right thing to do just so we have absolute clarity
really. And also because I’m very much interested in her opinion and what she has to say. Usually if I think about doing things one way and she says no I think we should do it that way I will go with what she’s recommended because she knows this marketplace better than I do. So I rely on her opinions very much but I want to make sure that I get them out of her, she doesn’t hold anything back, usually she doesn’t but, you know, you need to be sure of that.”

RE was aware that the way he clarified information with MX could be regarded as being rude in Western culture, however, he and MX were OK with it and both considered that clear and accurate communication was important.

RE: “I mean if I spoke to you or RB or like a westerner like that it would be rude, but I don’t think it comes across that way, it’s just the way we communicate and I think she [MX] appreciates that we’re doing it to be clear with one another.”

RE: “No I don’t think she [MX] does [feel being offended], and if I suspected that she was I wouldn’t do that, but she’s obviously OK with it and I think it’s the best way to make sure that everything is in order and clear.”

vi. RE told me that he appreciated MX’s directness in her communication.

RE: “I think most Chinese people probably…this is generalising but face to face are probably a little bit more Confusian if that’s a word in terms of sort of holding back perhaps and not being so direct. …dealing with MX is great because she’s so direct and if she held things back it’d be frustrating because we need to have her opinion because she is an expert in the way things work out here…”

In the meeting SH-M-SALES, MX and RE talked about ED who contacted RE late in the evening. MX appreciated ED’s hard work. But RE did not appreciate being contacted at 11 o’clock on a Sunday night. In the interview, RE explained further that he would never accept this kind of thing.

RE: “...a lot of the time I agree with what she’s [MX] saying, I accept that I need to adapt because I’m living in a foreign country, but there are boundaries that I have which I won’t accept being violated and one of them is being phoned at like 11 o’clock on a Sunday night, I’m not being paid a hundred thousand Pounds a year, I’m not an accountant or a lawyer and frankly I’m not paid enough to be contacted at that time of night which I know for a fact is not gonna be urgent, and no amount of complaining from MX or anyone else is gonna make me change that opinion that I have. It’s like the same thing I have about spitting in the street, I hear [makes noise] and someone spits in the street and I should be used to it by now, I know it’s a cultural thing, you know, it’s fine, but in my head it’s not fine because that’s how you get tuberculosis, that’s how you pass on tuberculosis to people, that’s how people get avian flu and stuff so it’s not OK, I’ll never be OK
with that stuff. Most little things like that I don’t have a problem with, you know. Like it used to really bother me when people would eat KFC or chicken's feet on the metro system ‘cause I’d find that disgusting, it’s just a pet hate of mine but now it doesn’t bother me at all, I’m just used to that sort of thing... But spitting and phoning me up at 11 o’clock at night I’ll never get my head around that."

RE: “…I mean it works both ways, I try to be as respectful as possible of Chinese business culture and Chinese culture in general but it does work both ways, and just because I’m living in China doesn’t mean that people should be disrespectful of my beliefs and my culture, you know.”

Lastly, RE explained that Chinese people in general do not have positive views about insurance business.

RE: “I think people have a view of insurance companies that they’re dishonest and they’re sort of paying their money into an organisation which then comes up with every excuse imaginable not to fulfill their obligations, it’s not a trusted industry I think. There’s an element of that in the west as well, probably not to such an extent because in the west the market’s been quite strictly regulated for a much longer time, but I think that’s where it comes from. Also traditionally a lot of people who’ve been able to afford quality insurance have been perhaps...a lot of them have been so wealthy that they haven’t needed it, so there hasn’t been segments that’s, you know, really come to mind for them. But if we market these products as a lifestyle option that’s a much more attractive way of doing it for the Chinese I think, so we wouldn’t be marketing ourselves as an insurance provider, we’re marketing ourselves as a health care partner.”

5.5 Preliminary Conclusion

In this chapter, three units of data collected in Shanghai have been analysed. The participants involved in this data are Chinese, British and Australian. Firstly, communication in business meetings was analysed based on Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value difference and the findings are summarised below.

i. Deviation of Chinese participant’s communication from Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of PDI. Evidence found in Unit SH1, SH2 and SH3 shows that the Chinese participant (MX) is not in line with Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in PDI.

ii. Evidence found in Unit SH1, SH2 and SH3 shows that the communication of both British and Australian participants (RB, SP, RE and DD) is in line with Hofstede’s classification for British and Australian culture in the dimension of PDI.

iii. Evidence found in Unit SH1 and SH2 shows that communication of both British and Chinese participants (RB, RE, SP and MX) is in line with
Hofstede’s classification for British and Chinese cultures in the dimension of MAS.

iv. Deviation of British participants’ communication from Hofstede’s classification for British culture in the dimension of LTO. Evidence found in Unit SH1 showing communication of British participants (RB, RE and SP) is not in line with Hofstede’s classification for British culture in LTO.

v. Evidence found in Unit SH2 shows communication of a British participant is relevant to the dimension of IND. However the evidence contests the notion of “indulgence” in Hofstede’s classification. In this data, the communication of the Chinese participant (MX) shows appreciation of thriftiness which is in line with Hofstede’s classification with Chinese culture in IND. But the communication of the British participant (RE) cannot be simply regarded as “indulgence” – RE was only trying to draw a line between social and antisocial hours.

vi. No evidence found for the dimensions of individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance.

The communication of participants in all three meetings shows evidence of power flow. Communication of participants in SH-M-TEAM in Unit SH1 shows power flow between RE and RB, depending on issues being discussed. Communication of participants in SH-M-SALES in Unit SH2 shows power flow between MX and RE, with MX communicating with more strength than RE when they discussed issues related to Chinese government regulations. Communication in SH-M-BROK in Unit SH3 shows repeated power flow to RE and MX, when they talked with DD about migrating the current customers to a new product.

The communication of participants in the meetings also demonstrates leadership. RB and RE’s communication in SH-M-TEAM in Unit SH1 demonstrates that each of them showed leadership in the areas where each of them had more experience or was directly related to their role. MX’s communication in SH-M-SALES in Unit SH2 demonstrates leadership when she talked about Chinese government regulations. RE and MX’s communication in SH-M-BROK in Unit SH3 demonstrates leadership when they discussed how to migrate customers to the new product.

The communication of the Chinese participant (MX) is very direct in all meetings. Her communication is especially strong when discussing the Chinese government’s regulations. She explained in the interview that she did not want to argue with RE but that she had to make sure that RE understood the regulations and stopped doing offshore business (as shown in the quote below). This evidence shows that how people communicate in business meetings can be contingent on issues being discussed and may not be determined by cultural norms or personal preference.

MX: “...this is the most serious argument I had with them, because...this is really serious cross my mind. I want him to know that this is really serious. ...I
don’t like that kind of argument…” (her comment was quoted in Section 5.2.2).

The communication of participants in business meetings provides evidence for workplace alignment. SP’s communication in SH-M-TEAM in Unit SH1 (passage 5.2.1.13) shows that she tried to align with RE – she wanted RE and all brokers to support her in undertaking more marketing promotions. MX’s communication in SH-M-SALES in Unit SH2 (passage 5.3.1.6) shows that she wanted to align with RE in order for RE to better understand and accept her intention to maximise YC’s profit. Both RE and MX’s communication in SH-M-BROK in Unit SH3 (passages 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.1.11) shows that they tried to align with DD in order to build up a good relationship and foster long term cooperation. Their communication shows that alignment is also contingent on the purpose of communication and topics being discussed.

In the interviews, the three participants (RB, RE and MX) reflected on cultural difference and working and communicating in different cultures based on their experience. Their comments have been discussed in Section 5.2.2, 5.3.2 and 5.4.2 of this chapter. Some key points that arose from their comments are outlined below.

i. Cross-cultural business communication

· National cultural difference versus individual difference

Similar to CD’s comment outlined in Chapter 4, RB suggested that people should not over generalise on national cultural difference, and that difference at an individual level is equally important for business communication and management. In CD’s view (in Section 5.3, Chapter 4), not only national culture but also factors at the individual level (age, gender, origin, etc.) have an impact on business, and even the cultures of subsidiary companies are highly dependent on local leaderships.

· Difference in expectations

RB suggested that people come from different cultural backgrounds often have different expectations in business. As summarised in Chapter 4, CD also mentioned that frustration in business meetings is often caused by differences in participant’s expectations. RE highlighted that he found Chinese people more demanding in business than Westerners.

· Checking and digging for accurate understanding

Both RB and RE suggested that when communicating with Chinese people in business, it is necessary to ask, dig, check and double check in order to get all the information and to ensure accuracy in understanding.
Adapting to difference

RB explained that people who work in international business should be flexible in accepting and adapting to different aspects of daily life. In Unit BJ3 (Section 4.4.2, Chapter 4), CD also suggested that people should try to understand, accept and adapt to differences.

Arguments rarely happen in face-to-face communication

RE considered that Chinese people communicate differently in written and verbal communication. He suggested that Chinese people is in general modest in verbal communication but can be very direct in written communication. In Unit BJ3 (Section 4.4.2, Chapter 4), CD also suggested that arguments rarely happen when people communicate face-to-face at the workplace.

ii. The Chinese participant (MX) explained that she preferred open, equal and direct communication in business. Reflecting on her experience working for YC, MX talked about the innate hierarchy and politics in Chinese organisations. As summarised in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.2 and 4.3.2), the two Chinese participants (JW and BB) also suggested that they preferred and were already used to the open and direct communication of Western business environments.

Finally, two participants (RE and MX) reflected on their experience selling international health insurance in China, and suggested that overall Chinese people (except people in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai) have negative impression about the insurance business.

As an international health care company, BP has businesses in the UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, China, India, South East Asia, the Middle East and South America. BP’s main businesses include providing health care services (via its hospitals), international health insurance services (via BPIHI), and aged care services (via its aged care facilities). By the time of data collection, BP has established a consulting company (BPBJC) and a joint-venture company (BPIHI-YC) in China to provide international health insurance services and to explore business opportunities in health care and aged care in the Chinese market. My fieldwork in China was conducted in these two sites in Beijing and Shanghai. BPAUG, BP’s subsidiary company in Australia, is specialised in providing aged care services and managing aged care facilities. The next chapter will discuss fieldwork conducted in Sydney at the head office of BPAUG.
CHAPTER SIX: SYDNEY DATA – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses data collected in Sydney. This chapter has three sections. Each of the first two sections analyses one data unit including one meeting observed and one interview conducted after the meeting. The third section analyses one meeting observed and three interviews conducted after the meeting.

6.2 Unit SYD1: Operation meeting and interview with GH.
6.3 Unit SYD2: Operation meeting and Interview with GH.
6.4 Unit SYD3: Development review committee meeting and interviews with DW, TW and TT.

Each unit of data has the following format.

i. Introduction: Introducing content, structure of the unit, participants and codes used in analysis and information about participants.

ii. Analysis of meeting data.

iii. Analysis of interview data.

Sydney data was collected in the head office of BP’s subsidiary company in Australia (BPAUG). BPAUG provides care services for the elderly through its aged care facilities in Australia. Unlike BPBJC and BPIHI which are relatively small-sized startup companies, BPAUG is a well established enterprise which manages about fifty care homes in Australia. Participants in Sydney data include Executives and Senior Managers from Australia, UK and New Zealand. All participants are Westerners. The three participants in the interviews in Unit SYD3 are experienced international managers and one of them was previously involved in the initial setting-up of BPBJC in Beijing.

As explained in Chapter 3, analysis of Sydney data and integration of the findings from the three data sets will enable triangulation across different teams, meeting contexts, and business and organisational contexts. It offers an opportunity to cross-reference the findings from Chinese-Western communication with observations from Western-Western communication. Sydney data offers unique findings to help explore patterns of cross-cultural communication in business meetings.

Following the same format as in Chapters 4 and 5, the data analysis began with a review of the meeting data, screening it to find evidence relevant to the dimensions in Hofstede’s framework. The evidence found was listed and discussed to see if it was in line with the classifications and scores in Hofstede’s framework. Then, interview data was screened and reviewed to find evidence relevant to the findings from meeting data, and the reflections of interviewees on Chinese-Western and cross-cultural business communication and management. During the interviews, respondents were
requested to reflect on their experiences working in international business. Some excerpts in the three interviews in Unit SYD3 (Section 6.4) are extended discussions with participants in an effort to capture cultural differences and interpretations of culture in discourse. The findings from the Sydney data are summarised in the conclusion of this chapter.

6.2 Unit SYD1 - Operation Meeting and Interview with GH

This section analyses two connected sets of data, SYD-M-QR1 and SYD-I-GH1, centered around a meeting within the operation team.

i. SYD-M-QR1 is a meeting attended by members of the operation team including managers in Operations, Quality & Control, Legal, IT and Human Resources.

ii. SYD-I-GH1 is an interview with GH, the Group Director of Operations, after the meeting.

The operation meeting was held every month and participated by the two Group Directors of Operations, GH and IB; the Legal Director, BF; the Regional Director, PS; the Chief Information Officer, PB; and senior managers in the Quality & Control Department and Human Resources. These senior managers formed the operation team to supervise the operation of BPAUG’s aged care facilities across Australia. Members of this team chaired the operation meeting in rotation. Stipulated by GH, the key aims of this meeting were:

i. To update senior managers in the operation team on the operation of BPAUG’s aged care facilities across Australia.

ii. To discuss key issues arose in the daily operation of aged care facilities.

This meeting was chaired by GH.

In this section, two sets of data are analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about participants is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
<th>Experience living/working in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>35-40 M New Zealand Group Director of Operations</td>
<td>Born and grew up in New Zealand. Came to Australia to study and work. Has been living in Australia for 15 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>35-40 M Australian Group Director of</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

135
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Operations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Chief Information Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Senior Manager, Quality Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A few years in Hong Kong, teaching in universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Senior Manager, HR Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Regional Director (South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Regional Director New Developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Legal Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transferred by BP from UK head office to Sydney. Has worked in Sydney for nearly 1 year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 Information about The Participants in Unit SYD1

6.2.1 Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)

Hofstede’s framework includes the Power Distance Index (PDI) which measures the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Australian culture’s PDI is 36 and New Zealand culture’s PDI is 22 – they are both low power distance cultures. Hence in both cultures, communication is direct and participative. Hofstede’s classification also suggests that in New Zealand, culture managers would rely on employees for their expertise. Among all participants in the meeting analysed here, GH and IB are the most senior and GH chaired the meeting. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to appear in their communication.

i. Direct and open communication among all meeting participants.

ii. Direct and open communication between GH and other meeting participants.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI in the meeting communication.

6.2.1.1 GH opened the meeting confirming if all members of the committee were in attendance. He was not happy with BF’s absence as this was the second instance where he was not present for a meeting. GH then went through the minutes of the last
meeting. GH’s communication in this passage is direct. His communication also demonstrates leadership, but not hierarchy. Since the fieldwork is gathered in round table meetings, it can be assumed that hierarchy will be apparent in the leadership of the meetings. The communication of other meeting participants is also direct and relaxed.

GH: So this is the second one that BF’s missed?
RL: Mm hm.
GH: I don’t know if he’s trying to tell us something.
MC: He’s busy with the car company.

[GH pointed out a mistake in the minutes of last meeting.]
GH: Okay, so let’s have a look at the agenda. There are a few extra things on there. We’ve got changes to assessments in the agency, MC’s going to talk about that. We’ve got the information governance posters. And nurse call audit, although I think we picked that up in one of the other action points, don’t we, point seven, so that’s an update from Paul. Is there anything else before we——?
MC: I had a question yesterday about the census that’s coming up, how we’re going to manage that in the homes?
GH: What census?
MC: The national census.
GH: Right.
MC: Because they’re going to homes, and so how do homes manage that in terms of the paperwork and things like that?
GH: Emm hm.

6.2.1.2 In this passage, AM raised a question about the contractors which led to a discussion about who should have ownership of the contractor issue. Communication of all participants is direct and participative. GH’s communication demonstrates leadership.

AM: The one thing I’ve thought of as well was I made some fairly last minute changes to some of the contractor information around undertakings and CHCs, ready for the accreditations which we did last week. I think obviously clearly I didn’t have much knowledge around the process of the contractors, and I think there’s a void with AT going, and, you know, I think it’s slightly, he owned it as, as head of risk in compliance, but I don’t think that process——
GH: I think he owned it more from a contractor’s, OH&S point of view as opposed to head of risk and compliance.
AM: Okay. But no one owns it currently is what I wanted to flag.
GH: Yeah, so everybody seems to be running from it, BF doesn’t particularly want to own it.
AM: Yeah, and neither does SA.
GH: Right, okay, I’ll take that up.
AM: Yeah, I thought that might be----
GH: Because it sits, it sits in that part of the world.
AM: Somewhere. Well, yeah, that's logical, but I thought we needed to decide on that.
GH: So we might pick that up----
[IB suggested that contract management under the Property Department should be responsible for the contractor issue. GH agreed.]
GH: So it's whoever, whoever owns contracts in the business owns that. So it's just part of, we need contractors, clearly, we engage them through a range of people. SA has a role in terms of services and all of that sort of stuff, BF has a role in checking. So it's just, for me, it's another part of managing the contractor relationship.
AM: Yep, yep.
IB: I agree.
GH: So what, maybe we just stick that in there on action point eight.
PB: BF also has a role in ensuring that there's a contractual obligation when we go into a contract.
GH: Oh yep, but the person who, who owns the contracts-----
AM: It's the, yeah, because it's a contractual obligation, isn't it?
...
GH: I think the action point, just if we can just jump straight into that and get it now rather than waiting, is that the undertakings for criminal history checks, for contractors, is part of the contractor management process, and the actions for me to follow up with BF and Susan to get an owner of that. Clearly any changes were communicated through BF in the policy and regulatory compliance committee, and communicated to the owner, to then update things as we need to, okay?

6.2.1.3 When GH was checking through the action points in the last meeting minutes, IB raised his concern about the incident reporting (as it is important that incidents that occur in aged care facilities are reported on time). Following IB’s comment, meeting participants talked about the OH&S committee [OH&S in this context refers to Occupational Health and Safety]. Their communication is open, direct and participative. IB’s communication is slightly stronger and demonstrates leadership.

IB: Other agenda items, just 1800 and mandatory reporting, entering into incident reporting as well, so that whole issue that I’ve noticed the reporting’s not tight.
GH: Okay, alright, we’ll follow that through. So the other things that are new here this month are overdue hazard logs. The quarterly quality assessment document, which is a massive document, and is an important document though. Ahh...and continuation of the quality care audit and moving that through. Okay. So, we’re not in August yet, so we go to the actions. National OH&S committee will have to be held over; I haven’t got anything from...
[GH looking through meeting materials/reports as talking through the above.]

IB:  When does the new OH&S manager start?

