UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

An Intercultural competence study of conflict management style amongst managers in cross-cultural American organizations

QualComm and Genentech

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Master of Communication Thesis

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following persons who have made the completion of this thesis possible:

My amazing beautiful professor, Nataliya Berbyuk Lindstrom for her vital encouragement and support. She has been patient, understanding and very helpfully. She has continued to motivate me and assist me throughout the way.

Alexander Almer, for his help, guidance and inspiration that kept me going and for his reminder that things tend to work out one way or another.

To my special amazing parents who have shown me nothing but support, love and motivation.

I can't thank you enough for everything that you've done.

Thank you so much for the bottom of my heart.

Abstract

Today nations are not only transferring goods and services, but also people, knowledge, technology and cultures. These new ways of development triggers new concepts to the literature of intercultural interaction and conflict management styles in businesses across the world. Businesses around the world are developing various disciplines to support, teach and increase awareness of intercultural interaction.

This study aims to analyze the intercultural interaction and the different conflict management styles that appear in a cross-cultural work setting among managers. The aim is to recognize and further generate ways to become better at understanding, how conflicts occur, are managed and if "face" negotiation theory plays a role into the type of conflict styles different individuals from different cultures use. Sixty (60) managers from two well-known organizations, Genentech and QualComm in California, San Diego were chosen to participate in the study. The questionnaire was conducted to try and identify the effects of cultural on conflict management styles among managers who deal with other managers from other countries. The study revealed that managers from different cultures tend to have different conflict management styles and that "face" plays a big role on what type of styles they use to resolve conflicts. Gender and age were also included as fixed factors which showed a positive correlation to how you deal with cultural interactions at work and conflict management styles. The study of the study is applicable for understanding culture influence on conflict management.

An intercultural study of different conflict management styles amongst employees and managers in American Organizations.

Appendix

1. Introduction

Importance of culture diversity in businesses and opportunities of international experience provided are getting vital in the world of globalization. This is mostly because most companies are targeting foreign markets rather than the domestic markets as a result of overload in their home market and effects of globalization, such as, economic hardships. This trend of going global has changed the selection procedures in majority of organizations as they are now looking for co-workers who are bilingual, who have a university degree and the freedom of traveling both in and out of the country. In short, we can say that businesses are conducted across the borders of one nation, which makes the world market culturally diverse.

Disappearance of national borders in business terms bring a brand new to the literature known as "intercultural competence". This opens doors for different business relations to take place in where an increase of productivity of international communication is vital. In other words, this requires us to know the background of the people we deal with, where they grew up, what they care for and how they react. This helps when coping with people from different cultures and minimizes chances of conflict to occur due to intercultural interactions.

This study aims to analyze the impact of culture on intercultural interactions and how it affects conflict management style in business settings. The objectives of the study are included in the following statements:

1) To discover how conflicts occur due to difference in cultural background
2) To see how conflicts are managed in cross-cultural work settings.
3) To discover whether "face" negotiation theory plays a positive role into conflict management styles.

2. Background

2.1 Conflicts – a definition

According to Putnam and Poole (1987), conflict is defined as "the interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims and values and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals" (p. 552). This definition is important and crucial because it highlights the "three I's" of conflict: incompatible goals, interdependence and interaction. These three factors target the basic underlying central understanding of conflict, nonetheless, in organizational settings, these can vary substantially.

Conflicts rage from private to formal and this research aims to focus on business encounters with different cultural backgrounds and conflicts that might arise due to these interactions. As society continues to evolve and technology is the leading innovation, we are able to travel, interact and form business with organizations across the globe. Even though, conflict is a challenging activity to be a part of it has been identified that conflict is a modern approach towards management in business settings and the influence of being able to learn more from each other (Asad Mohsin, 2006, p.3). Even though the word conflict is often associated with a negative weight to it, it is

true that conflicts can contribute towards positive outcomes, if managed effectively. If conflicts are dealt with in a productive way in where both parties manage to come to an agreement, the results can involve improved relationships, more effective tasks accomplishments and more creative problem solving and innovation (Asad Mohsin, 2006, p.7).