AM: The end of the month, isn’t it?

GH: Yep, yep. The 26th.

PB: No. Is that ES?

GH: Yes.

PB: No, it’s not until end of August, I just came from a meeting with KT. We were talking about the end of August.

GH: Okay. I don’t think there’s any, just to carry that over for the meeting of anything, any actions that come up.

IB: So is the OH&S committee happening in the absence of having a new one?

GH: Well, it happens quarterly, it doesn’t happen monthly.

IB: So when’s the next call?

GH: So we should have had one, I think the next one is August. So it’s just a matter of...

IB: Yep. Someone just needed to make sure that it happens...

RL: Yeah, KT’s been running that, hasn’t she.

IB: Okay.

6.2.1.4 After talking through the agenda items, GH moved into a discussion about individual care homes. This passage is taken from a conversation about a care home in Berry. At the beginning of the conversation, GH read from the report that Berry is “green in complaints, injuries from falls red”. There were four people who participated the conversation. Two of them were males (GH and IB) and two were females (MC and RL). The two males, GH and IB, were both the more senior employees. GH’s communication in this passage demonstrates leadership by initiating the topic of discussion and asking questions throughout the conversation. Communication of all participants in this passage is open and direct.

GH: Okay. Shall we just have a brief look at what we’ve got this month? ...so let’s have a chat around Berry, given what we know about Berry and what we’ve seen and hear. So Berry, green in complaints, injuries from falls red, which is, looks to me like the only one in the group.

MC: A spike in fractures and things, yep.

GH: And is that indicative of the fact that it’s a new home? Injuries from falls, what’s the metric again?

RL: So what’s the side analysis around that?

GH: Per thousand bed days, no, well, there’s other homes that, gee, it’s quite a big number isn’t it? Total actual’s 30, out of how many residents? 40.

RL: We’ve got 51 today.

GH: 51’s good. So, so that is quite a big number.

RL: They’ve only had 51 for the last week though, so prior to that when this data would have been collated for June, that would have been around 44, 45
residents, so that’s a lot of residents.
GH: They’re head and shoulders above anyone else.
RL: So why----
GH: They’re at 7.43 per thousand bed days for injuries. The next highest I can see is there’s quite a few around the 4.8s, well, when I say quite a few, four or five, and everyone else is in the twos and threes. So there’s a lot of falls or injuries within, well, yeah, falls down on floors with impact.
MC: Fractures, I just remembered they had two fractures I think, from falls this month.
GH: Yeah, yes, yeah.
MC: I put it in the pulse report. I had it printed out, I haven’t got it on me.
GH: Yeah, and that then, so what does that say? And that compares very highly to the Australian thing too? The benchmark?
MC: The benchmark still is, you know, 16 fractures per thousand bed days. Well, 38 really, it’s 16 offs and 16 others.
...
MC: So your fractures, you’ve got 16 fractured and 16 others, that’s, per thousand bed days, that’s the national, that’s 38 per thousand bed days. So they only had two fractures this month, you’re looking at the wrong figure.
[Participants continued to discuss injuries at care homes.]
GH: So what do we need to do then, because, around that one, that was obviously, has significance around injury for person.
MC: For that particular home I think we need to look at where it’s happening. Like was it hermitage, or is it the dementia unit? Looking at those things. Because that will tell us a lot to start with. But it’s----
...IB: So what are they doing from their own analysis?
MC: Exactly. So following this meeting, that’s the conversation that needs to happen.
GH: Yeah, yeah, and I think it’s that coaching conversation. Tell us about, you know, rather than what the hell are you doing down there.
MC: Exactly.

6.2.1.5 GH initiated the topic of resident aggression and mandatory training at care homes. MC then raised the issue of incident reporting in care homes. The meeting participants then discussed how incidents occur at care homes. In this passage, apart from initiating the topic and answering MC’s question about the report, GH did not talk much. This is mainly a discussion between MC, RL and IB. Power flowed to IB and slightly to RL. Communication of all participants is open and direct.

GH: Resident aggression, mandatory training...
MC: And the incident reporting----
RL: So is resident aggression----
MC: The incident reporting’s very good as well down there.
RL: Has resident aggression dropped from previous months? Because we
know it peaked, and then you did a lot of training in there, didn’t you?
MC: I’ll go and get that report, because you haven’t got it on you?
GH: No, I don’t, sorry.
MC: I’ll grab that report, because I wrote it all out.
IB: It’s still high, you know, it’s another one that----
MC: Yeah, it’s still high, I’ll just grab the----
IB: You know, you look at everyone else’s, Ingleburn 3.47.
GH: Yeah, it is.
IB: It is high. Particularly in a new building, single rooms where you’re
not----
RL: That’s right, and they’ve had intensive training, support.
IB: Yep. I mean, you shouldn’t be really giving away resident interaction.
RL: Not now, I would have thought June was better.

6.2.1.6 In this passage, meeting participants discussed in detail the operational issues
in Berry. Their communication is open and direct. GH’s communication is stronger
than the other meeting attendees and demonstrates leadership. GH’s communication
also shows that he relied on team members for their expertise which is in line with
Hofstede’s classification for New Zealand culture. MC’s communication demonstrates
good knowledge about risks and injuries at care homes.

MC: To Berry?
GH: Let’s go back to Berry.
MC: Berry remains two times greater than the company average for
absconding aggression. The slight downward trend last month has not
continued with the slight increase this month in terms of absconding
aggression. Berry currently sits 2.53, resulting in five months, two times
greater than the company average, so it’s still sitting there.
GH: It’s still up.
MC: Berry also sits at two times greater than the company average for
medication incidents and has done so for 10 months. Currently it’s 6.53
greater. And then we’ve also got here falls, we are we, a decrease of three
fractures this month, and a decrease of four homes. Recurring fractures at
both Berry, three fractures, and Donvale two for the rolling two month period.
So Berry had one last month and two this month, Donvale’s had one each
month. That sort of stuff. That’s all that Berry’s mentioned in the analysis.
GH: So is some of that stuff picked up in, or will be picked up by MA?
RL: Yeah, MA’s in the process of getting the action plan to me today.
GH: Great, okay.
RL: Yep, yep, because I needed to meld your----
MC: This stuff together.
RL: Which will be mostly obsolete, the one that we were currently sitting on.
MC: We talked the other day, yep. [“the other day” refers to the last meeting]
RL: To an operational action plan that covers all the business and risk.
GH: Okay.

6.2.1.7 Continuing the discussion about the care home in Berry, GH raised the issue of absenteeism. GH’s communication in this passage demonstrates leadership. The communication of meeting participants is open, direct and relaxed. Power flowed to GH when he demonstrated leadership in this exchange. Communication in this passage shows a shared understanding among GH, IB, RL and MC.

GH: Okay. Absenteeism is another one that runs the line.
RL: Yep.
AM: It’s surprising actually.
RL: So has HR been providing any assistance in there around absenteeism? I know you guys have with recruitment.
AM: Berry?
RL: Yep.
AM: I believe so. EM’s been in there around absenteeism workshops. But I’ll double check.
IB: I think it’s the same thing with CL, so what’s the plan, the HR team, around absenteeism as the HR partners, considering it’s coming up here quite late?
AM: Yeah, well, certainly absenteeism plays a part….
MC: Berry’s done a big recruitment drive too, haven’t they, with the RNs and stuff recently? Got RNs coming on board as well?
RL: Yeah, but this is absenteeism of recruited staff.

MC: But that might help, you know what I mean, if you got a bigger pool of staff, and you start to weed those ones out.
RL: You’ve still got to identify the root cause and manage the sick leave…
GH: Okay?
AM: I’ll forward this on.
GH: Thanks Adam.
RL: Thanks Adam.
GH: If you could bring that back next month, it’s a global view.
AM: Yep, yep.
RL: Yep, it’s good, isn’t it?
GH: It’s a good thing to do, isn’t it? It’s good.
AM: Yeah, absolutely.
RL: Very good.

6.2.1.8 In this passage, participants discussed the operation of a care home in Tamworth. Their discussion is open, direct and relaxed. Communication of GH is more resolute than the other meeting participants. Communication in this passage shows a shared understanding among GH, IB, RL and MC.
GH: Okay, data entry, absenteeism for Armidale as well. …Tamworth, injuries from falls, manual handling, I think there’s been a lot of work done on manual handling, as I understand it recently.

AM: There’s been a lot of support with Tamworth and absenteeism---

GH: It will be interesting to see it shift.

AM: I think that’s trending down, but---

RL: It, yeah, I would have thought so too.

GH: It was very high though, was it six point something?

AM: It was, it was relatively high, yep.

GH: It was six point, okay. Yeah.

6.2.1.9 This is a discussion around the operation of care homes in Campbelltown and Enfield. In this passage, GH’s communication demonstrates leadership by initiating the topic, but he does not do so as strongly as in the previous passages. Power flowed slightly to IB when he demonstrated good knowledge about the situation at the care homes. Communication among meeting participants is open and direct. There is no sign of hierarchy.

GH: Emm. Ahh….Campbelltown?

IB: Yeah.

GH: Complaints, injuries, under. Manager training, PB. Okay. Enfield, same?

[GH reading through report]

IB: Yep. Well, Campbelltown’s in a better position than Enfield. So Enfield, more could come out and make them, it could be incident reporting not happening, and so forth.

GH: Where’s that? Campbelltown?

IB: Enfield.

GH: Enfield.

MC: Enfield, yep.

GH: So either way we’ll probably see, if it’s under reporting then we might see some more reports, which would throw it up.

IB: Yep. I’d anticipate that it would go up in the next, for next month.

GH: Okay.

MC: Yeah, that one too from MN.

GH: Yep, okay. So resource…

IB: Resources are in, ON will be free from Bendigo this week and then we’ll be there for the whole of next week. New GM’s looking the goods, so I don’t think that’s a concern, clinical manager, yeah. Probably won’t last, but yeah, I’m managing that.

RL: She a new one as well, or----?

IB: Yeah, round October last year.

AM: Round October.

IB: There’s probably a bit of risk around if there was an agency visit this week, but that should be, that should be managed in the next couple of days.
Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
In Hofstede’s framework, Australian and New Zealand cultures have similar rankings in the dimension of IDV. Australian culture is scored 90, a highly individualistic culture. New Zealand culture is scored 79. The communication of participants in this meeting, as shown in passages 6.2.1.1 to 6.2.1.9, reveals that all meeting participants displayed initiative and were autonomously responsible for their areas of work. Apart from this, there is no other evidence found for this dimension.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for UAI.

Long-term Orientation (LTO)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for LTO.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

6.2.2 Analysis of Interview Data
After the meeting, an interview was conducted with GH. In the interview, GH firstly gave information about himself and his family which is summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of work with BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position at BP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19 Information about GH

Then GH reflected on his own experience and explained his understanding of the difference between British, Australian and New Zealand cultures.
i. Three months after this interview, GH will go to work in the UK head office for some time which he felt will be different from working in Australia.

GH: “Yeah it’s [different], it seems to be a lot more formal in terms of the interactions and the meetings [in the UK head office], and yeah quite more hierarchical and more formal…. So it will be interesting to see how I go in that environment.”

ii. GH considered that Australian and New Zealand cultures are different and that New Zealand culture is more similar to the culture of the UK.

GH: “…there are differences, I mean on a whole New Zealanders and Australians are pretty similar, like it would be fair to say in both business and personally New Zealanders are a little bit more um, they are not as forthright and this is a generalisation, but I think…New Zealanders are probably a little bit closer to the UK in terms of um, how things should happen and who says what, whereas in Australia I think you can expect that people will tell you pretty much which way or what they think and how you should move forward in very simple terms, and um, …more direct.”

iii. GH feels that a major difference between British and Australian culture is that people communicate less formally and more directly in Australian culture.

GH: “In the formality side of things it’s quite interesting, like if you talk to BF and DW, ah, the meetings ah in the way business is done is quite, is more formal in the UK and um, that’s generally the main thing they talk about, is that the differences is it’s less formal here, more opportunity to have your say probably. And um, people are a little bit more direct in terms of what they are after.”

GH considered that how strongly people communicate in the meeting is related to their confidence and knowledge about the issue and the impact of the topics being discussed.

GH: “So I think that’s an interesting thing and how hard people push into meetings and into business interactions is very much about how much confidence there is around the information, and what it means and what we are doing with it. So I, more confident from now in terms of where we are at and how we moving that agenda forward than what I was two months ago. So I think the need to really push into that stuff with the exceptions of real, you know, significant stuff like we’re going onto the compliance of each home and the reds and the ambers and why. That’s an area that we all still need to
push into but some of those other things like the audits and all of that side of stuff, I have more confidence that we are moving that forward.”

Some discussion about care home operation was based on the numbers presented in reports. During the interview, I asked GH if meeting participants have different views about the risk of predictive reports or numbers and how he would resolve this issue. GH suggested that his approach would be to resolve it separately after the meeting.

GH: “A range of ways, and some of it is about, depends on who it is a little bit as well. Um, but sometimes it’s productive to have the discussions then and then, about exactly what that means. Sometimes it’s not because of information about who is working so there might be some background information that I know in and around the home manager or something like that, but it’s not productive to share or it could be personal information, but it’s not productive to share but has an impact in here, so it’s better to leave it there but still pick it up outside of the meeting and work it through, whereas other times it needs to be worked through in that forum with people so we all agree with what, what the rating is, what the risk rating and what the action is.”

GH suggested that in his experience, direct arguments do not occur often in business.

GH: “Um, yeah probably not hugely though, I can’t think of um times where there’s been direct arguments around things. I think certainly trying to do things that will see issues forward and trying to work through in what the goal is I think that’s part of what that leadership piece is isn’t it, it’s being able to go well you came from here, you’re view is this, what’s the goal, what are you trying to do here, um how are we going to get there? Generally I think...I mean I just don’t see the value of arguing for argument’s sake.”

6.3 Unit SYD2 - Operation Meeting and Interview with GH

This section analyses two connected sets of data, SYD-M-QR2, and SYD-I-GH2, centered around a meeting within the operations team.

i. SYD-M-QR2 is a meeting, attended by members in the operation team including managers in operation, quality & control, legal, IT and human resources.

ii. SYD-I-GH2 is an interview with GH, the Group Director of Operations, after the meeting.

As explained in Section 6.1, the operation meeting was held every month and was attended by the operation team including: the two Group Directors of Operations, GH and IB; the Legal Director, BF; the Regional Director, PS; the Chief Information
Officer, PB; and senior managers in the Quality & Control Department and Human Resources. The operation team supervises the operation of BPAUG’s aged care facilities across Australia. Members of this team chaired the operations meeting in rotation. Stipulated by PS, the key aims of this meeting were:

i. To update senior managers in the operations team on the operation of BPAUG’s aged care facilities across Australia.

ii. To discuss key issues that arose in the daily operations of aged care facilities.

This meeting was chaired by PS.

In this section, two sets of data were analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about participants is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
<th>Experience living/working in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>35-40 M New Zealand Group Director of Operation</td>
<td>Born and grew up in New Zealand. Came to Australia to study and work. Has been living in Australia for 15 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>35-40 M Australian Group Director of Operation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>40-50 M Australian Chief Information Officer</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>45-55 F Australian Senior Manager, Quality Department</td>
<td>A few years in Hong Kong, teaching in universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>30-40 M Australian Senior Manager, HR Department</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>40-50 F Australian Regional Director (South)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL</td>
<td>45-55 F Australian Regional Director New Developments</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>35-45 M British Legal Director</td>
<td>Transferred by BP from UK head office to Sydney and has worked in Sydney for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3.1. Analysis of Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)
As previously discussed, Hofstede’s framework assigns Australian culture a PDI of 36 and New Zealand culture a slightly lower score of 22. Among the meeting participants, GH and IB held the most senior positions (BF did not participate in this meeting). Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking and their positions within the company, we would expect the following characteristics to be present in meeting communication.

i. Direct and open communication among all meeting participants.

ii. Open and direct discussion between IB, GH and other meeting participants.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI in the meeting communication.

6.3.1.1 At the beginning of the meeting, PS asks how RN shifts are being arranged at care homes. Communication between meeting participants is direct and open. PS’s communication demonstrated leadership by initiating topics and asking questions.

[RN refers to Registered Nurse] [EN refers to Enrolled Nurse]

PS: _Just go through. I wasn’t at the last meeting. And move on to August, Ian, to get an update on RN coverage._
IB: Yes, _I can give that._
PS: Yes.
IB: _Just draw it up. Won’t be a sec._
...
IB: _Update is available 4 p.m. weekend shifts._
AM: _These are the outstanding?_
IB: Yes.
PS: _4 p.m. week-----_
IB: _Weekend shifts. And LZ will be moving on that to fill those with registered nurses. We’ve got Bellarine, three night shifts. Status quo will be maintained. Windsor, 10 p.m. shifts weekday, 1 a.m. Saturday, 1 p.m. Sunday. At Campbelltown nil, all shifts covered. Enfield nil, all shifts covered. Sunshine is one nightshift – two nightshifts a fortnight and the status quo will be maintained for that._
PS: _So what do they have? An EN?_
IB: Yes. _An experienced EN. Bendigo, nine nights and six p.m. shifts in the fortnight, and that’s – that’s the immediate issue out of all those. And it’s the – the highest risk there is Bendigo and Colleen will be – actions will be; Colleen will be rearranging the roster to reduce that number, and we have overseas
6.3.1.2 In this passage, participants discussed predictive risks at care homes. In this passage we can observe that power flowed slightly to IB when he asked questions and sought to confirm the situation in regard to risk. Towards the end of the conversation IB was in a more dominant position than PS. Communication in this passage is open, direct and participative.

PS: *Predictive risk, we’ve changed– so this has just been run off this morning with the change of numbering the numbers... I’m a little suspicious. As I said, I’ve run this off – PK’s run it off this morning. Data entry; everybody’s agreeing, that would be nice.*

AM: *Berry’s moved significantly. There were 30 points last month.*

PS: *So there were.*

IB: *So at the last meeting we talked about having the previous month...current month results so we could see trends...if this is a trend.*

PB: *Yes. We’re working on getting that included.*

IB: *Right.*

PB: *PK’s just been a little bit flat out with labour cost reporting and the end of financial year...*

IB: *Yes.*

PB: *...reports.*

PS: *Okay...*

IB: *Is that included in the minutes?*

PS: *So in the minutes it says, “Format to be changed as discussed. LN suggested cross-checking would be useful.”*

IB: *Okay.*

6.3.1.3 This passage is a discussion around the risks in care home operations and how to flag these risks to the people in charge. Soon after PB initiated the topic, IB started to make comments. IB’s communication is strong and demonstrates leadership. Communication in this passage is open, direct and active.

PB: *The risk alert.*

PS: *Yes.*

PB: *We’ve just had one come out from the UK on IT security and RK wrote a cover letter to that.*

IB: *Yes.*

PB: *Sort of got everyone’s attention. “RK’s written a letter. We’d better actually read it.”*

IB: *Right.*

AM: *Yes. No, that sounds good. We’ll get something drafted ASAP.*

PS: *Can I just – did you work out who your distribution list was for your audit visas, lads?*
AM: I thought we had it, but I didn’t think – no offence – you or KN are on that list.
IB: It should mirror the CHC. [CHC refers to Care Home Complaints]
AM: Yah.
IB: So we need to check the CHC so, you know, for the regions – for the, you know, southern or northern, or goes to RD and the two OMs. [RD refers to Regional Director] [OM refers to Operation Manager]
AM: Yes.
IB: And then everything else goes into. So an OM should be able to see exactly what’s happening across the region as well.
PS: Good.
AM: Is that okay to action directly with you instead of going---- through PL and then-----
PB: Yes.
AM: Yes.

6.3.1.4 In this passage, the meeting participants discussed the integration of phone systems in care homes. As the CFO of the company, PB was the leader of the project and was responsible for overseeing its progress. The discussion was initiated by IB. The first half of the conversation was mainly between IB and PB. GH joined the conversation later. Although the meeting was chaired by PS, she did not contribute significantly to this conversation. GH and IB clearly demonstrate leadership in their communication.

IB: We’ve got new builds, we’ve got – you know, if we acquire homes, we’re going to have to look at nurse call systems if they fit to what our-----
PB: Right, yes.
...
PB: Tim and I have come to a decision on the strategy going forward there. Thanks very much for sending DM along. He was very helpful.
IB: Oh, good.
PB: So TM, DE, care manager from Coburg…and myself went down – out to Comtel, which is the nurse call company that’s putting the Questek system into Wodonga, and they showed us a demonstration of integrating DECT phones, nurse call, duress, everything all into a package. And then we went to see the Australian distributor for the DECT phones to see what they could offer. And we’ve now come to a landing point on where we should be going with our DECT phone integration to nurse call strategy.
GH: It’d be brilliant to see that, wouldn’t it?
PS: It would.
PB: That’s what I want to put down on paper.
GH: Yes.
PB: Put it down and get the exact user requirements as well so we can match that up with the-----
GH: *Okay.*
PB: *-----with the solution.*
GH: *So is that – will you have that – where will you take that to?*
PB: *I’ll bring that back here for the next meeting.*
IB: *Very good.*

6.3.1.5 In this passage, the meeting participants discussed the contractor issue which was mentioned in Unit SYD1. At the beginning of the last meeting (Unit SYD1), GH was not happy with BF’s absence and this is mentioned again in this passage. Their conversation shows a shared dissatisfaction regarding BF’s absence from meetings and lack of involvement with the contractor issue. This is a direct and open discussion between the participants.

PS: *Okay. The players and contractors, GH? You were going to put up with them further on ownerships, et cetera.*
GH: *Yes, he’s been away so I’ll catch it. It won’t be this week. It’ll be next week.*
IB: *Normally people have an excuse about their own leave that “I was on leave”, but you’re using other people’s leave ‘cause actions are not done.*
GH: *He was.*
PS: *That was my excuse, I was on leave, I wasn’t here at this meeting.*
IB: *Right.*
IB: *I see how it works.*
GH: *So I’ll catch up with him next week on that.*
PS: *Thank you.*
PB: *He should have plenty of time. While he was on leave, he’s – the outsourcing.*
AM: *Should be in there, you should – best ask him now.*
... 
IB: *Is he attending to the quality risk anymore?*
GH: *Yeah. I said he’d do anything to get out of it, won’t he?*
IB: *Yeah.*
GH: *I think he’s a bit busy at the moment, productivity commissions and all.*

6.3.1.6 This passage is a discussion about risk reports from care homes. This topic was also raised in the last meeting (SYD-M-QR1 in Unit SYD1). In this passage, PS demonstrated leadership when she initiated topics and requested an update from meeting participants. PS’s leadership skills are also revealed by her conclusion to discussion of this topic: “*I’ll put this on my head. Shut up, you. So – well, just data entry’s just a bit suspicious.*” This passage also reveals a close relationship between PS, GH and IB, revealed through the following relaxed and collegial quotes: “*Two weeks and you bloody-----*” (GH); “*Black hat – black hat on. Put a green hat on for once, eh?*” (IB was half joking). This is an open and direct conversation between meeting participants.
PS: So GH, written here is “Updating next meeting high risk homes” and now it’s me. So is that just about updating our high risk homes? Is there anything else surrounding that? No?
GH: No.
PS: Okay. So-----
GH: So is that what we’re into?
PS: Yes-----
GH: Have we got the predictive risk report there?
PS: We do. Which has only just been run.

... IB: So we’ve already discussed that the trends – we haven’t got the numbers in there so we can’t see trends.
RL: Mmm, previous.
IB: Yes, previous, okay.
PB: So that still needs to be put in, yes.
IB: So that’s the first action. The first action needs the-----
RL: But didn’t we talk about that last time?
PB: We did. But we haven’t been able to do it. PK’s been flat out trying to get the end of financial year reports done and the labour cost reporting which----- ...He hasn’t had a chance to get to this one, but it is pretty close to the top of his list once he gets those ones finished.
PS: So the difference on it is just the numbers at this point?
RL: Mmm-hmm.
PS: But it looks very green; I’m suspicious.
GH: Mmm.
RL: So am I.

... AM: There’s a lot of change there.
PS: I hope I’m wrong.
GH: Gee. How long have you been doing this, RL?
PS: Two weeks.
RL: -----Two weeks.
GH: Two weeks and you bloody-----
IB: Black hat – black hat on. Put a green hat on for once, eh?
PS: Okay, PB. I’ll put this on my head. Shut up, you. So – well, just data entry’s just a bit suspicious.
IB: Yes, well, we identified that there’s one data entry that’s probably an issue.
RL: Mmm-hmm.
Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

In Hofstede’s framework, Australian and New Zealand cultures have similar rankings in the dimension of IDV. Australian culture is scored 90, a highly individualistic culture. New Zealand culture is scored 79.

Communication of participants in this meeting, as shown in passages 6.3.1.1 to 6.3.1.6, reveals that all meeting participants displayed initiative and were autonomously responsible for their areas of work. There is also evidence showing that they worked very closely and shared similar understandings and opinions on some issues (especially in passages 6.3.1.5 and 6.3.1.6). There is no further evidence found for this dimension.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for UAI.

Long-term Orientation (LTO)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for LTO.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

6.3.2 Analysis of Interview Data

After the meeting, an interview was conducted with GH. I told GH that MC (in SYD-M-QR1, Unit SYD1) and PS (in SYD-M-QR2, Unit SYD 2) were both key managers in the operations team but their communication styles are very different. GH felt that MC and PS have different background, different ways of doing things and different views.

GH: “Yep, both nurses, ah, um, PS’s probably got more, I think some of it is about um how they see the world a little bit and um, yeah so PS’s a very direct, operational, bent on things. MC probably comes more from a um, academic kind of style and background. So there’s a little bit in that and I think some of it’s about what we, what we shared around what was the common goals of the why’s we were doing some things and I think um, PS and MC probably had different views on what was mostly important in terms of what we should be doing.

GH also explained why he communicated strongly and demonstrated leadership in the last meeting (SYD-M-QR1, in Unit SYD1), but was less strong and more relaxed in this meeting (SYD-M-QR2).
GH: “...some of that's about who should be chairing that meeting and we needed to get the meeting to a point which kept the business safe which is kind of the whole function of that meeting, up to the previous one I wasn't confident in terms of where we were at with it and what information was producing, was meaningful... And I think we've now got to a point where we are starting to get some meaningful information and I think it's up to PS to start to take more of a lead in that.”

As Group Director of Operations, GH worked closely with senior managers and is responsible for the operation of care homes. During the interview, GH reflected on his experience and suggested that cultural difference may not be the most important factor that influences leadership. Instead, GH argued that the goals that motivate leadership may have more impact on an individual’s leadership style.

GH: “I think fundamentally differences in what people want to get out of their leadership, their time in leadership. I think sometimes people's motivation is around um developing people and moving people forward as well as achieving goals or just solely, wholly and solely about goals and that's, irrespective of what impact it has on people. I think that um [nationality] can influence it, but I think things like International Business Schools, ah, the media and multimedia and how that now impacts across different cultures, um has kind of cut that down now so what you know you might have seen 20 years ago existing in some cultures as a way of leadership and what's valued as shifting slightly now to a more kind of agreed way of what good leadership looks like.”

In the interview, GH also explained the culture of the health/aged care industry. He suggested that people who work in the health/aged care industry share the same understanding and values, in particular a desire to care for people. This shared starting point reduces the impact of regional or cultural differences.

GH: “I think generally you could say that people that come to work in health care or aged care see and understand what the differences, in terms of working to other industries, 'cause if we get something wrong either in direction or in what we do, the impact is to people, 'cause that is our business and is looking after people and caring for people, so if you get things wrong you can have terrible outcomes for people, whereas some other industries like I don't know selling bikes or selling cars, um, if you don't get the sale or things aren't necessary done exactly right, generally speaking the outcome is then a poor thing for a person, like things go really wrong at a care home and people just die. Same in a hospital, so there's that real...pull between commercial performance and what that means for individual people in terms of that sort of healthcare thing, caring for people.”

GH: “So generally what I found working in hospitals and aged care businesses
and things is people enter those industry and those organisations with that in mind and often you see people coming from different organisations or different industries probably and they don’t always get that impact and so they either go oh yeah I get it and I really like it and I’ll stay and then they become part of that caring sort of...or they go oh this isn’t for me I’d much rather work somewhere like a hotel where you care for people but for a very short period of time and it’s about making sure that things are really nice and they are well cared for from a very service point of view as opposed to an in depth personal care and that sort of thing. So they, I think that’s the thing I see in common in people that work in aged care and healthcare verses other industries and I think some of the regional differences and cultural differences um aren’t necessary, well they are here in terms of how things are done, but the fundamental thing of what we want to do in terms of what it’s about is pretty consistent across certainly New Zealand and Australia and from the UK and generally in healthcare I think as well for aged care. You will see those commonalities of um, I suppose goals in terms of what a person sees as their role, and what the impact of it is. ”

6.4 Unit SYD3 - Development Review Committee Meeting and Interviews with DW, TT, and TW

This section analyses four connected sets of data, SYD-M-DRC, SYD-I-DW, SYD-I-TT and SYD-I-TW, centered around a meeting within the Development Review Committee.

i. SYD-M-DRC is a meeting attended by the executives and senior managers in the Finance, Development, Operations, Legal and Property Departments.

ii. SYD-I-DW is an interview with DW, Director of Strategy and Development, after the meeting.

iii. SYD-I-TT is an interview with TT, Senior Manager of Property, after the meeting.

iv. SYD-I-TW is an interview with TW, Commercial Director (South), after the meeting.

The Development Review Committee meeting was held every month and was attended by DW, the Director of Strategy and Development; GH and IB, the Group Directors of Operations; BF, the Legal Director; PS, the Director of Development; MH and TW, the Commercial Directors; AD, the Regional Director; MS, the Director of Property; and TT and MT, the Senior Managers in Property Department. These participants formed the Development Review Committee to manage the development of new care homes and the extension and maintenance of existing facilities. Development Review Committee meetings were chaired by DW, the Director of Strategy and Development. Stipulated by DW, the key aims of the SYD-M-DRC meeting were:

i. To discuss the maintenance and extension of existing care homes.
ii. To discuss the progress of new developments.
iii. To discuss potential investment opportunities.

Also in attendance at this meeting was CB, who was from the head office in the UK. CB came to work in BPAUG for 3 months to support the progress of investment projects and the development of new aged care facilities.

In this section, SYD-M-DRC was analysed using Hofstede’s framework explained in Chapter 2. Codes used in analysis are presented in Appendix II. Information about the participants is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Detailed Information about Participants</th>
<th>Experience living/working in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Worked with BP Arabia, Middle East for 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Being transferred to BPAUG in 2010. Has worked in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia for 1 year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB 35-45 M</td>
<td>British Senior Manager in Finance, BP head office</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO 40-50 F</td>
<td>Australian Director of Development</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH 35-45 F</td>
<td>Australian Commercial Director (North)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TW 35-45 M</td>
<td>British / Australian Permanent Resident</td>
<td>- Lived in France for 1 year and a half.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Did market research about India and worked in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Did market research about China and worked in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for a few months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Being transferred to BPAUG and has worked in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia for 2 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21 Information about The Participants in Unit SYD3

6.4.1 Analysis Meeting Data Based on Hofstede’s Framework

Power Distance (PDI)
As previously discussed, Hofstede’s framework assigns Australian culture a PDI of 36, British culture a similar score of 35, and New Zealand culture a slightly lower score of 22 – they are all low power distance cultures. Hence in all cultures, communication is direct and participative. Among the meeting participants, DW, PO, MH, TW, AD, MS, GH, IB and BF were all on the Director level. CB was from the head office. Only TT and MT were senior managers. Based on Hofstede’s PDI ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to appear in their communication.

i. Direct and open communication between all meeting participants.

ii. No sign of hierarchy.

The following passages provide evidence for the dimension of PDI in the meeting communication.

6.4.1.1 DW started the meeting. As the chairman, he asked if there were any additional issues before going through the minutes and action points from the last meeting. DW’s communication clearly demonstrated leadership as the chair of the
meeting. The communication of participants is direct, relaxed and active. There is no sign of hierarchy.

DW: Right, OK.
CB: Good morning.
DW: OK, minutes of last meeting, any issues?
TT: Yes, and I’ll…
DW: Anything else? What were the issues?
TT: The size of the TVs was a bit…and there was a bit more verbiage around what we’re doing for standard care. Well it says 36 inch TVs for each service section 37 inch and the standard is a 32 inch. And it’s correct that the refurbs will be dealt on their merits, refurbs, extensions to be treated on their merits.
MT: Extensions of the building.
TT: Well it’s just that you’ve got one half doing one thing, one half doing the other so it’s a bit more complicated that’s all.
IB: I think the other point there’s no high care mentioned.
TT: Well standard care, standard care…Standard high care.
DW: Should the top one be…
TT: Extra service high care…
DW: There should be another one in there should there?
TT: Yeah just high care.

6.4.1.2 After TT raised the issue of refurbishing the care home, DW wanted to start going through the action points of the last meeting so he asked TT to give a quick update about the maintenance/development of care homes in Wodonga, Bankstown and Baulkham. However before TT gave the update, MT raised another issue which was about the construction of a care home in Mossman. Communication in this passage is direct and open. DW’s communication demonstrates leadership. There is no sign of hierarchy.

DW: OK. Any other issues TT with the minutes? No. Right, action points, so let’s run through those. TT real quick, Wodonga. Need to cover off Bankstown, Baulkham…
MT: Sorry DW. One other point, Mossman construction will start in 2013 following updates.
DW: Oh yeah so we need to set that out.
MH: Because it’s not happening or because …?
IB: I don’t think it was an agreed.
...
DW: Yeah right so we need to formally minute then that Mossman we’re not going to go ahead with. I know we’ve talked about it and we’ve self set it but in this context let’s formally say that we’re not…look I think the official line is we’ll review it again in eighteen months but at the moment it’s off ‘cause I’ve got other opportunities to pursue in preference.
6.4.1.3 In this passage, DW asked for an update on the action points from the last meeting. DW's communication demonstrates leadership by initiating the topic and asking key questions (e.g. about the project timeline). As the person who oversees the project, TT's communication is strong. Overall in this passage, the communication between all participants is very open, direct and active. There is no sign of hierarchy.

DW: OK, action. So TT can you... so we’ve got Wodonga, we’ve got Bankstown if you can give us a quick update... would be good... Bankstown.
TT: You might’ve seen Nuts and Bolts. Bankstown is really... [‘Nuts and Bolts’ is BP’s internal newsletter]
GH: Looks like an Ikea centre.
MH: Costco.
TT: Costco yeah. That’s the slab....
DW: Where’s the car park, out the front?
TT: Car park’s under here.
DW: Geez it has progressed hasn’t it. When did we take NT out, June, early June?
CB: 3rd of June.
DW: That’s pretty good going.

... GH: Neighbours have been good?
TT: Neighbours have been fantastic. I mean we did start the project by replacing all new fences all around the perimeter and a bit of payola so it was all very good. We did a few favours to them so they’re very happy. We chopped some trees down for them.
DW: Good stuff. So...
Still on for May next year?
TT: Absolutely.
DW: Good stuff.
TT: It’s a big project, you know, the builder and I have decided we’ll know much better by Christmas where we stand on that because once you get the roof on they should get a pretty good crack on it. So yes it’s pretty exciting that one. Well actually it’s really worth coming and have a look, you can start to really sense, just get a sense of scale, it’s a Willoughby type room, it’s actually quite a big...
DW: You can host one of these there when you think it’s an appropriate time.
TT: We can host of these here yeah. It might be a bit later ‘cause that’ll be much later but, um, we’re doing a finalization of the room, the finishes in the room, what the room looks like.
DW: When will that be done?
TT: That’s about a month away and that works in parallel. [TT gives more details about the construction.]
IB: ... garden, do you have much garden?
TT:  There’s courtyards, in fact the courtyards are pretty special. It’s probably not as generous as Wodonga’s courtyards, you know, it’s a tight site. I just had a session with LN on that yesterday and pretty well nailed the court, it’ll be interesting.

DW: Good stuff.

6.4.1.4 This passage is a discussion about a potential investment in Sterling. It was a project that the Development Review Committee had been investigating and planning for some time. They hope to shape the project into a business case and then make a proposal to head office for approval. In this passage, DW’s communication continues to demonstrate leadership. The communication of TT and AD is strong when they explained the situation, as they had been working on and leading this project. Overall, communication of participants in this passage is open, direct and active.