2.2 Conflict management in organizations

Conflict is a very widely studied area in where many researchers have tried to study people's behavior during a conflict episode. Their aim is to identify the most effective and constructive approach when dealing with conflicts. Rahim and Bonoma (1979) organized conflict styles into two basic dimensions which were: concern for thy self and concern for others. These two dimensions result into five behavioral categories that occur during conflict strategies and these are:
1) Integrating
2) Obliging
3) Dominating
4) Avoiding
5) Compromising
Now, in most cases there is always some type of psychology involved in most solutions and outcomes of things. There is always a thought behind every action, thus, using "integrating" actions during a conflict episode refers to the high concern for both self and others. An integrative solution or outcome often involves the process of meeting both partners' needs. "Obliging" refers to the individual's low concern for self and high concern for others. This is associated with attempting to satisfy the needs of others while at the same time sacrificing one's own needs and happiness. On the other hand, a "dominating" style during a conflict episode refers to being selfish and not really caring about others needs and wants. This tactic is often used to gain all rights and privileges of the conflict that has occurred. "Avoiding" is a style in where the individual avoids the situation and has low concern for both self and others. In this case, the problem has not been discussed nor dealt with, thus, it has failed to satisfy one's own need as well as the need for others. Finally, the style of "compromising" during a conflict episode is a moderate level of both the concern for self and others. This particular style looks to reach a mutual acceptable decision that usually works for both parties.

Katherine Miller (2006), states that many organizational conflicts come from inconsistent ideas about the supply of organizational resources. In an organization, often many people are involved in making a decision in where and how things should be supplied and organized. Often times, these decisions rarely happen without a conflict of interest that occurs among colleagues. In any given work setting, where capital investment, benefits, payrolls and different ways of managing the organization is involved, there will always be conflicts that arise for the reason that there are too many ideas and solutions to decide from. Each decision will carry a disadvantage outcome and an advantage outcome, yet deciding which choice to take is the most crucial part of an organizational setting. For the reason that, each manager wants to ensure a successful outcome that will be beneficial for their organization, now imagine wanting to engage in these decision making processes with customers and businesses from different cultures. Conflicts will occur and factors such as differences in norms, values and behavior will now play a part of the conflict, not to mention personality, thus, knowing how to turn a conflict into a resolution will be a crucial

part for any manager in any business setting. Nevertheless, incompatibility is not the only condition for organizational conflicts to arise, interdependent behaviors among organizational members also play a role in the increase of conflicts to occur. An example of this, is when one manager supports and believes in having a participative way of making decisions, because most business decisions will effect most employees and they have the right to share their opinion and thoughts. On the other hand, you have another manager that supports and believe in authoritative way of making decisions, this comes from the belief that too many inputs from too many people will result in a decision not being made or the decision making process will be prolonged (Miller, 2006, p.160-161).

2.3 "Face" negotiation theory and culture

Brown and Levinson (1978) argued in their development of the politeness theory, that face is often what matters the most during a conflict. The term "face" might be defined as a positive social value a person claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is often seen as an image of self-delineated, in where you are approved by the unspoken set of social attributes. Brown and Levinson argued that positive and negative face exists everywhere in all cultures of the worlds. Some social encounters can have face threatening outcomes that are inevitable.

Brown and Levinson's theory was developed by Stella Ting-Toomey (WHO IS SHE? J, who claims that "face" is an explanatory method for conflict behavior and outcomes in different cultural groups (Ting-Toomey (1988). In other words, "conflict styles" is a grounded concept within any culture and depending on the type of culture you were exposed to. Hence, depending on the type of culture you are from and how "face" is valued it will influence the type of conflict style one result to. "Face" negotiation theory is used to define, interprets and understanding what happens during a conflict episode in interaction. Stella Ting-Toomey (1988) believed that "face" helped identify the different types of behavior that occur in a conflict episode. Thus, during business encounters it could help explain and predict the type of conflict that might arise and the type of styles that might be used. As mentioned and known to all of us, conflicting situations are tricky alone without the added difficulty of cross-cultural differences and interactions in a business encounter.