DW: Let’s talk Sterling, where are we on Sterling?
TT:  We’ve drafted out the first part of the business case. We just need some operational input to confirm the staffing, there’s some discussion around staffing which probably warrants a...
[AD entering room]
CB:  We’re just talking about Sterling.
DW:  Good timing.
AD:  Very good timing.
TT:  AD perfectly conspicuous.
TT:  AD handed me the financial model and…the only open question in your mind at that time which you may have now addressed is the staffing model, just getting an operational sign off on the staffing model which is probably you now.
...
PO:  And I did see...stuff up there the other day too and confirmed that the competitor is asking bonds of three hundred upwards.
DW:  So how quickly do we think we realistically can pull it all together ‘cause I’m keen for this to be the next business case that we get out here.
AD:  Well I think....sorry and I’m not sure where the conversation got up to but yes there was the staffing but the other thing for me is that I think the business case I think when I calculated it sat at around about the eighteen and a half, nineteen percent range.
TT:  Yeah it’s gonna run in like that....I brought the book value right up to September and said these are all book figures, if you prefer to run it out to the actual dates then that’s fine but...what it means is you’re actually saying it’s worth more than what’s on our books... But that’ll mean a run in at eighteen, nineteen percent and that we have to put the business case up on that basis. It’s really how you want to read the story.
AD:  Yeah I mean it’s a theoretical discussion which I think we can probably take that offline. And I think to DW’s point is that well yeah I mean the model’s
there, I think we’re just waiting on the words and the competitive stuff with which to lodge the business case. If we think that at nineteen percent it’s a goer...I don’t agree bringing those numbers forward to get it to twenty one or twenty two when it’s not actually that sort of rate.

TT: Except today’s book values exactly the same as it was two years ago so you tell me how that makes sense.

AD: Yeah, the same as a cashflow in the payback period which is critical to the IRR is a big differential. So I’ll take your valuation point as said but I think that when you move around...’cause it shows we’re gonna pay back our money earlier when that’s not the case by moving those numbers closer to...

CB: You might want to just run that past Mr. MR as well.

TT: Actually KT’s here next week isn’t he?

AD: I’ve expressed my concerns to DW.

DW: AD and I are both on the chartered accountant same page.

AD: Yes.

CB: So what page that will be.

AD: The lobotomized page.

... AD: If we’re happy to go with nineteen and I think it’s just around the risks.

6.4.1.5 Following their discussion in the previous passage, the participants continued to discuss how much bond they should put into the business case. They compared it with a potential competitor’s in the area. In this passage, DW’s communication continues to demonstrate leadership. PO’s communication is especially strong as she explained and analysed the bond issue in detail.

GH: Sorry, who is taking three hundred thousand on bonds?

PO: United Care. So they built a new facility probably about ten km away, five km away from us. It’s the only...and it’s high and low care and low care dementia, and the new low care they’re asking bonds of three hundred thousand.

GH: How old is it?

PO: ...it’s probably about four years old. It was being built when I was up there last a couple of years ago and it was relative...

AD: And they’re full?

PO: Not completely. Their other low care down the road was full. The new low care is, um, a lot of it was dementia. So one floor was full and the other one wasn’t too far away. But it’s actually only been opened two years ‘cause what they did was build that first, put all the high care in there then build the other one and moved them back and now they’re filling the low care dementia.

AD: So they’ve been open four years then in total?

PO: No, no, haven’t completely, I think it’s probably still maybe two years. I mean I can’t glean a lot of information, I got a good look around it.

...
What’s the name of it again?

It’s called Uniting Church and I can’t remember. I’ve actually done a summary on it, I’ll send it internally.

I’ve got some feedback on business case which I will give you guys over the weekend. It’s a lot of stuff which is still copy paste from Bankstown, there’s a lot of stuff that’s ...

There’s some operational stuff.

I know the project’s important but please ‘cause someone might be running this in the future, I don’t want to have to open something that is gonna be three hundred grand which is gonna be very difficult to get a bond for that.

Oh yeah look I mean three hundred thousand would be a mature price. I mean you’d be having to fill that with probably less than, you know, bonds less than that ’til you got it to its mature level. And interestingly when I was walking around the care manager that took me around had been there seven years, said that our only...was a low care in the region too that was taking bonds of about two hundred and fifty, three hundred, but was an older low care facility, but they said their real competition for the bonded area was over at Aranda at Belconnen. So they didn’t see anything on that side and they’re really on the other side of Aranda, of Canberra, Sterling, so it’s right away and that’s a fair distance away if you’re thinking that’s your competition on the other side, so there didn’t seem to be much on the Sterling side.

OK.

6.4.1.6 In this passage, participants continued to discuss development projects. DW’s communication continues to demonstrate leadership. The communication of MS is strong and demonstrates authority. MH also actively participated in the discussion. CB’s communication demonstrates his knowledge and expertise in doing investment projects. Their communication in this passage is active, open and direct.

So minuting where we’re agreeing with the ninety four bed proposal to move forward as per the paper.

Do we need to keep NL in the loop or...?

I don’t know but I don’t think, yeah. See the thing is the proposal we’re putting forward is still very flexible. So actually we’re putting forward a design to the planners here is the bricks and mortar. Actually...we already said we can get up to one twenty if we wanted to.

I would leave him...he’s got enough on his plate.

So we talked about...the action is that we can move forward and just hook up with council...

That’s right, he’s basically ...

...pre-DA. ‘Cause we talked about...we were talking about the timing
and that if we do go to DA that we’d need that operational plan understood because as soon as it gets public people will want to know what’s happening to me so we need to be sure we’ve got that story.

MS: There’s a lease option yeah for forty three beds, yeah, down at Phillip Bay.

DW: What would you do with the other...would you be able to accommodate the other fifty? Not fifty, how many’s at Queens Park?
AD: So I wouldn’t mind just, you know, let’s just go through all the options as part of the operational plan and see what we can do. I mean today, if it was today I could probably accommodate most of them.
MS: You’ve got twenty vacancies haven’t you in that sort of southern Sydney area?
AD: Don’t forget most of them...sorry, there are a few people there on guardianship...
GH: Thirteen.
AD: ...yeah thirteen. ...
MS: Where’s the most vacancies?
GH: Some of them have done very well in regional areas as well. We have had someone go from Adelaide to Tumut.
AD: ...in terms of our latest application with the way this currently sits we’re a bit short on extra service licenses, so I think we need to make that statement as well. I think there’s about four or so licenses I think that eighteen to twenty two or something were a bit short.
MH: There are no extra service licenses at Queens Park.
[Participants continued to discuss the license issue.]
TT: This DA’s gonna take a while.
CB: But we’ve just got to get the clock ticking haven’t we, you know, get it in.
DW: OK. Now the other, what’s yours, Kempsey wasn’t it?

6.4.1.7 In this passage, participants discussed the development of a care home in Kempsey. The project was managed by MT. This was the last project being discussed in this meeting. DW’s communication continues to demonstrate leadership. MT’s communication also demonstrates leadership, as the manager of this project. The communication of participants is open, direct and active. There is no sign of hierarchy.

MS: Kempsey, MT’s got the plans there.
MT: Just a quick one. Between now and the last meeting the DA was or the plans for DA were signed off from ops [the operation team]. So I just want to basically pass the motion in the meeting that we got to that point.

... 
MT: So it’s really as per the business case initiative. So it will be centre at the
front, low care throughout the back and then slight modifications to high care. It’s probably just a case if anyone’s got any questions on it.

CB: I mean it’s not something you’re expecting people to go through now is it?

MT: No, no.

AD: I mean... for anyone that wants to there are documents available where we’ve informed with some design standards and either spoke to why we’ve... if we have deviated from them which there weren’t many, as to why we’ve also changed the plans or the plans are actually in line with some of our old design standards as well which is quite good.

DW: So the entrance is still the same isn’t it?

MS: Entrance moved to the front.

... 

DW: Yeah sorry I beg your pardon, I meant the driveway?

MS: Driveway’s the same, yeah correct. So where the existing entry is you’ll note that there’s some four rooms going in there, so it’ll be a staged development in that regard. In terms of the planning we had a pre-lodgement meeting with council, it all sounded pretty simple, they didn’t have any major issues, we’re not expecting any major issues. So now that the DA’s lodged we’ve actually asked the consultants to crack on with the design, so fast track the design rather than wait for the DA. ...So it’s quite possible that we’ll have a DA before the end of the year and this build could happen probably in the new year rather than where we’ve currently got it scheduled.

MT: So it could actually come forward a couple of months.

... 

MH: I mean at ELT this morning we talked about, you know, experts on the floor being at accreditation times, and this is probably a key one where we’d put the hand up for a property person to be at this one.

MS: Absolutely.

GH: How many beds will we...will any beds have to come off...?

MT: While... the way we’re staging it you’ll actually build the back section and then... from the front but we move back into the new section.

MH: You won’t need to decamp.

DW: It’s high care moving to low care though isn’t it?

MT: There’s ten high care that’s gotta go.

MH: Oh OK, yeah.

DW: This was net twenty five beds wasn’t it this one?

MT: Yeah.

DW: And do you think the costs are in line with what we got approval for?

MT: Yep.

AD: That didn’t sound particularly convincing.

CB: No I wasn’t convinced.

MT: No, no, look it’s a point where we’re working through at the moment. At the moment we’re still within budget.
MS: We’ll tell you it when it’s tendered. We’re expecting to be able to bring it in within the budget.
AD: I’m sure you guys have spoken about it.
CB: Yes we have.
TT: So we’re minuting that Kempsey’s DA is signed off by the development review committee, that’s what we’re saying.
CB: That’s what we’re agreeing then that that’s signed off.
MH: I think the fact that ops have signed it off and if they’re happy and they’ve been through the process then this group is happy.
AD: We’re excited.
MS: Good, it’s great to hear that someone’s excited about property.

... 

DW: Has anyone got any other business?
AD: Don’t call me the client one more time. [laughing]
DW: I’ll talk about that one when it’s further down the line.
DW: OK thank you.
[End of meeting]

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
In Hofstede’s framework, Australian, British and New Zealand cultures have similar scores in the dimension of IDV. Australian culture is scored 90, British culture is scored 89 and New Zealand culture is scored 79 – all highly individualistic cultures. Based on Hofstede’s IDV ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to be present in the communication of participants in the meeting.
   i. High level of individualism shown in their communication.
   ii. High level of autonomy and initiative shown in their communication.

Data in SYD-M-DRC shows evidence in line with Hofstede’s classification of Australian, British and New Zealand cultures in the dimension of IDV. The communication of all participants shows that they have good knowledge about the work in their own areas, are responsible for their projects and display initiative in regard to their work.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
Unlike the support for PDI and IDV as provided above, communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for MAS.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
In Hofstede’s framework, Australian and New Zealand cultures have similar scores in the dimension of UAI – Australian culture is scored 51 and New Zealand culture is scored 49. British culture has a score of 35 – a very low uncertainty avoidance culture. Based on Hofstede’s UAI ranking, we would expect the following characteristics to appear in the meeting communication.
i. High tolerance of ambiguous situations, comfortable with change and highly adaptable.
ii. Less structured, flexible in process and planning.

Communication in this meeting does not provide strong evidence for this dimension. However, if we compare communication in this meeting with SYD-M-QR1 (the meeting chaired by GH in Unit SYD1) and SYD-M-QR2 (the meeting chaired by PS in Unit SYD2), we can see that DW’s communication is more relaxed than the communication of GH and PS. Leadership demonstrated in DW’s communication is also more flexible and focuses mainly on the overall structure, progress of projects and key issues like timelines and costs, and is more relaxed regarding details. The communication of participants in SYD-M-DRC is more active and participative than the communication of participants in SYD-M-QR1 and SYD-M-QR2.

Long-term Orientation (LTO)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for LTO.

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)
Communication in the meeting does not provide evidence for IND.

6.4.2 Analysis of Interview Data

After the meeting, separate interviews were conducted with DW, TW and TT. Interviewees were asked to reflect on the meeting discussion, their understanding of BP and their own experience. The interviews also raised issues of culture, communication and management in international business and the interviewees talked about their understandings of cross-cultural business communication and management. A brief summary of the background of three interviewees is presented in Table 6.3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Position in BPAUG</th>
<th>Experience living/working in other cultures/countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DW</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Director of Strategy &amp; Development</td>
<td>- 3 years working for BP in Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 1 year working in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TW</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Regional Director</td>
<td>- 1 and 1/2 years living in France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- A few months working in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 6 months working in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- About 2 years working in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Australia (5th generation)</td>
<td>Senior Manager, Construction &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>- Some years working in different parts of Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Some years working with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22 Information about The Interviewees in Unit SYD3

Summarising DW, TW and TT’s reflections during the interviews, and screening and reducing information obtained in these interviews by following the research questions (as explained in Chapter 3), the findings from interviews are summarised into seven major areas.

6.4.2.1 Accepting differences and building affinity with others.
Both DW and TW have experiences working with people from different cultures. Their opinions are summarised separately.

i. DW’s opinion
DW suggested that more exposure to different cultures and people will assist in promoting a deeper understanding of people and cultures.

DW: “I think moving around has been great for us [DW’s family]. I think it broadens your mind and you meet people from all walks of life, so we know people now from all corners of the world and I think it just makes you aware more of people, cultures…”

ii. TW’s opinion
TW argued that being able to accept difference in cultural norms (for example, food) and respect these differences is important for building up “trust and affinity” in business.

TW: “You need to be I think willing to go along with the cultural norms which predominantly the differences revolve around food, so meals are very important aren’t they and routine and ritual around food is very important and it varies quite a lot by culture. So you have to be prepared I think in order to build trust and affinity in a business sense to fit in with that even if it seems completely bizarre… So lambs brain curry in India I had, and this guy took me to a restaurant, a duck restaurant in Beijing, so we had ducks feet with some sauce which was horrible which I told him I didn’t like mustard and he said that’s OK, so he went and got me another bowl of ducks feet with a different sauce which was equally horrible. Then ducks gizzard, then ducks tongue, …you’ve just got to go along with it. Ball frog soup with chilli with a ball frog floating on the top, and pigs ears and all these things, and you have to be prepared to just go along with it. I think it’s part of the cost, personal
cost of making the relationship work, and if it's good enough for you then why isn't it good enough for me, it ought to be good enough for me, if that's what you normally do, yeah. The problem's with me not with you so I need to make the effort to do as you do.”

6.4.2.2 The importance of accuracy in communication with people from different cultural backgrounds.

i. TT’s opinion
TT had, in his own words, “quite a bit of experience working with Asian groups”. He suggested that misunderstandings can easily occur and the best way to avoid them is to double confirm (spoken and written) to ensure accuracy in understanding.

TT: “I’ve had quite a bit of experience working with Asian groups, because World Square was owned by a Malaysian – Chinese/Malaysian group, called Ipoh Garden. ...So working with the Malaysians was really my main introduction to the different ways things were done, and even the Japanese some of the dealings, because we’re doing development deals, and recognising there’s some sensitivities, and most importantly the nodding of the head doesn’t mean ‘yes’. In terms of communication, for me the biggest problem that is generic is people making statements, thinking they’re understood, and those who are listening, not understanding what’s been said to them, and therefore there is misunderstanding...”

TT: “More background knowledge has a lot to do with it, and we have to recognise that you probably have to say things in a number of different ways to ensure that the other person truly understood what you meant. Other techniques are get the other person to say it back to you, what you just said, so you know they understand what you said, because people don’t always understand. In fact more frequently than not they don’t, or they’re thinking about something else when you’re talking so they never really heard what you said, and only heard the last three words. So I find that I – my – techniques that I’ve learned, as I said, you repeat yourself a few times, and then you say things a couple of different ways, and then you look for the body language to make sure they’re tuned in, and if it’s appropriate ask them to, “Let’s just go through that. Do you understand?”

TT: “...I’ve taken over writing the minutes so that I can write down, in very clear terms what was discussed, and therefore that reinforces the message, ...that technique of writing down, and minuting, and publishing the minutes, and taking feedback off the minutes, is fundamental to getting the story told correctly.”
TW’s opinion
TW considered important to communicate in a way that the interlocutors can understand and comprehend.

TW: “So...for the most effective communication you need to understand how to deliver messages in a way that the other person’s going to understand the importance or what you mean...”

6.4.2.3 Cross-cultural business awareness.
DW, TW and TT all have experience working with people from different cultures. Their opinions are summarised separately below.

i. DW’s opinion
DW suggested that in cross-cultural business management, leaders need to be aware of the cultural influences of their staff and peers. However he also felt that the background and individual identity of individuals was more important in achieving success in teams. DW felt that in corporate environments, understanding individuals is more important than understanding cultures.

DW: “I think good cultural leadership has to be aware of all the cultural influences, now that’s an obvious thing to say, but when I was in the Middle East, we had Filipino’s so they have a very distant culture. ...I’m not saying that I got it right, but I think you have to just be aware of what people’s backgrounds are and how you deal with them. ...I think you have to be aware of people’s circumstances, I think you have to be aware of the culture of the business. I think as long as people are good communicators, you work hard for people and they work hard for you, there is like that mutual respect. Culture sort of doesn’t really come into it, I think as long as people – you know you respect the people that you work with and for, and they respect you, culture shouldn’t necessarily come into it, part of the respect is you understand their culture and they understand yours.”

ii. TT’s opinion
TT pointed out that a lot of the differences that arise in cross-cultural business environments are due to individuals – their personality and experiences.

TT: “There was [the differences] – it would be a lot more to do with the person, or personality, or their individual experiences than anything else.”

6.4.2.4 Different views on Anglo cultural differences.
Reflecting on their own experiences, DW, TW and TT gave diverse opinions about the difference between Australian and British cultures.
i. DW’s opinion.
Based on his own experience of living and working in Britain and Australia, DW revealed that he believes there is no big difference between Australian and British culture.

DW: “The English culture and the Australian culture is very similar, hugely similar. There isn’t a lot of understanding needed between our culture. ... Culturally it’s good [in Australia]. I think it’s [the Australian Culture] quite diverse. There’s more British here than I thought there would be, I’m quite surprised at how many British people there are in this business and more generally. I find it’s a great place to work right? ... I didn’t work in care services in the UK. I worked in BP Insurance side, the medical insurance. But environment wise, I would say you’re probably not going to find a more similar business environment to the UK than you would here, I think it’s very, very similar. Yeah, I think culturally, it’s similar. I think a lot of that is driven by, there’s a lot of British people here. A lot of British influence rubs off on Australia and ways of working.”

ii. TW’s opinion
TW, on the contrary, pointed out that there are significant differences between Australian and the British cultures.

TW: “Oh there’s huge cultural difference [between Britain and Australia], how can they not feel... there’s a huge cultural difference between Britain and Australia, even though Australia was pretty much, you know, modern Australia was founded by Brits, there’s a huge difference.”

TW then explained in details the differences between Australian and British cultures and societies.

TW: “Just in the way the infrastructure is set up changes the culture. So in the UK a lot of the culture is driven by pubs, Australia doesn’t have them.... And, you know, social life is built and community life is often built around a pub in the UK, and so the two biggest soap operas in the UK that have been going on for twenty, thirty, in fact Coronation Street fifty years, the focal point of those communities in both of those soap operas is the local pub. Australia doesn’t have it, and that’s a fundamental difference. The sport is different, that’s a fundamental part of British and Australian culture and the sports are different. Even in Australia by State you’ve got different sports, whereas Britain has shared sports across the whole of Britain. ... And there’s a history of culture that Australia doesn’t have, it just doesn’t have the history. ... So when I went back I took MH to a pub in the UK and it said rebuilt 1667, it was rebuilt after the great fire of London, you know, like a hundred and fifty, two hundred years
before people even started settling here. You can’t ignore that and all of that is somehow, possibly imperceptively but that it’s a reality all the same, intertwined in what is the culture today in Britain, you can’t undo that. And all of the immigrants from across Europe over history and all the wars and all that you can’t undo that and it has subtle impact on the culture, and the hierarchy in the culture where you had the landed gentry and the landowners and the industrialists and you had the peasants and the workers and the industrial revolution, you can’t unravel and ignore the influence of all of that on British culture. And Australia doesn’t have it, it hasn’t had it and it can’t recreate that ...it’s a subtle difference but it’s a real difference. And the sense of humour is different, it’s really different, and the language is different and that matters, so we have different terms for the same things and different pronunciations for the same word, and those things do matter at times, you can get a misunderstanding. And I can be sitting in a meeting and I’ve noticed I will tell a joke, what I think is a joke and it’s quite a subtle joke and only the British people will laugh, and the only reason they laugh is because they understand the cultural basis of the joke because they share something with me because they’ve experienced it and they know what."

TW recognised that there are “commonalities” between Australian and British culture, but still he argued that there is a big difference between the two cultures. And he further pointed out that the Australians are more direct than British people.

TW: “Well it is easy [for British people to get around/work in Australia] because there are a lot of commonalities, yeah, and the language takes away the threat. So one of the big issues of going into a foreign country, foreign culture which you know and I knew in France and working in China and less so India, is language is a huge barrier to assimilating yourself in the culture. People come to Australia and they assume that because the language is pretty much the same and most of the people that founded Australia, modern Australia were British that it will be the same and they won’t have a problem and fundamentally there isn’t a problem, yeah. You can come here and integrate quite comfortably but there are differences and to pretend there aren’t I think is...or to think there aren’t you’ve got to have your eyes closed. So I’ve been brought up with television programs, Australian TV programs, yeah, not many but it gives you an insight. So generally I understand, I came here [Australia] expecting people to...be far more direct about what they thought about me and about things than a British person would be, that was my only expected difference I think. And that’s not really been borne out.”

iii. TT’s opinion
TT suggested that British companies (using BP as an example) are more hierarchical than Australian companies.
TT: “We find the POMS [the British] tend to be still caught in their class structures. They’re still very hierarchical. Even we see with BP, they’ve got this hierarchical thing, so it’s really not for me to go and talk to PG [the Managing Director of BPAUG], it’s just not really appropriate that I go and talk to PG. There’s an example. If there’s something to be said it’s really got to go through the structure, so that’s, for me, that’s quite different, and Australian organisations have a different approach to that. ...The big thing about Australians, and why I talk about hierarchy and stuff, is that we – Australians tend to be less hierarchical, and a little bit – I was going to say contentious, but it’s not the right word. We’re not hung up about who’s the big boss. I mean we’re more than happy to go and have a beer with anybody. We don’t feel that, “Oh no. I can’t talk to him, because he’s a boss.” We’re not like that. We tend to be very inclusive.”

6.4.2.5 Challenges in doing business in China

TW reflected on his experience setting up business in China and India, and suggested some key challenges and factors that impact on doing business in China.

Comparing China and India, TW suggested the impact of structural and systematic factors on business.

TW: “So India easier place to do business, or it felt easier, whether it is or not is, yeah, open to question. But the legal system is based on the British legal system, so immediately you have some confidence because it’s not obscure, the law is the law, even though interpretation might be flexed depending on who you are, or access to it but the law is still the law, so the law tends not to change and the law is what it is, application of it maybe variable depending on who you are but the law doesn’t seem to shift. Whereas in China it seems to shift, yeah, as well as be obscure. In India it’s based on the British legal system, so for a western company it immediately gives you confidence. The main language is English, yeah. There is a lot of colonial ... Let’s go back, contrast Hong Kong and China, Hong Kong part of China. Very different place to do business because you’ve had a hundred years of colonialism, there is a shared understanding of the cultural differences and now a shared culture in Hong Kong, yeah, the cultures are kind of mixed over, it’s had long enough for a lot of it to be ironed out, there are still very clear differences even within that maelstrom of...yeah, small area, very small area, very different cultures, still not merged. But a lot more affinity and understanding, mutual understanding than in China. India, English first language for business and people have been brought up in England with an understanding of England because England has had such a pervasive influence on Indian development, and the school system, the railways are all done by Brits, even though we were at war there, they understand where we’re coming from far more and there’s a shared legal system. So it’s much easier to go in with some confidence about
where you stand, but there are still big differences in the way they think and where their values are.”

TW further suggested that it is difficult for him to understand how the business “games” work in China.

TW: “China it’s all very tricky isn’t it. ‘Cause as we’ve discussed, you know, it looks like they’re agreeing even when they’re not so where does that leave you. And then there’s posturing, you know, they’ll make out they’re offended when they’re not, you know, and there’s lots of game playing that’s built in, it’s like a dance, does that make sense? It’s like a cultural…a dance based in cultural norms that we just don’t understand and…we don’t do the right steps ‘cause we don’t understand what the steps are because it’s culturally based. …and we don’t understand how this game works and so you’ll do x and you’re expecting us to do y and z but actually we go and do d because we haven’t understood what x requires. It’s a bit like swans mating… and we just don’t even have an insight into them.”

6.4.2.6 The importance of lingua franca in business communication.

DW, TW and TT explained their opinion about the language used in international business.

i. DW’s opinion

DW suggested that speaking the same language would facilitate communication in international business.

DW: “I think that has a lot to do with it, talk the same language. I think when you’ve got different languages, it makes life more difficult from a start point, so when you talk the same language it certainly helps.”

ii. TW’s Opinion

TW suggested and explained in-depth that speaking the same language does help enhance understanding, reduce fear and unfamiliarity as well as building up relationships.

TW: “Because of the language problem I think there’s an inherent fear, not fear but, um, uneasiness about what you don’t know, and China is so very different to Britain that there’s an inherent wariness about it, and the language is a real barrier in terms of business… So I think that when you’re looking to…the world runs on relationships doesn’t it, I think fundamentally it runs on relationships… So the guy who was fronting it [a company in China which BP approached for cooperation] was a doctor who spoke pretty good English and could express his motivation for doing what he was doing in a way that we
felt aligned with our motivation. So there’s a temptation which could be incorrect for you to want...because you like the person you want to do something with them, yeah, which could be actually completely wrong, yeah, it could be that it’s a mirage, what you’re seeing is a completely fake and a mirage but you do get drawn in by somebody with whom you have some kind of affinity, and the shared language and some kind of common ground certainly helps to build that affinity. Whereas people that do not speak your language have to have a translator who you don’t know, and have routines that you’re not familiar with, and there’s a hierarchy so that you go into a meeting and their hierarchy is around the room with top to bottom, yeah, and they’re not allowed to talk out of line with the hierarchy and everything has to be translated, yeah. And you do the same, so you’re doing something which is unfamiliar to you, what for you is a basic meeting turns out to be some elaborate kind of theatre, yeah.”

TW pointed out that speaking the same language is important for the health and aged care business.

TW: “And I think that has an impact when you’re caring for people, how can you really care for somebody if you don’t understand the real subtlety behind the language they’re using, ’cause people will say something but mean something else and you need a really good understanding of somebody’s language and body language to be able to interpret...so that’s when you’re caring for somebody, nursing for somebody, and they have cultural nuances and needs as well and their understanding of health might be different or illness might be different ’cause they come from a different culture, and they’ll have religious things and then your invasion of their privacy.”

TW further explained the importance of language in strengthening trust and relationships in business.

TW: “Well...we got an agent to take us around [in China], so that was interesting as well, so again they were Chinese people who spoke English and we had an expectation. ...I think that everybody deliberately goes for where they feel comfortable or least threatened, yeah, and for us going with a western company that’s represented in Beijing was where we felt comfortable..., rightly or wrongly you infer some level of affinity and trust in a western company that you’ve dealt with outside, yeah, so we have a relationship with you somewhere in the world, yeah, we will use you here and we’re trusting you to do the right thing by us. We’re trusting somewhere that you’ve recruited people with integrity who know what they’re doing who will treat us fairly because we are in the jungle, yeah, we are completely out of our comfort zone, we don’t know where we are, we don’t speak the language. Without you...we don’t really have too much of an idea how to go about doing
TW: “Well it is easy [for British people to get around/work in Australia] because there are a lot of commonalities, yeah, and the language takes away the threat.”

6.4.2.7 Cultural dynamism.
DW, TW and TT reflected on their experience and provided their opinion about culture and international business. Their opinion is summarised separately.

i. DW’s Opinion
DW suggested that people need to adapt to organisational culture but need not completely change their own values. He suggested that national cultural differences do not really come into business and workplaces.

DW: “I think you have to [change your own style], to an extent, but you try not to change your principals but you have to adapt to the way the organisation works. I mean I would like to think I haven’t changed too much but you have to do things by the company’s rules, and they’re all been quite different. …I think as long as people are good communicators, you work hard for people and they work hard for you, there is like that mutual respect. Culture sort of doesn’t really come into it, I think as long as people – you know you respect the people that you work with and for, and they respect you, culture shouldn’t necessarily come into it, part of the respect is you understand their culture and they understand yours.”

Reflecting on his experience working for Cisco and BP in the UK, and then being transferred to work in BPAUG in Australia, DW suggested that corporate and workplace culture varies depending on the nature of business and the national-regional economic situation.

DW: “I mean when I worked for American companies, I think – the thing about BP it’s a very caring culture by nature and I think that then becomes part of the way that we work as well... When I was working for Cisco, salespeople got ridiculous commissions...the reward was massive but the risks were huge, so that drove a really, really tough corporate culture. So when you work in that sort of industry and then you come to BP, it’s not relaxing, but it’s a different way of working. We [BPAUG]...do manage ourselves quite strictly to targets...we’re in a very fortunate time, right, and I’ve been extremely fortunate in my career, extremely fortunate that I’ve seemed to have worked in the right industries at the right time. I left the UK just before the global financial crisis there and went to a country that didn’t have any, because it’s got a third of the world’s oil deposits. So in the UK at the moment, in the UK care homes they’re going through quite a tough time. I’m glad that we’re here
to be honest.”

DW further suggested that people normally do not take part in significant arguments or fight at work as a result of their cultural differences or differences in understandings and opinion.

DW: “I’ve got to be honest with you, I think the days of people having great big shouting matches in the offices is kind of gone, I think the world has moved on from that, and people can resolve things a lot more sensibly now.”

ii. TW’s Opinion

TW’s reflection on his experience working in BP suggested the dynamism and complexity of culture and individuals in international business.

TW: “Well it’s different in the same country. BP is completely different, the aged care division is completely different to the insurance division, the people are different, the culture’s completely different. Yeah, even though the values are ostensibly the same the cultures are completely different. And then it changes again in the international businesses because you need different people in those businesses and those people tend to have a particular...they’re a certain type of person. So the ones in aged care are less risk taking, are more stable than the ones in international businesses. The ones in international businesses don’t like sitting still for very long, they want something different all the time which is why they’re prepared to travel and they tend to work harder and play harder I think. And insurance, again they’re different, these are the different mindset required to work in those businesses. So now I’ve worked in all three and they’re definitely very different, and that’s just in the same business in the same country.”

TW: “So between countries then you get differences...I haven’t worked in aged care in the UK, I’ve only seen the people that work there... so that people again in the UK are far more conservative and less risk taking than here in the Australian aged care business. Insurance I would say not too different, pretty much the same type of people. Yeah, I’m finding it difficult to answer this question.”

TW further explained that in his view that organisational culture “trumps” national culture.

TW: “My thinking which could be wrong is organisational culture trumps national differences, because you have to have affinity with the values and the aims of the organisation, yeah, and we’re all people, we’re all human beings with motivations and drives and that glue holds people together far more strongly than national differences or cultural misunderstandings take people
apart. So the difference is in national misunderstanding can lead to inefficiencies and slowing things down and hurdles and mistakes, but they’re not enough to undo the glue that cultural...shared values create because everybody’s going in the same direction. If those organisational values align with the individual personal values and everybody holds them broadly the same and it’s shared and understood, that will overcome all the other things if everybody’s going in the same direction.”

TW: “And because the criteria for assessing somebody’s acceptability is not are you Anglo Saxon, it’s are you able to do the job you’re employed for and are you contributing, are you aligned with our values and are you doing your job well. That’s my personal thinking...so I don’t look at where you come from, I just look at whether you fit, in terms of values whether your goal is the same as mine and whether you’re doing your job well, that’s all I think about.”

6.5 Preliminary Conclusion

In this chapter, three units of data collected in Sydney have been analysed. The participants involved in this data are Australian, British and New Zealander. Firstly, communication in business meetings was analysed based on Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value difference and the findings are summarised below.

i. Evidence found in Unit SYD1, SYD2 and SYD3 shows all participants’ communication in the meeting is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Australian, British and NZ cultures in the dimension of PDI.

ii. Evidence found in Unit SYD1, SYD2 and SYD3 shows all participants’ communication in the meeting is in line with Hofstede’s classification of Australian, British and New Zealand cultures in the dimension of IDV.

iii. Evidence found in Unit SYD3 shows participants’ communication in the meeting is in line with Hofstede’s classification of Australian, British and New Zealand cultures in the dimension of UAI.

iv. No evidence found for other dimensions in Hofstede’s framework: masculinity versus femininity, long-term versus short-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint.

Participants’ communication in the meetings also provides evidence for power flows and leadership. The three participants who chaired the meetings (GH in SYD-M-QR1, PS in SYD-M-QR2, and DW in SYD-M-DRC) all demonstrated leadership in their communication. Given his position, responsibility and knowledge about the operation of care homes, the communication of IB is also strong and demonstrates leadership in SYD-M-QR1 and SYD-M-QR2. Although GH did not chair the SYD-M-QR2, his communication is strong and demonstrates leadership when he checked on important operational issues. In SYD-M-DRC, the communication of TT, AD, PO, MS and MT is also strong and demonstrates leadership when they talked about projects they
managed. In the interview (SYD-I-GH2, Unit SYD2 in Section 6.2), GH explained that how strongly people communicate and demonstrate leadership was related to their knowledge around the topics being discussed and their aims. As GH said (in Section 6.2.2, Unit SYD1) “how hard people push into meetings and into business interactions is very much about how much confidence there is around the information, and what it means and what we are doing with it”. Also, leadership being demonstrated in the communication of GH, PS and DW is different. Leadership being demonstrated in DW’s communication is more relaxed, flexible and focuses on overall management, whereas leadership being demonstrated in GH and PS’s communication is slightly more conservative and focuses on issues at the micro-level. This difference could due to cultural difference (British culture is the scored 21 in the dimension of UAI hence is less uncertainty avoidance than Australian and New Zealand cultures), or difference in personality.

The communication in meeting SYD-M-QR2 shows workplace alignment. As reflected in passages analysed in Section 6.3.1, communication of meeting participants shows that they shared similar views and understandings and agreed with each other on almost all issues being discussed.

The five interviews conducted after the meetings are analysed in this Chapter. The interview attendees were requested to reflect on their experience and gave their opinions about managing business in cross-cultural business environments. Their comments suggest that in international business and cross-cultural work environments:

1. having the willingness to explore, understand and accept other cultures is important;
2. accepting and adapting to the culture and rules of the work team or organisation and “the way the organisation works”, is necessary but individuals can maintain their own “principles”;
3. the ability to accept differences and accommodate others is important for building up “trust and affinity” and “relationships” in business and workplaces.

During the interviews, participants reflected on their experience and suggested the importance of ensuring accurate understanding in cross-cultural business communication. They suggested techniques including choosing appropriate ways to communicate with interlocutors, double checking, and repeating and confirming understandings to ensure accurate understanding in communication.

The interview attendees compared the Australian culture and their native cultures, and gave different opinions. GH argued that New Zealand culture is closer to British culture in terms of formality and that Australians communicate more directly. DW felt that there is no significant difference between British and Australian culture. TW, on the contrary, suggested that there is a big difference between British and Australian
culture. TT suggested that the British corporate culture is more hierarchical than the Australian business culture.

In the interview, TW also reflected on his experience setting up businesses in India and China, and suggested the major challenges for Western businesses in China including the differences in languages and social systems, as well as the difficulty in understanding the culture and how the “games” work.

Reflected on their experiences, the interview attendees gave their opinions about culture, leadership and international business. Their comments suggest that in international business and cross-cultural work environments:

i. national culture “doesn’t really come into it” (as expressed by DW) and does not impact heavily on employment and business operation as long as people in the workplace agree to their organisational/team values, respect each other and work hard;

ii. accepting, agreeing and adapting to the organisational and industrial culture is important for individuals working in the same workplace (as suggested by TW).

iii. leaders need to be aware of national cultural influences but it is more important to understand the individuals themselves, including their background and experience.

Participants (GH in Section 6.2.2 and DW in Section 6.4.2) suggested that argument, whether caused by difference in culture or in business views, does not really occur in today’s business workplaces.

Finally, interview attendees suggested that speaking the same language is important for international business and cross-cultural team work. They considered that speaking a *lingua franca* would not only facilitate communication, but also help enhance understanding, reduces fear and unfamiliarity, and strengthen trust and relationships in business.
CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSIONS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I conclude this study and, based on the findings, propose a pedagogical framework for workplace communication within management training and workplace learning. In sections 7.2 to 7.4, I summarise and discuss my research findings on Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural value differences, contingency in communication and management, cultural differences and the impact on business communication. In Section 7.5, I elaborate upon the meanings and functions of the ‘third place’ in business and workplaces. In Section 7.6, I explain the pedagogical framework designed to build and enhance the ‘sameness’ in the ‘third place’, in order to help improve efficiency and accuracy of business and workplace communication. Lastly, in Section 7.7, I discuss the limitations of my project, and point towards some practical implications and applications of the framework I have established.

7.2 Hofstede’s Dimensions of Cultural Value Differences

This thesis analysed business meeting communication using Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural value differences. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have presented the outcomes of this analysis separately. All evidence found relevant to Hofstede’s framework is summarised below and in Table 23.

Chinese Participants
i. Communication of ALL Chinese participants deviates from Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of Power Distance.

ii. Communication of ONE Chinese participant deviates from Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance.

iii. Communication of ONE Chinese participant is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the dimension of Masculinity versus Femininity.

iv. No evidence was found for other dimensions.