Most of the times, most of us want to enhance our own reputation and respect within the culture and community we live in. We try to do what is expected of us and what our culture and community believes in and follows, we want to show our "face" and be proud of it. Of course, this differs from culture to culture, in an individualistic culture, such as the Western cultures, people are often more concerned with their own interest and don't always put as much effort into saving their "face" (Hoofstede, 1967). In a collectivist culture, such as the Eastern culture such as those in Middle East and Asia, people are more accommodating and desire to create and fulfill whatever is necessary to live in harmony within their social environment. Eastern cultures are more "face" oriented and they are often obliging into situations and circumstance which enhances their "face" and allows them to maintain that status within their culture. On the other hand, people from the Western culture are more direct and straight forward, they often do things that they will benefit them and they tend to confront conflicts head on. As can be seen, cultures

are different from each other and they all have their own uniqueness, thus, introducing several different ways of conflict management styles.

The face saving theory can help give understanding during the cross-cultural contact and later help understand why these conflicts are occurring. One way of doing this, is to try to understand the other persons communication style. Each culture communicates differently and understands verbal and nonverbal messages differently compared to another culture. Whilst the Eastern culture finds it obtrusive to have direct eye-contact, the Western culture very much appreciates direct eye-contact and often times view it as a sign of confidence and honesty. Saving face theory is important to refer to because it helps predict conflict behaviors. Predictions can help build better relationship bonds as well as stronger healthier communication exchanges during a cross-cultural interaction.

2.4 Intercultural communication competence (ICC)

Intercultural communication competence requires the ability and understanding to cross-culturally adjust, task effectiveness within overseas assignments and maintaining healthy cultural relationships with individuals from different cultures (Miller, 2006, p.102). Research shows us that there are a high percentage of failed expatriate tasks because of employee's inability to adapt to the host culture's social and environmental business settings (Miller, 2006, p.96). In regards to this, it has been found that high intercultural sensitivity is associated with high levels of intercultural communication competence. In other words one could define culture as "a sense of shared system of attitudes, beliefs, values and behavior", Hofstede has called culture a "collective mental programming" or "the software of the mind". Often it is seen as "simply the way we do things around here" and that it is a habitual process which we have adapted to, since birth (Gibson, 2000, p. 7-8). However, it is critical to know that humans are not robots and most of us try to think before we act, thus, culture nowadays can't be completely a "habitual" habit.

In organizational settings, intercultural communication competence has been a profound increase within businesses across the globe. In today's world, many business meetings occur among managers from different cultures around the world. They make deals, settlements and business offers without having to see each other or know each other. This advantage comes from our technological resources that allow us to travel, connect with each other through technological communication no matter where we are in the world. In recent years, many services such as education, hospitality, banks and investment agencies have become more and more globally oriented.

Stauss and Mang (1999), state that since the mid 80's, global business growth rate has increased to 175 percent and, in today's society makes up more than one-fifth of all world trades. Such a notable growth requires services within the companies that allow them to conduct their business with operators and customers of different cultures. The challenge of creating and carrying out business propositions and solutions with people from the same country is already difficult enough, now, imagine the challenge to work and deal with people from another culture (Mohsin, ,2006). However, we must remember that service management, which is the contact between customer and service provider, differs from culture to culture, due to the difference in norms, rules and behavior. It's inevitable that differences will arise during business encounters

between different cultures since most cultures differ in norms, rules and behavior. This leads to various expectations from different cultures during a business interaction and if service managers are unaware of the core cultural expectations of customers it will result in a gap of performance of service. During this encounter service managers have two options, one is to ignore the bad performance because some customers can't be satisfied or two, they can learn what the core culture expectations are and see what can be best done for them. This is to help minimize conflicting episodes and also help increase the success of businesses.

3. Methodology

3.1 Method design

The research design for this particular study was the descriptive method. Descriptive method of research is a way to gather information about present existing conditions and it is done in a descriptive manner rather than on judging or interpreting the conditions (Creswell, 1994). Often the aim is to verify the formulated research questions that refer to the present situation that is being researched in the first place. The descriptive method of research is beneficial due to its practicality and quickness in terms of the financial aspect. Furthermore, this approach allows flexibility, hence, when important new issues and questions arise during the duration of study further investigation may be conducted, such as including more measurements. Given that the research method used was descriptive, it felt more appropriate to use quantitative measures within this study. For the reason that strength in numbers characterizes many advantages such as being able to utilize a series of tests and techniques this can often yield to a larger population being tested. Quantitative research is so deeply rooted in numbers and statistics, it gives the benefit of being able to measure, awareness, attitude, performance and behavior.