Western Participants
i. Communication of THREE British participants deviates from Hofstede’s classification for British culture in the dimension of Long-term versus Short-term Orientation.

ii. Communication of ONE Danish participant is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish culture in the dimension of Power Distance.
iii. Communication of ONE Danish participant is in line with Hofstede's classification for Danish culture in the dimension of Individualism versus Collectivism.

iv. Communication of ONE Danish and THREE British participants is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Danish and British cultures in the dimension of Masculinity versus Femininity.

v. Communication of ALL Sydney meeting participants is in line with Hofstede’s classification for British, Australian and New Zealand cultures in the dimension of Power Distance.

vi. Communication of ALL Sydney meeting participants is in line with Hofstede’s classification for British, Australian and New Zealand cultures in the dimension of Individualism versus Collectivism.

vii. Communication of Australian, British and New Zealand participants in one Sydney meeting is in line with Hofstede’s classification for Australian, British and New Zealand cultures in the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance.

viii. Evidence found in one Shanghai meeting contests Hofstede’s notions of Indulgence vs. Restraint.

ix. No evidence was found for other dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BJ Meetings</th>
<th>Power Distance</th>
<th>Individualism vs. Collectivism</th>
<th>Masculinity vs. Femininity</th>
<th>Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>Long-term Orientation</th>
<th>Indulgence vs. Restraint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-JCI</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deviation of JW's communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-OPS</td>
<td>Deviation of BB and VK's communication</td>
<td>Both CD's and Chinese staff's communication (BB, MR and CS) is in line</td>
<td>Deviation of VK's communication</td>
<td>CD and other Chinese' communication is in line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-TEAM</td>
<td>Deviation of BB, VK and TL's communication</td>
<td>CD’s communication is in line</td>
<td>CD’s communication is in line</td>
<td>Deviation of CD’s communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23 Evidence Found for Hofstede's Dimensions

There are in total 15 times that participants’ communication was found to be in line with Hofstede’s classification for their national cultural value. There are in total 9 times that participants’ communication was not in line with Hofstede’s classification for their national cultural value. The dimension of Power Distance appears as an important dimension for cross-cultural business communication, as evidence was found for this dimension in all the meetings considered in this study. However, none of the Chinese participants’ communication conformed with Hofstede’s classification for Chinese culture in the Power Distance dimension. This shows that, although Hofstede’s dimensions provide a general structure for understanding differences between cultural values at the national level, they appear to be:

- **inadequate** on these data to understand cross-cultural communication in international business contexts.
- **insufficient** on these data to understand the communication of Chinese speakers in international business contexts.

In Chapter 2 Section 2.4, I discussed the critiques of Hofstede’s framework, including its lack of time reference, and construct and face validity. Hofstede’s notion of culture and dimensions of national cultural value differences are also only linear and static, and therefore cannot capture the dynamism and fluidity of culture. Due to these problems, although Hofstede’s framework provides some reference for understanding national culture values, it is conceptually inadequate for understanding cultural
difference especially in today’s globalised workplaces. As shown by the evidence found in data analysis, on its own Hofstede’s framework cannot provide sufficient guidance for anticipating patterns of communication and practice of people from different cultural backgrounds, hence it is not an adequate guide for effective communication and practices in today’s business environments. In Chapter 2 Section 2.7, I addressed the recent scholarship that challenges the old static notions of culture, and instead highlighted its dynamic and fluid nature of culture. I also explored contemporary factors that capture specific situations in business communication and practice and argued that these are more applicable in socio-cultural formations in current workplaces and business situations. If we briefly survey Chinese culture over time, we can find continuities, not a static entity.

The core values of traditional Chinese culture, which have dominated Chinese civilisation for five thousand years, lie deep in its ancient philosophy. Some aspects of traditional culture have endured despite immense change at the material and symbolic level of Chinese life. Among ancient Chinese philosophies, Confucianism is dominant and after the Qin Dynasty, it gradually became the official state ideology. Confucian philosophy promotes hierarchy, authority, and unquestioning obedience; and has been supported by many generations of feudal authorities in China. Confucius’s value system contributes to the fundamental principles of Chinese value in terms of relationships with the environment and others: “the primacy of order and stability, of co-operative human harmony, of accepting one’s place in the social hierarchy, of social integration” (Feuerwerker, 1976, p. 15) and “ideology is the key to the system’s long-term stability and cohesion” (Nolan, 2004, p. 124).

Confucian ethics and philosophy constitute the traditional Chinese values on which the imperial institutions were built and functioned; at the same time they reinforce the consistency of those values. This model accords with Hofstede’s (2001, p.12) “The stabilizing of culture patterns” diagram (Section 2.4, Chapter 2), which has at its centre “societal norms”, consisting of the value systems shared by the bulk of the population. Their origins lie in ecological factors (geography, history, demography, hygiene, nutrition, economy, technology and urbanization) affecting the physical and social environment. These “societal norms have led to the development and pattern maintenance of institutions in society with particular structures and ways of functioning” (p.11). Such a system operated in China for thousands of years, until the end of the Qing Dynasty.

Hofstede’s (2001) diagram also suggests change, or the “outside influence” that comes from either “forces of nature” or “forces of man” (including trade, domination and scientific discovery) (p.12). In China’s case, the “outside influence” started in the late Qing Dynasty in the form of foreign invasion, trade and the adoption of Western technology. From this point on, traditional values and beliefs were no longer officially promoted as the national ideology. Outside forces began to influence and challenge the old values. There were three major influencers: Sun Yat-sen and his Democratic
Sun Yat-sen and his Democratic Revolution introduced aspects of democracy into China as an alternative to the traditional way a government was established. This was a combination of traditional authority with democracy functions and characteristics. Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution wanted to overthrow traditional cultural values and replace them with Marxist Leninist ideology and values, and in the process had a deep impact on Chinese culture, including destruction of many traditional temples, and pieces of art. Deng Xiaoping and the Open-Door Policy introduced the capitalist market economy into China. Some capitalist values gradually replaced Communist and Maoist ideology as the so called “socialism in Chinese characteristics”. Economic co-operation and trade have now begun to make a significant impact on social norms and institutions.

The purpose of discussing these continuing socio-political events is to show how Chinese culture has changed. Various new philosophical and ideological innovations have become prominent. Thirty years after those Market Reforms, the Chinese economy has grown to become one of the largest in the world. Current economic growth and China’s engagement with the West have had enormous socio-cultural influence on Chinese people and are forcing structural change to the business and economic environments, including, for example, incentives for businesses to innovate and compete in global and domestic markets.

All of these factors – philosophical and ideological social, cultural, political and economic - have had a huge impact on China’s development. Globalisation will further bring about continual changes to China and Chinese people and culture. As China continues to grow, economic development will bring about changes to how business is conducted and how people communicate in business. This will manifest itself in Westernised business practices and adherence to a global economic system. Chinese culture will continue to adapt to the changing environment and although some traditional values will continue to be part of Chinese society their importance will begin to diminish. The traditional ideology will remain but their application will be less widespread. With reference to English language learning, Lo Bianco (2009, p. 51) describes the current changes in China as:

  Appropriation and re-appropriation, inherited cultural designs are re-designed even in the process of comprehension, and they are transformed and confirmed with newly assigned meanings…

Chinese culture has been through an ongoing transformation in the past twenty-five years and such transformation will continue in the future due to globalisation and China’s economic growth. China is in constant change and never static. In this way, the values defined for Chinese culture in Hofstede’s framework which was developed
thirty-six years ago based on a linear and static model cannot provide accurate and adequate guidance for understanding Chinese individuals and their communication in international business contexts, and my fieldwork findings support this claim.

Also, due to different levels of economic development, there are gaps between China’s first tier cities (including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen) and second and third tier cities (including most of the inland cities). The first tier cities have been well developed and people are more adaptive to Western culture. While the inland cities are less developed and lagged behind, compared to the first tier cities. There is evidence in the interview data that reveals the difference between the Chinese employees from the first tier cities and those from inland cities. In Chapter 4 I have discussed that both JW (in Unit BJ1) and BB (in Unit BJ2) were used to Western business practice and did not have significant challenges when communicating and working with Westerners. BB is from Beijing and has worked for Western hospitals in Beijing and Shanghai. JW studied in the UK and has always worked for Western organisations. Different from JW and BB, MX (in Unit SH2, Chapter 5) is from Henan (an inland province) and works for a Chinese company. Therefore, MX illustrated clearly the differences between Chinese and Western companies and considered her role as to help BP learn about and adapt to the Chinese market, although occasionally she felt conflicted about helping a Western company make money in China. Hofstede’s framework cannot address and measure sufficiently this diversity in Chinese people’s culture and values.

In Chapter 1, I asked the first research question: How can a critical analysis of key Hofstedian dimensions in the specific settings of commerce and business meetings provide guidance for cross-cultural communication and management? In this study, I analysed Chinese-Western and Western-Western communication in business meetings using Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultural value differences. The results of my analysis show that Hofstede’s framework may give some indication of national cultural traits, but due to its static and linear nature, is inadequate for understanding cross-cultural communication in international business contexts and is especially insufficient for understanding the communication of Chinese speakers in international business contexts.

7.3 The Challenge of Cultural Differences and Business Communication

In Chapter 2 of this thesis I discussed different approaches to conceptualising culture, including linking culture with civilization, emphasising the ‘emic’ (insider) and ‘etic’ (outsider) distinctions, or focusing on rationalising people’s thoughts and behaviour; and I have concluded that the concept of ‘culture’ is complex, fluid and elusive. The evidence collected from participants’ reflection in interviews for this research study shows that both the concept of culture and people’s views about cultural differences are complex and vary from person to person. For Chinese individuals who are used to
working in Western business environments, like JW and BB, cultural difference is not obvious and does not seem to cause problems or challenges in their communication with Westerners. For a Western manager who has tried to set up a business in China, like TW, the difference between Chinese and Western cultures is so great that he concluded his experience showed it as “a cultural dance based in cultural norms that we just don’t understand”. For a British manager, like DW who works in Australia, there isn’t much difference between British and Australian cultures; while for another British manager, like TW, there is “a huge difference” between Australian and British culture. Even for experienced international managers, culture is still a fluid concept. Although CD (the Danish manager who worked in Beijing) has lived in China for seventeen years, he reflected in his interview that cultural differences are “very difficult to define”. In Chapter 6, the interviewees (DW, TW and TT) offered highly individualised and personalised accounts of what works in international cross-cultural business which, is actually a matter of interpretation of whether to consider the qualities they claim to be essential as strictly personal/individualistic or influenced by culture.

As I have argued, ‘culture’ is a very broad and profound concept, since it encompasses aspects of daily life, people’s thoughts and practices, and varies in the eyes of insiders and outsiders. It is a kaleidoscope through which different people see different pictures. There are divergences between cultures, some of which are highly visible and others that are more hidden. Such a broad, complex and fluid concept needs to be further explored and this would be useful for business communication and management, which is highly ‘situational’, as I have claimed in Section 7.2.

What is obvious, and easy for people to understand, is the divergence of culture at different levels and scales. Some divergence is visible and it immediately affects communication and management in workplaces. In the interview, CD identified differences in age/generation, gender, language, originality, personality, and city of residence. These factors also constitute an individual’s cultural and social identity, as I have discussed in Chapter 2. Every individual identifies him/herself as a member of a group or groups by the ‘sameness’, and yet differentiates him/herself from other groups by the ‘difference’. Knowing that culture diverges, and yet understanding the ‘sameness’ between people at different levels and scales, in this way, facilitates communication with, and management of, people in workplaces.

When does difference become visible in business communication? My fieldwork shows that managing expectations is a significant factor for business communication. People walk into business meetings with shared purposes. If people cannot communicate and cannot eventually agree on what is to be discussed, why would they have the meeting? But people also walk into business meetings with differences between them, which is reflected in their different expectations for communication – this is when the difference becomes visible and when frustration can arise if not managed carefully. In the interviews, both CD and RB reflected that frustrations and
challenges are normally caused by the ‘different expectations’ that people have for business discussions. Hence, understanding and effectively aligning expectations is crucial for successful communication within business situations.

Equally important for business communication, as shown in my fieldwork, is to ensure accuracy in communication. In conversations, it is normal for people to expect that they are understood. We all do this – when we talk, as a matter of course we expect that people listen and understand our message. However, although people may have listened, this doesn’t mean that they comprehend our message, especially in communication between people from distinct cultural backgrounds. Only accurate communication can generate reliable business outcomes. Hence double-checking and confirming what has been agreed on is fundamental for business and workplace communication. These interviews have shown how challenging business communication and management is, in particular workplace contexts.

In Chapter 1, I asked the second research question: *What are the challenges in cross-cultural business communication and management?* Under this question, I further asked:

i. What are the factors that influence communication and management in cross-cultural business settings?

ii. What are the strategies used by experienced international managers for effective cross-cultural business communication and management?

Both factors and strategies are reflected in interviews of experienced international managers, who showed that:

i. Culture diverges and is highly situational. My fieldwork shows the divergence of culture at different levels and scales. For example the factors that constitute an individual’s personal and social identities (age/generation, gender, language, originality, personality, and city of residence), have a significant impact on cross-cultural business communication and management.

ii. Managing expectations and ensuring accuracy in understandings are strategic significant for business communication.

I will expand on these outcomes in the following section.

### 7.4 The Challenge of Capturing the Dynamic Nature of the Workplace

Workplaces are dynamic and complex. The functioning of leadership, power flow, trust in practice, politics and other macrostructures are contingent upon specific participants and situations. Martin and Nakayama (2015) suggest that old models that conceptualise culture as static “ignore the issue of power and the larger structures that constrain and impact individual’s attitudes and actions”, and that recent scholarship recognises and focuses more on the role of politics and the investigation of other macrostructures (p. 14). Contingency theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6,
suggests situational practice rather than a focus on the ‘best’ style/way of practice. Leadership is highly contingent – there is no single ‘best’ or ideal style of leadership but only the effective leadership for a particular situation and a particular task.

The communication in business meetings observed in Shanghai and Sydney provides evidence for leadership, power flow and workplace alignment.

Leadership and Power Flow
Meeting data collected in Shanghai and Sydney shows leadership and power flow between participants during meeting discussions.

In SH-M-TEAM, communication between participants shows power flow often to RB and RE when they discussed sales of insurance products, distribution channels, broker management and liaison with the head office in the UK. RB (the Sales Director) and RE (the Sales Manager) managed the sales of insurance products and were familiar with distribution channels. In all three Shanghai meetings (SH-M-TEAM, SH-M-SALES and SH-M-BROK), communication between participants shows power flow to MX when they discussed Chinese government regulations and policies in health insurance. MX, the Sales Manager, as a Chinese person who has been working for a few years for a local Chinese insurance company, understood the local Chinese policies and regulations.

Communication in all Sydney meetings (SYD-M-QR, SYD-M-QR2 and SYD-M-DRC) shows that power flows to the chair of the meeting, especially at the start of each meeting. Evidence of their leadership is clear and obvious. In SYD-M-QR and SYD-M-QR2, communication during the meetings shows that power flows often to IB when they discussed operational issues around management at aged care facilities. IB, as the Group Director of Operations, has a comprehensive knowledge of not only the overall management of the business, but also operational detail in many care homes. In SYD-M-DRC, communication shows that power flows to DW, the Director of Strategy and Development and the chair of the meeting at the beginning; but power often flows to other executives and senior managers like MS and TT, when they discussed projects and businesses that they were managing. DW told me during the interview that every executive/senior manager who participated in this meeting knew the progress of his/her projects and had his/her objectives ready to be discussed in the meeting.

Evidence discussed above shows that ‘authority’, ‘power’ and ‘leadership’ emerges not just from the ‘authority’ provided by an individual’s title and position, but also from the actual ‘authority’ inherent in particular situations. This actual ‘authority’ in business meetings is not given or assumed, but emerges from knowledge related to the specific situation and topic of discussion. As GH reflected, how hard people push into meetings and business interactions is very much about how confident that person is about the item being discussed. Hence leadership and power flow relate closely to
situational factors and participants in particular situations.

**Workplace Alignment**

Meeting data collected in Shanghai and Sydney clearly shows workplace alignment between participants during meeting discussions, as I have outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

In the first Shanghai meeting (SH-M-TEAM), during discussion about sales issues, SP tried to align with RB and RE as she needed to set the strategies for marketing and sales in China and then report to head office. She knew that she might be “encroaching” on RB and RE’s “territory”. So she said, “I’ve got this guy in marketing... I’ve got you guys. ...you know, we all want the end goal, right... So we have to come to some kind of compromise...”

In the second Shanghai meeting (SH-M-SALES), when discussing the sales issue and the migration of customers from the existing BP insurance product to the new BP and YC joint venture insurance product, MX was eager to complete the migration process as soon as possible and she told this to RE directly. She then said to RE, “even though I think I’m working for BP but I’m still an employee of YC, I have to try to maximize or pass the benefit here, so all these migration is my first and most important target.” Right away RE showed his understanding and responded with the same alignment, “it’s our target as well, OK. I want to do everything I can to get all this stuff on shore...that’s my target as well ...’cause my target is China...”.

In the third Shanghai meeting (SH-M-BROK), when discussing the migration of customers from BP’s insurance product to a BP and YC joint venture product, RE asked DD to assist on issues like contacting customers. RE indicated that he would like to co-operate more in the future with DD’s company. He told me in the interview that he loved dealing with Australian brokers (in Section 5.2, Chapter 5). During their conversation, DD tried to align with RE, saying“...we’re only proposing one insurance company” RE then responded with the same alignment, “we know that you’re only looking at us so we know that we can trust you with that sort of stuff and we’d be very happy for you to look after this business.”

In the same meeting, MX also tried to align with DD, saying “we trust you, that’s why; you know, we come to you.” DD responded: “...we want to make you guys trust us more so you’ll give us more.”

Communication in the second Sydney meeting (SYD-M-QR2) showed alignment between all participants during meeting discussions. Their communication showed that they shared the same views and understandings and constantly aligned with each other. GH’s question at the beginning of the first Sydney meeting (SYD-M-QR1) shows that he was unhappy with BF’s absence which he saw as an indication of non-alignment with the operations management team. He said, “So this is the second
Evidence discussed above shows that ‘alignment’ does not necessarily emerge from actual positions or groups. Interlocutors who work in different companies, business departments or project groups may also want to align with each other. The evidence of this research shows that ‘alignment’ is situational – it relates closely to topics of discussion, participants’ own feelings, opinions, and objectives, and other factors like business targets which are regarded important in particular situations.

The evidence and analysis of my research showed that leadership and power flow – as manifestations of ‘authority’, as well as workplace alignment – are all situational. ‘Situations’ are culturally framed, therefore an understanding of the ‘situation’ is critical for communication and management. Focusing on specific communication contingencies (when interactions can have various outcomes, depending on the participants’ perceptions of those present) reveals the ways a situation (such as a meeting) generates a specific set of outcomes. Evidence found in the communication within meetings shows that ‘contingency’ in business communication and management is important for understanding the meaningfulness of business communication and is a fruitful area for further research. By ‘contingency’ I mean the daily interactions in meetings where decisions are required. I suggest that the dynamic nature of interactions in meetings in specific communicative situations is fundamental for effective communication and management.

In workplace practice and learning studies, how power flows in a system has been debated among educational writers. As Fenwick (2012, p. 73) writes, “the question remains of how power flows within a system to enact particular entities, positions and rewards… Power may appear to flow through the system according to how, in everyday interactions, people take up positions and understand others’ positions in relation to themselves”. The communication in business meetings in Shanghai and Sydney, as well as the analysis undertaken, show clearly that power flow within a system is situational – it is not statically influenced by fixed authorities, but is influenced by authorities, knowledge and relationships in specific situations. Whose interests or authorities are the most influential in different situations? What patterns of power flow can possibly be identified over the movement of the system? These questions, and others, are to be further researched and investigated to help understand the dynamic movement of leadership and power in the complex systems inherent in workplaces.

Similarly, workplace alignment is also contingent, as shown in the conversations considered throughout this thesis. Workplace alignment is based upon trust, relationships and situation. “Learning to trust in practice is conventionally discussed as an intersubjective phenomenon” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 73). Trust in practice is built, subjectively or objectively, on affection and realized in behaviour and relationships. Such affection, behaviour and relationships are contingent – they move in conjunction...
with practices in the dynamic and complex workplace, and are built between members of a group in specific situations.

Leadership, power flow and alignment are all situational but also linked to affection. Individuals prefer to work with people with whom they have a positive relationship, as CD reflected on the meeting with JCIGM. If this positive relationship is present individuals are also more likely to recognise their leadership or power. Individuals are aware of the importance of affection, and try to maintain good relationships in their work practice, especially when they are driven by certain purposes or situations, as SP, MX and DD demonstrated in their conversations. Affection is important for forming ‘situational’ groups. What factors contribute to the establishment of affection between people from diverse cultural background and help build up ‘situational’ groups, is another area that is worth further research especially for the effectiveness of practices and management in dynamic workplaces.

I have shown in Section 7.2 the complexity and diversity of cultural differences, and the significant impact of situational and personal factors on business communication. I have also suggested that cross-cultural business communication can be improved by managing expectations and ensuring accuracy in understandings. In this section (7.3), I have claimed that business meetings observed in my fieldwork suggest other strategies often being used by experienced managers, these being leadership, power flow and workplace alignment. These strategies are highly situational and contingent, and affiliated closely with an individual’s personality, personal and social identity, knowledge, and affective functioning. These two sections (7.2 and 7.3) give my responses to the second research question, on the challenges faced in cross-cultural business communication and management.

7.5 The ‘Third Place’ in the Workplace

In Chapter 1, I asked the third research question: What are the patterns of communication between people from different cultural backgrounds in particular business settings, and what might be the implicit reasons governing their communicative behaviour?

A workplace is the location (physical or virtual) where people work together. It is formed by people who practise jobs and tasks. Patterns emerge from the daily experience and practice of habit. ‘Practices’ are understood, from a philosophical and social theory point of view, as “embodied, material arrays of human activity centrally organised around shared practical understanding” (Schatzki, 2001, p. 2). Most workplaces comprise groups and sub-groups. In workplace learning theories, human groups of two or more individuals are understood as ‘co-present groups’ (Lancaster, 2012, p. 128). People within co-present groups share cultural values and understandings with their group members. Although there are differences between
individuals, by becoming members of a co-present group, individuals agree on and adopt the cultural values of the group. For any given group, there are the ‘emic’ (insiders) and the ‘etic’ (outsiders); and for any given individual in the group, there is the ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ with others. But by agreeing on, and adopting, the ‘sameness’ – shared values and understandings – individuals form co-present groups that share a common group identity. Co-present groups thus reflect mutual identity for formations: a quest for sameness. As Erikson (1980) put it long ago, it “connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characteristics with others”.

‘Sameness’ is the foundation on which groups are built. People form co-present groups by sharing values and understandings. ‘Sameness’ relates closely to ‘affection’. ‘Affection’ and ‘Sameness’ are fundamentally linked, and are important for forming ‘situational’ groups. Lancaster (2012, p.128) suggests that the “processing of affect is a primary function” of co-present groups:

For human survival, individuals need to be able to monitor and regulate internal psycho-physiological states, to engage with the external environment, including the social environment and to manage the relationship between these inner and outer worlds. Managing these needs is relational function of the body/mind: ‘affective functioning’, where raw experience, from inside and outside of the body is processed and given meaning from social sources…it is also a function that is necessarily partially shared with others. This sharing with specific others is the process from which human meaning emerges, and hence it forms the basis of human practices.

Martin and Nakayama (2015, p.17) note that recent developments in ICC (Intercultural Communication Competence) theories reflect that ‘competence’ is related to ‘ABC’, that is, Affect, Behaviour, and Cognition/Knowledge. Stephan and Stephan (2002, p. 128) in their model of cross-cultural interactions emphasise the role of affect and cognition in intercultural relations. Hence, affective functioning - how people feel about and agree with each other - is critical for not only the formation of co-present groups, but also for the communication involved in this process.

Figure 3 The Role of Cognitions and Affect in Intercultural Relations
Stephan and Stephan (2002, p. 128)
What counts as a workplace is a hybrid concept which consists of groups and sub-groups intertwining with each other, functionally and culturally. Each co-present group can be understood as “a complex system that emerges from the complex relations between the individuals of the group, while these individuals themselves function as complex systems, shaped by individual biology, personal social relations and historical experiences” (Lancaster, 2012, p.129). Take organisations for example: there is the organisation and its culture; there are departments and their working culture; there are smaller groups and project teams with their own ‘team’ cultures. Workplaces are complex webs of co-present groups, evolving, linking and intertwining with each other. In this process and for these co-present groups, the situations (both cultural and contextual) that members experience together, and the processing of affective functioning that members of the group share, are critical and fundamental. By practicing and experiencing together the ‘situations’ and enhancing ‘affect’ within the group, group members further develop their shared ‘sameness’ as well as mutually agreed practices.

The staff working in the BPBJC office formed their own team culture and practice - as CD described “all these people know me”. RB, SP, RE and MX formed the BPIHI-YC sales team with their own targets and shared understandings, hence they align with each other their plans and goals as well as how to report and communicate with others including head office and brokers. Participants in the meeting SYD-M-QR2 worked closely together on care home management and developed their agreed understandings and practice. Participants in the meeting SYD-M-DRC had their own responsibilities and came into this meeting with their own goals (as DW described), but their projects were interconnected as part of BPAUG’s larger investment and development processes.

A workplace is constituted by people in a ‘situation’. Individuals are the carriers of the ‘sameness’ and the ‘difference’ and the performers of practice, but they do not perform solo. My fieldwork shows that understanding and managing people is fundamental in workplaces and that this is primary within co-present groups. Three experienced international managers, in their reflection in interviews, all pointed out that focusing on people is important for management. Culture is adaptive and adaptation is performed by people and is driven by a ‘situation’. Hence instead of emphasising cultural understanding (which can be inert), people management is significant in situations critical for the success of workplace communication and management.

Thus, I argue for the formation of the ‘third place’ in international business facilitated by the English language. I discussed in Chapter 2 the role of the English language as lingua franca (ELF). When being used as a lingua franca in international business, the English language is no longer the original native English language. ELF is a shared language, ideologically based on the Western business culture and framework,
being used in different locations and situations, partly adapted to cultures and contexts by its different users. As *lingua franca* of the ‘third place’, ELF helps enhance understanding, reduce fear, and build up familiarity, trust and relationships.

Therefore, I claim that the situation of workplaces, in organisations, businesses and particularly in international business, is the hybrid ‘third place’; and I claim that sensitivity to the hybridity of that ‘third place’ and the people involved, as well as to the development of affective functioning between members of groups, is significant. This third place is based on ‘*samenesses*’ and distinct from ‘*differences*’. As shown in my answer to the second research question, people involved in this ‘third place’ all have their individual cultural values and identities, but by entering this ‘third place’ and joining different groups, they get involved in the process of group value and identity development, where they build up affective functioning towards certain groups and members, adapt to group values, and acquire group identities – they form patterns that are meaningful to them. In this ‘third place’, individuals function and co-operate with each other, based on not just their original values and identities, but more primarily on their affective functioning and their groups’ values, interests and identities. They very often reveal implicit reasons for what they do.

Individuals engage in specific communication/interaction for certain purposes. Their communication/interaction serves the purposes of its interlocutors. Therefore communication/interaction in specific contexts is transitional, especially interaction between individuals at workplaces. Specific contexts call for appropriate interaction and going further even rule formation, as Samovar et al. (1998, p. 176) suggest “contexts specify the appropriate rules”. Rules and patterns of communication in a specific context are governed by the conventions of interaction and cultures at different levels, including national, institutional/organisational, group/team and individual. National culture, organisational culture, and individual identity and experience contribute to the rule formation in the process of communication. Different rules being generated produce different interaction experiences and outcomes – the outcomes of transactions. Different outcomes of contingent and transactional interactions produce different communication experiences and generate different relationships. The ability to generate positive communication outcomes – affection, *sameness*, cooperative and collegial spirits – is significant for the survival of individuals and sub-groups in workplaces, i.e. the ‘third place’.

The cultures of the groups and sub-groups in this ‘third place’, can be purposefully created by the leaders and members of the groups, through joint practices. At the time of data collection, CD was trying to create a team culture, as he described in the interview, “*I want people to take chances. If I can develop that culture, then I am happy but that is more a question of the company and the team culture, it is nothing to do with local culture*”. A culture in this ‘third place’ can be created and learned from shared experiences, that is, as I explained at the beginning of this section, in the processes of practising of jobs and tasks. CD explained explicitly how the culture of
BPBJC team was to be created: “everybody’s together, we are doing - we are solving things together”. Members of a group work together in order to produce agreed outcomes or reach shared targets. The culture of the ‘third place’ is created for the survival and the success of the group. As Ehrlich (2000) suggests, culture assures the survival of the group. When individuals work together, they have to cooperate, make joint efforts and build relationships. Affection is crucial in joint practices as it determines how individuals cooperate and interact with each other. Based on the affection developed, members of a group can then develop their ‘sameness’ – their agreed values, behaviours, work processes and targets. CD explained how BPBJC members created their own culture: “we are just trying it out, we will see what people like and what they don’t like”. The individuals who cannot develop affection with others or with the work tasks, therefore cannot share the ‘sameness’ – as CD said “some people fit in while some people don’t fit”. When the culture of the ‘third place’ is created and agreed by the members of the group, the patterns of communication thus emerge, and the members reveal implicit reasons for what they do, through their communication.

Having completed answering my three research questions, I propose, in the next section, a pedagogical framework to promote understanding and to better align people and cultures, and thus to create the ‘third place’ in workplaces, which is mainly constituted in co-present groups’ practices.

7.6 The Pedagogical Framework

The answers to the three research questions as set out in sections 7.2, 7.2, 7.4 and 7.5, contribute to the need for a pedagogical framework for better workplace communication in cross-cultural contexts. In Section 7.5, I argued that co-present groups’ cultures diverge, and that workplaces are where cultures and sub-cultures co-exist and intertwine. This pedagogical framework was initially developed for international business communication – cross cultural on the national level – but further developed for communication in workplaces on other levels, including anywhere co-present groups exist – in organisations, departments, or project groups.

The central concept of this framework is that communication in the ‘third place’ is hybrid and that ‘sameness’ can be purposely identified, elicited, encouraged, further developed and managed.

Jameson’s (2007) suggestion that cultural identity is one part of a larger concept of individual identity, and his list of components of cultural identity (as presented in Table 24) can be used alongside this pedagogical framework. Jameson’s list addresses the diversity of cross-cultural workplaces and can help capture the ‘sameness’ which can better guide people involved in workplaces and business situations to understand and co-operate with their business partners and colleagues – the members of
co-present groups in particular situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Cultural Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession or job category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employing organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subunit of organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geography</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region, state, province, or city identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density identification (urban, suburban, small town, rural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence (if different from nationality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philosophy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity based on other philosophies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biological traits with cultural aspects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24 Components of Cultural Identity

This pedagogical framework consists of four major steps. When using this framework, workplace trainers and leaders should adapt this framework into specific situations, and feed into the framework additional information, or case studies for specific industries or projects. For example, an aged care company that wants to use this framework to train their carers should adapt this framework into the context of an aged care facility, design the cases/situations to caring for elders from diverse cultural backgrounds, have different life experience and personal situations, with different illness or aging problems; and also guide the carers’ communication and practice aligned with care home regulations and requirements. Jameson’s components of cultural identity can be used to guide people to understand others culturally, so that...
‘sameness’ can be established. Accuracy in communication is fundamental in this process. Reliable business outcomes are generated from accurate communication and understanding. Double-checking understandings and expectations, as well as confirming agreements, is always necessary and is encouraged throughout this framework.

**Step 1:** Sharing Information and Building a Level of ‘Sameness’.
This is the initial stage of the formation of the ‘situational’ co-present groups. People firstly enter a situation, for example, a business meeting, a project team or a training group, without knowing much about each other. The focus of this stage is to encourage and elicit understandings between group members and identify the ‘sameness’.

**Step 2:** Confirming Information and Developing ‘Sameness’.
In this stage group members try to confirm their understandings about others, and the information they have shared that relates to the situation. Based on the ‘sameness’ identified in Step 1, group members then try to facilitate good relationships with one another, exchange their views and expand their knowledge related to the situation. Based on these exchanges and interactions, the ‘sameness’ between individuals will be further developed.

**Step 3:** Communicating Accurately and Establishing ‘Sameness’.
In this stage, members of the group start to depart from the old information which they have shared and confirmed, and move on to the development of new knowledge and information and extended discussions. Group members need to pay more attention to and exert more effort to maintain accuracy in their communication at this stage. The initial good feelings towards each other should be enhanced and the ‘sameness’ should be further developed. This is the stage when the ‘third place’ culture of this group starts to formulate.

**Step 4:** Enhancing and Extending ‘Sameness’.
In this stage group members further discuss and develop shared understandings and expectations, negotiate differences, and reach agreement. The ‘sameness’ is enhanced and extended in their communication and joint practice. Members may communicate more easily and closely. In this stage, the reinforced ‘third place’ culture will bind the members together and will drive the movement of this co-present group.

This pedagogical framework emphasises ‘sameness’ and that this is teachable, or at least learnable. Successful business managers know the importance of understanding and aligning with those they work with – they learn this from their experiences. The business managers in my fieldwork know how to foster understanding and build up affect with their employees and business partners – they learn this by constantly reflecting on their management experiences. All people come into the workplace with their own values and preferences, some adapt quickly and some take time to truly
become a team player. Seeking affection with other people and being identified by others is in our human nature. As Lancaster (2012, p.127) says, “this sharing with specific others is the process from which human meaning emerges”. This framework is developed to inform people at workplaces of the importance of sharing ‘sameness’, to purposefully help them build this ‘sameness’ faster and easier, and to facilitate managers in building productive co-present groups within their workplace.

My pedagogical framework has four steps. Step 1 focuses on identifying the ‘sameness’. Steps 2 and 3 focus on building and enhancing this ‘sameness’ and step 4 focuses on reinforcing and further developing the ‘sameness’. Solid communication, engagement, and effort in building up ‘affect’ are important throughout each step. Shared understandings and joint practice are also important as the significance of co-present groups is the development of learning in situations. Sensitivity to hybridity and the ability to communicate accurately is essential in this process. In the context of international and cross-cultural business communication, I suggest and encourage the use of ELF (English as Lingua Franca) because ELF, as the language of the ‘third place’, facilitates, promotes and enhances the establishment of ‘sameness’ between people and groups in international and cross-cultural business.

The pedagogical framework contributes to the understanding of an individual’s philosophical and socio-cultural identity which is in continuing negotiation in contingent and transactional interaction. It is not a recipe for ‘cookie cutting’. The framework will not generate clones. When being used for workplace training and team building, different business and workplace situations can be applied into this framework including business entry meetings, joint venture partnership discussions, or new staff training. Training and teaching activities like role-playing, group-work, and case studies can also be integrated into the framework to enhance learning and practice. Joint activities and group-work should be developed based on training purposes, industry needs and business situations, and participants’ professions and interests. For example, these activities should be ‘meaningful’ to the learners and participants to encourage participant buy-in. During activities and group-work, learners and participants from diverse or distinct cultural backgrounds can be paired or grouped together, in order to develop their sensitivity to hybridity, their ability to develop ‘sameness’ with people from distinct cultures, and their competence in communicating accurately across cultures.

7.7 Limitations, Possibilities and Implications

In this study I analysed meeting communication and interview data collected in three sites of a ‘case’, a British enterprise, to explore the complexity and dynamism of international business, and to identify strategies for effective communication and management in today’s ‘cosmopolitan’ workplaces.
I acknowledge that this study has some limitations. Methodologically, the use of a case study allows me to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon of communication in business meetings and cross-cultural business management. However this approach is limited and does not allow me to explore other business and workplace practices. Nor does it not allow me to study enterprises in other industries and geographical locations, or to observe the communicative behaviours of people from other diverse cultural backgrounds. Therefore in this study, I observed and analysed only the particular situations of Chinese-Western and Western-Western business meetings, in an enterprise in the human service industry. Conceptually, this study focuses on culture, cross-cultural business and workplace communication and does not investigate issues like global citizenship. Also, due to time and capacity limitations, this study does not track and analyse the outcomes of the decisions made in business meetings, hence I could not identify the effectiveness of these decisions or understand the impact of the power flow and alignment that occurred in the business meetings on business practice and project implementation observed.

Despite these limitations, the outcome of this study has significance for updating understandings of cross-cultural communication and management. This project provides evidence for the inappropriateness and insufficientness of Hofstede’s framework for understanding cross-cultural communication in today’s international workplaces. The research outcomes also challenge the traditional focus on cultural differences for understanding the meaningfulness of cross-cultural business communication and I suggest that instead of looking at the ‘differences’, that ‘sameness’ in business situations, the formation of co-present groups is fundamental for effective workplace practice. I propose a people centered approach and the concept of the ‘third place’ to better capture the dynamism of today’s workplaces and business situations.