Questions that were used in this study aimed to answer the research hypotheses and these are: how conflicts can occur, management of conflicts and how "face-saving" theory influences conflict outcomes. The aim is to gain a better understanding of intercultural relations at work and how to make the best of a conflicting situation that might arise. The objective of Hypothesis 1 is to see and understand how conflicts occur due to the difference in cultural backgrounds. Therefore, most questions tried to aim towards getting the best possible result to understand why these conflicts occur.

The objective of Hypotheses 2 is to gain a better understanding of how to manage conflicts during business settings when fellow colleagues refer to different cultural styles. Questions within the study referred towards actions such as "devil's advocate" or "negotiation" styles. The main aim is to see what kind of different ways one should adjust to in order to manage conflicts in a constructive manner.

The objective of Hypotheses 3 is to see whether or not "face-saving" theory has any influence on how you deal with conflicts at work and how it interacts with individuals that come from different cultural backgrounds. The purpose of the questions that were created for this particular hypothesis was different than the remaining two hypotheses. Questions for this particular section were outlining "face-saving" theory as link toward reputation and social status of an individual more so than cultural background itself.

3.2 Questionnaire development

A questionnaire was developed in order to measure the level of intercultural interactions on conflict management style. The survey was divided into three sections, section A which includes questions that deal with how conflicts occur due to the difference in cultural background. Section B which includes questions that deals with how conflicts are managed in multi-cultural work settings and section C includes questions that deal with whether or not "saving face" has an influence on conflict resolution (see Appendix 1). The profile contains socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender and age and the remaining of the survey contains questions, particularly on its usability and reliability on understanding and finding out the type of conflicts that occur in response to cultural exposer at work. The questionnaire contains simple "yes" or "no" responses as well as statements and opinions. Within this questionnaire, there are three to two choices to choose from, (please see Appendix 1 for details).

3.3 Participants

For the research aimed in this study, two sets of respondents were chosen from two major organizations located in San Diego, Genentechs and QualComm. Genentech's was founded in 1976 and provides one of the best biotechnological advancement by using human genetics. QualComm who is one of the leading wireless communication companies in the world was founded in 1985 and provides one of the best 3G technological advancement in the world. Participants were chosen from these two organizations due to the high exposure of cultural diversity and global work relations. Managers from both organizations leveled from CTO (Chief Technician Officer) to Supervisors. The main language instruction for both of these organizations was English.

The aim of this study is to analyze the influence of intercultural interactions and the influence it has on conflict management style on managers in a cross-cultural work setting. Since this study is focusing on managers only, no other participants were included in the study, such as co-workers, assistants or interns. All managers from both organizations that took part of the study added up to a total of sixty (60) managers that constituted the sample of this study, 21 females and 39 males responded. Each participant got a consent form to sign and debrief from at the end of each questionnaire that explained what their rights and responsibilities were. The research was carried out in March 2012 and a total of 60 questionnaires were received (with a 93% response rate), 37 questionnaires from Genentech's and 23 questionnaires from QualComm. These sixty (60) managers ranged in ages from 26 to 45 years with a mean age of 33.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Data processing is maintained by the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. Means and standard deviation for the sample sizes are also calculated and these are used as a basis for the comparative analysis. Hypotheses based on interval data and are comparatively analyzed using multiple regressions.

3.5 Ethical consideration

Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time, that their answers would be kept confidential and that full explanations of the study were provided in both the consent form and debrief from.

4. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The main hypotheses of the study aimed to understand (1) the causes of conflicts due to intercultural interactions at work and (2) how they occurred, managed and were dealt with. All hypotheses are linked to the questionnaires provided and are based on theoretical backgrounds that were covered throughout this text (see, Stauss & Mang 1999).

The first group of hypothesis (H^1) was on the idea to see if and how conflicts occur due to differences in cultural backgrounds.

The second group of hypotheses (H^2) was developed to understand how conflicts were managed in a multi-cultural work setting. The point is to reflect and understand the conflicts that occur in order to understand how to manage them in the best possible way. It was expected that differences will occur and that the type of management styles would differ greatly depending on the level of intercultural sensitivity.

The third group of hypotheses (H^3) was developed to understand how "face" negotiation theory could have an influence on conflict management styles in regards to cultural differences. "Face" value may change the way individuals behave in a conflicting episode.