For decades, there has been debate about how to define culture and how best to understand cultural value differences. The process of seeking to define culture can be endless as the concept of culture and differences between cultures are complex and fluid. How useful is it to put cultural concepts at the centre of business and workplace communication and management? Among cultural and business studies, Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural value differences have been, and are still, dominant. In this study I have argued, based on evidence collected in fieldwork, that Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural value differences can provide some indication for cultural values at the national level, but are not an appropriate and efficient guide for understanding the meaningfulness of communication and management in cross-cultural workplaces and international businesses. By challenging the static notion of culture, I also argued that the concepts of culture and cultural differences are contingent and situational, and that people form groups, implement tasks and achieve common goals based on the ‘sameness’ they present. I argue that people, businesses and organisations come together as a result of ‘sameness’, in the pursuit of shared understandings and outcomes. By claiming ‘sameness’ as an important concept for
communication and management, I further suggest, that the workplace is a hybrid ‘third place’ that’s foundation is built on the ‘sameness’. Instead of generalising and emphasising cultural difference, this study shows that sensitivity to hybridity, and the ability to comprehend and align expectations are fundamental for effective communication and management. I proposed a pedagogical framework concentrating on developing, aligning and enhancing ‘sameness’ and understandings between people involved in workplaces conceptualised as sites of ‘co-present’ groups. This framework aims to provide a pragmatic guide for building effective communication and management within business and workplace training and learning, that is, in sites I have identified as ‘third spaces’.

I also claim that, the ELF (English as lingua franca) is the language of the ‘third place’ in cross-cultural and international business. ELF is rooted in the Western business ideology, it promotes the Western business framework and it is adaptive to diverse cultures and situations. I suggest that using the English language promotes and enhances ‘sameness’ in the sites of business ‘third places’.

Workplaces are centered around people. Languages and cultures are adaptive and dependent on these people – their users and carriers and contexts – the actual situations. Rather than identifying the complexity of static culture in isolation, I call for more focus and encourage further studies on understanding the meaningfulness of people, situations and the affective significance of groups’ behavior. I also argue for great recognition of the contingency of communication and management, as a priority in workplace communication and management studies, especially for the further exploration of affective functioning and patterns of power flow and alignment and their outcomes in work groups in ‘cosmopolitan’ workplaces. Thus, Hofstedian analysis has served significant research purposes. It has opened up the dynamic, fluid and contingent nature of cross-cultural work environments. The future will carry these further.
REFERENCES


Erikson, E. (1968). Growth and Crises of The Healthy Personality. In Chiang, H. and


Scarino, A. (2010). Assessing Intercultural Capability in Learning Languages: A Renewed Understanding of Language, Culture, Learning and the Nature of


Yep, G. A. (2000). Encounters with the Other: Personal Notes for a


APPENDICES

Appendix I: Hofstede’s Dimensions of National Cultural Values

The first four dimensions of national culture values were introduced by Geert Hofstede (1980) in his book *Cultures and Consequences*. They were developed by Hofstede (1991) following a comprehensive study of cultural value differences at workplaces based on a large database of employee value scores collected within IBW worldwide. The four dimensions are:

i. Power Distance (PDI)
ii. Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
iii. Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
iv. Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

The fifth dimension was developed based on the result of a survey of students studying overseas conducted by Michael Harris Bond (1991) and developed together with Chinese professors. The survey results were supported by Hofstede who incorporated the result into dimensions of national cultures and introduced in *Cultures and Organizations* (1991) a new dimension called the Confucian Dynamism (also known as ‘long-term orientation’). Hofstede explains that this dimension “deals with a choice from Confucius ideas” (Hofstede and Bond, 1988, p.16). Then the fifth dimension used in the analysis framework, therefore is:

v. Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation (LTO)

In the 2010 edition of *Cultures and Organizations*, a sixth dimension was introduced, based on research by Michael Minkov which analyzed the World Values Survey for 93 countries (the Hofstede Centre, 2015). This new dimension is called:

vi. Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

Classifications of Australian, Chinese, British, Danish, New Zealand and American cultures in Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural values from the Hofstede Centre (2015)

i. Power Distance (PDI)

Power Distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede and Bond, 1984, p.419). Australian, New Zealand and British cultures have very similar scores and traits in PDI. Danish culture has the lowest score in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>PDI Ranking</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Low power distance culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hierarchy is established for convenience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Superiors are always accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Managers rely on employees and teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ii. Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
This dimension deals with “the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members” (the Hofstede Centre, 2015). Australian, British and American cultures have very similar scores in this dimension while Chinese culture is scored at the extreme opposite to all other countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>IDV Ranking</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Australia      | 90    | A highly individualist culture | • A loosely-knit society.  
• People look after themselves and immediate families.  
• Employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative.  
• Decisions regarding hiring and promotion are based on what one can do or has done. |
| Denmark        | 74    | An individualistic culture | • Individuals are expected to look after themselves and their direct families only.  
• Task oriented.                                                                 |

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>IDV Ranking</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Australia      | 90    | A highly individualist culture | • A loosely-knit society.  
• People look after themselves and immediate families.  
• Employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative.  
• Decisions regarding hiring and promotion are based on what one can do or has done. |
| Denmark        | 74    | An individualistic culture | • Individuals are expected to look after themselves and their direct families only.  
• Task oriented.                                                                 |

---

for their expertise.

• Information is shared frequently between managers and employees.
• Communication is informal, direct and participative.

**Denmark**

18 Very low power distance culture

• Believe in independency, equal rights and employee autonomy.
• Power is decentralized.
• Direct and involved communication at the workplace.

**China**

80 High power distance culture

• Inequality among people is acceptable.
• Subordinate-superior relationship and hierarchy are acceptable.

**New Zealand**

22 Very low power distance culture

• Hierarchy is established for convenience.
• Superiors are always accessible.
• Managers rely on employees and teams for their expertise.
• Information is shared frequently between managers and employees.
• Communication is informal, direct and participative.

**United Kingdom**

35 Low power distance culture

• Believes that inequality among people should be minimized.

**United States**

40 Low power distance culture

• Equality among people is respected.
China

20
A highly collectivist culture

- People act in the interest of the group instead of themselves.
- Employee commitment (not necessarily to people in the organisation) is low.
- Relationship with colleagues are cooperative for in-groups but cold or hostile to out-groups.
- Personal relationships prevail over task and company.

New Zealand

79
An individualistic culture

- A loosely-knit society.
- People look after themselves and their immediate families.
- Employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative.
- Decisions regarding hiring and promotion are based on what one can do or has done.

United Kingdom

89
A highly individualistic culture

- Highly individualistic and private.
- Happiness leads to personal fulfillment.

United States

91
The most individualistic culture in the world

- Hierarchy is established for convenience.
- Equality and information sharing between superiors and subordinates.
- People look after themselves and their direct families.
- Active in interacting with others and seeking information.
- Self-reliant and displays initiative.

iii. Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
This dimension addresses “assertiveness and competitiveness versus modesty and caring” (Hofstede, 1991, pp.82-83). A masculine society tends to be driven by competition, achievement and success; a feminine society is dominated by values that emphasize caring for others and quality of life. Australian, Chinese, New Zealand, British and American cultures have similar scores while Danish culture is at the extreme opposite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>MAS Ranking</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Australia     | 61    | A masculine society | - A shared value of “strive to the best” and “winner takes all”.
|               |       |             | - Proud of success and achievement in life.                                                       |
iv. Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)
This dimension indicates a culture’s level of tolerance for “uncertainty and ambiguity” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 113). High uncertainty avoidance cultures “tend to have clear norms and rules to guide their behaviour for virtually all situations” while in low uncertainty avoidance cultures, norms and rules are not “clear-cut and rigid” (Gudykunst and Lee, 2002, p. 36). Hofstede (1991) explains that members of high uncertainty avoidance culture believe that “what is different, is dangerous”, and members of low uncertainty avoidance cultures believe that “what is different, is curious” (p. 119). Gudykunst and Lee (2002) further explain that “uncertainty-oriented individuals are interested in reducing uncertainty, and certainty-oriented individuals try to avoid looking at uncertainty when it is present” (p.37). Chinese, British and American cultures are all ranked relatively low in this dimension. Australian and New Zealand cultures are both intermediate. Danish culture is the lowest in this dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>UAI Ranking</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Denmark** | 23 | Very low uncertainty avoidance culture | Less need for structure or predictability.  
+ Comfortable with changes and happy to confront unknown/uncertain situations or issues.  
+ Curiosity and creativity are |
v. Long-term Orientation (LTO)
This dimension describes the need for every society to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future (the Hofstede Centre, 2015). Australian, Danish, New Zealand and American cultures all have low scores in this dimension which means they tend to have normative cultures. British culture is classified as intermediate (no preference shown). Chinese culture is the only country that has a very pragmatic culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>LTO Ranking</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Australia** | 21 | Low score in LTD A normative culture | • People have a strong concern with establishing the absolute truth.  
• People are normative in their thinking.  
• People exhibit great respect for traditions.  
• A relatively small propensity to save for the future.  
• Focus on achieving quick results. |
| **Denmark** | 35 | Low score in LTD A normative culture | • People have a strong concern with establishing the absolute truth.  
• People are normative in their thinking.  
• People exhibit great respect for traditions.  
• A relatively small propensity to save for the future.  
• Focus on achieving quick results. |
### China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Long-term orientation</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 87    | A very pragmatic culture | • People believe that truth very much depends on the situation, context and time.  
• People show their ability to adapt, traditions are easily to changed conditions.  
• A strong propensity to save and invest.  
• Thriftiness.  
• Perseverance in achieving results. |

### New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Low score in LTD</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 33    | A normative culture | • People have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth.  
• People are normative in their thinking.  
• People exhibit great respect for traditions.  
• A relatively small propensity to save for the future.  
• Focus on achieving quick results. |

### United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dominant preference in British culture cannot be determined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Low score in LTD</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 26    | A normative culture | • Americans are prone to analyze new information to check whether it is true.  
• Americans have strong ideas about what is good and evil.  
• American businesses measure performance on a short-term basis. This drives individuals to strive for quick results at the workplace. |

### vi. Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

This dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses (the Hofstede Centre, 2015). Chinese culture is the only country with a restraint culture; all other cultures are indulgent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>IND Ranking</th>
<th>Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Australia 71 | An indulgent country | • People are willing to realize their impulses and desires.  
• Enjoying life and having fun.  
• Positive attitude and a tendency towards optimism.  
• Place a high degree of importance on leisure time and happy to spend money as they wish. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Denmark      | 70    | An indulgent country | - People are willing to realize their impulses and desires.  
- Enjoying life and having fun.  
- Positive attitude and a tendency towards optimism.  
- Place a high degree of importance on leisure time and happy to spend money as they wish. |
| China        | 24    | A restraint society | - Society has a tendency to cynicism and pessimism.  
- Do not have much emphasis on leisure time.  
- People control their gratification of desires.  
- People have a perception that their actions are restrained by social norms.  
- People feel that indulging themselves is wrong. |
| New Zealand  | 75    | An indulgent country | - People are willing to realize their impulses and desires.  
- Enjoying life and having fun.  
- Positive attitude and a tendency towards optimism.  
- Place a high degree of importance on leisure time and please to spend money as they wish. |
| United Kingdom | 69   | An indulgent country | - People are willing to realize their impulses and desires.  
- Enjoying life and having fun.  
- Positive attitude and a tendency towards optimism.  
- Place a high degree of importance on leisure time and please to spend money as they wish. |
| United States | 68   | An indulgent country | **Indulgent + Normative**  
A combination of normative culture, indulgence of American culture is reflected by the following contradictory attitudes and behaviour:  
- Work hard and play hard.  
- A war of anti-drugs versus a higher drug addiction in comparison with other developed countries. |
Appendix II: List of Codes

i. Codes of companies involved in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>An insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP</td>
<td>The British Health Care Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPAUG</td>
<td>BP’s subsidiary company in Australia which manages aged care facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPBJC</td>
<td>BP’s subsidiary company in Beijing which provides consulting services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPIHI</td>
<td>BP’s health insurance division which provides international health insurance services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPIHI-YC</td>
<td>The joint venture of BPIHI and YC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS Group</td>
<td>A Chinese company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>An insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>An insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITG</td>
<td>An insurance broker company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCI</td>
<td>An American company which provides hospital evaluation and accreditation services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MY</td>
<td>An insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW</td>
<td>An insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>An insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>An insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YC</td>
<td>BPIHI’s Chinese joint venture company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii. Codes of participants in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Regional Director (North), BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>Manager of Quality Evaluation at BPBJC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>Director of Legal, BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Senior Manager in Finance, BP head office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>General Manager of BPBJC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Office admin at BPBJC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>Care Manager of one of BPAUG’s care homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DB</td>
<td>A Western sales person who worked for PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>A manager in PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW</td>
<td>Director of Strategy &amp; Development, BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>A Chinese sales person at MY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>An employee in HR Department of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>OH&amp;S manager of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>DD’s colleague in PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>DD’s colleague in PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>DD’s colleague in PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN</td>
<td>DD’s colleague in PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC</td>
<td>Chairman of the FS Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GD</td>
<td>BPIHI’s marketing staff in the UK head office who supported the China sales team on marketing and promotional activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>Group Director of Operation, BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>A manager at BPIHI’s head office who supported the China sales team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>Group Director of Operation, BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>A manager at BPIHI’s head office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JN</td>
<td>An admin stuff at YC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW</td>
<td>A senior manager at BPBJC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCI</td>
<td>General Manager of JCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCI</td>
<td>General Manager of JCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KT</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>General Manager of YC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td>A manager at MY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>A Manager of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>A previous staff of BPBJC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>Finance Manager of BPBJC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LZ</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>A care home manager of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MG</td>
<td>A manager in the operation team of BPBJC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>Commercial Director (North), BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>The newly appointed Marketing Director of BPIHI who’s based in the head office in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>A care home manager of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Director of Property, BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Senior Manager of Property, BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX</td>
<td>YC’s sales manager who worked with BPIHI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>A senior Executive in Finance, BP head office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>the Finance Director in BP head office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>A manager of an insurance broker company in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>The Managing Director of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PK</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>An employee of BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Director of Development, BPAUG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>DD’s colleague in PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>BPIHI’s Sales Director of Asia Pacific region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iii. Other codes used in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>Executive Leadership Meeting (of BPAUG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN</td>
<td>Enrolled Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC</td>
<td>Care Home Complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIC</td>
<td>China Insurance Clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIRC</td>
<td>China Insurance Regulatory Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Customer Relationship Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Design Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH&amp;S</td>
<td>Occupational Health &amp; Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM</td>
<td>Operation Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>Operation Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP</td>
<td>Quality Evaluation Program for hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Regional Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv. Codes of data units, activities and participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit BJ1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-JCI</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>CD / JW / JCI GM / JCIM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-I-JW</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>JW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit BJ2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-OPS</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>CD / BB / VK / CS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-I-BB</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit BJ3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-M-TEAM</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>CD / BB / MG / VK / LU / CS / TL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJ-I-CD</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit SH1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-M-TEAM</td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>RB / SP / RE / MX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH-I-RB</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>RB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Unit SH2
- **SH-M-SALES**: Meeting RE / MX
- **SH-I-MX**: Interview MX

### Unit SH3
- **SH-M-BROK**: Meeting RE / MX / PP
- **SH-I-RE**: Interview RE

### Unit SYD1
- **SYD-M-QR1**: Meeting GH / IB / PB / MC / AM / PS / RL
- **SYD-I-GH1**: Interview GH

### Unit SYD2
- **SYD-M-QR2**: Meeting GH / IB / PB / MC / AM / PS / RL
- **SYD-I-GH2**: Interview GH

### Unit SYD3
- **SYD-M-DRC**: Meeting AD / CB / DW / GH / IB / MH / MS / PS / MT / TW / TT
- **SYD-I-DW**: Interview DW
- **SYD-I-TT**: Interview TT
- **SYD-I-TW**: Interview TW
Appendix III: Sample Plain Language Statement

Rebecca Xiaoran Song  
PhD Student, Melbourne University, Australia  
x.song3@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au  
8 April 2011

In regards to: PhD Research: The Complexity of Cross-Cultural Business Communication.

RB  
Head of Sales & Distribution – Asia Pacific

Dear Mr. ,

I would like to invite you to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted as part of my study and supervised by professors at the Graduate Research School, Education Department, the University of Melbourne.

This project explores Chinese-Western business communication strategies. It is hoped the research will contribute to a better understanding of management and inter-cultural business communication in a globalizing China. Another aim is to better understand how corporate, leadership and management styles in Western and Chinese contexts interact with local ethnic and national culture. In order to compare management and communication in different contexts, the data required for this study will be collected in both Australia and China.

Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute to this in two ways.

1. I would ask your permission to observe and audio record your meetings in Shanghai, with your joint-venture partner(s). A minimum of 2 to 3 meetings would need to be observed and recorded.
2. Then I would ask you and your colleagues who joined the meetings to participate a brief interview of 35 to 50 minutes, so that I could understand your background and reflection on the meeting discussion. With your permission, the interview would be tape-recorded to ensure an accurate record of what you say. When the tape has been transcribed, you and your colleagues would be provided with a copy of the transcript, so that you can verify that the information is correct or request deletions.

We intend to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of BP and all participants to this research, and all responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. This project has applied for ethics clearance to the HREC (Human Research Ethics Committee) at the University of Melbourne and will not commence until obtaining the approval. The names and contact details of the company and all participants will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to the company or the participants’ responses by the researchers, for example, in order to know where to send your interview transcript for checking. In the final report, the company and participants will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

Once the thesis arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be available to you on application at the University of Melbourne. It is also possible that the results will be presented at academic conferences. The data will be kept securely in Melbourne University for five years from the date of the completion of the study, before being destroyed.

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it by scanning and emailing it to x.song3@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au. I will then contact you to confirm the time of data collection and other relevant details.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at x.song3@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au or via telephone at +61 (0) 427 449 920.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Xiaoran Song
Appendix IV: Sample Consent Form

PhD Research: Management Discourse
A Critical Analysis of Western-Chinese Business Interaction

Name of participant: RB, Head of Sales & Distribution – Asia Pacific, BP

Name of investigator: Rebecca Xiaoran Song

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher.

3. I understand that my participation will involve interviews and observation of meetings and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.

4. I acknowledge that:
   (a) the possible effects of participating in the interviews and observation of meetings have been explained to my satisfaction;
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
   (c) the project is for the purpose of an independent PhD research;
   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   (e) I have been informed that with my consent the interviews and meetings will be audio-taped and I understand that audio-tapes will be stored at University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years;
   (f) my name and the name of the company will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publications arising from the research;
   (g) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

I consent to this the interviews and meetings being audio-taped
☐ yes  ☐ no (please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings
☐ yes  ☐ no (please tick)

Participant signature: Date:

(RB)
Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s: 
Song, Xiaoran

Title: 
The complexity of cross cultural business communication

Date: 
2017

Persistent Link: 
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/192995

File Description: 
The Complexity of Cross Cultural Business Communication

Terms and Conditions: 
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.