4.1 Results for H^1, H^2 and H^3

H^1 is supported with $p < .0.05$ (Mean = 1.75, Std = .436) and the outcome of the supported hypotheses is mostly found in managerial communicative ways. Thus, it can be discussed that as managers learn more about international businesses and cultures the more responsive and ready they'll be to interact with people from different backgrounds.

Section A	N.	Q's	Average N. Answers
	60	1	A = 23, B = 37
	60	2	A = 7, B = 53
	60	3	A = 27, B = 33
	60	4	A = 29, B = 31
	60	5	A = 24, B = 18, C = 12

The above table, summarizes the average choice of answer from the questions given to each respondent (please, see Appendix 1, for Section A of the Questionnaire). The above table illustrate that the choices that were made for section A showed that managers who learn more

about intercultural work ethics and different cultural styles are more responsive and ready for intercultural interactions.

H^2 is supported with $p<0.05$ (Mean = 1.100, Std = .302) and the outcome is recognized mostly among supervisors and senior attendants from both organizations. Therefore, it could be argued that cumulative knowledge is enforced on employees to learn and understand cultural differences to help manage conflicts, quickly and efficiently. The knowledge that they got taught allows them to become more respectful and sensitive to people from different cultures. They learn that a lot of people living in this world share different norms, values and believes and that they will interact with the majority of them in international business encounters.

Section B	N.	Q's	Average N. Answers
	60	1	A = 53, B = 7
	60	2	A = 12, B = 14, C = 34
	60	3	A = 31, B = 29
	60	4	A = 42, B = 18
	60	5	A = 23, B = 37

Additionally, the table above shows the average answers for section B. As mentioned above, managers should be encouraged to learn and understand cultural differences, thus, helping to utilize different conflict management styles. It is also important to know that knowledge management is vital in this case, as it allows to separate between that is important and not during a conflict situation.

H^3 is supported with $p<0.05$ (Mean = 1.533, Std = .503) and the outcomes are recognized mostly among chief executive officers that deal with their competitive encounters across the globe. Furthermore, due to direct interaction with different cultures together with previous intercultural experiences, respondents are willing to learn more information from culturally different people.

Section C	N.	Q's	Average N. Answers
	60	1	A = 57 B = 3
	60	2	A = 26, B = 34
	60	3	A = 60, B = 0
	60	4	A = 30, B = 30
	60	5	A = 32, B = 28

In regards of the table above, section C shows that generalization within each culture exists. One's own reputation and social status in the society weighs heavily on the behavior one exhibits.

However, regardless of what type of leveled manager they were it was shown that H^3 showed a higher significant outcome than the remaining hypotheses. Therefore, it could be discussed that

"face" helps improve better understanding of cultural difference in regards to conflict management styles.

Supported hypotheses indicate that there is support on the effect intercultural experience on the perception of conflict management style among managers. Nonetheless, the links found between each hypothesis also show that the support found wasn't so strong and it could be said that the effect of conflict management styles on intercultural interactions needs further research.

Table 4 summarizes the multiple regressions for all three hypothesis which are explained in the above text.

4.2 Multiple regression analysis output

The general purpose of multiple regressions is to learn more about the relationship between several independent or predictor variables and a dependent variable. In this study, multiple regressions were appropriate to use because there were several independent variables that required the use of this analysis. This type analysis allows you to ask questions and hopefully gain the answers through multiple regression analysis.

4.3 Statistical outcomes

Table 1 Summarizes the outcome of the three hypotheses where the relationship lists the following outcomes from left to right, the multiple regression R-squared (coefficient of determination), followed by the degrees of freedom (d,f) and the p-value which is obtained by the help of SPSS analysis.

	R^2	R^2
Occur	$= .237$, $F (1, 58)$ $= 18.065$, $p<0.05$	$= .237 = 23.7\%$
Manage	$= .262$, $F (1, 58)$ $= 20.542$, $p<0.05$	$= .262 = 26.2\%$
"Face" theory	$= .328$, $F (1, 58)$ $= 28.356$, $p<0.05$	$= .328 = 32.8\%$

These outcomes and figures explain that the interference of each hypotheses based on the questionnaires were shown to have a positive correlation. The coefficient of determination which basically shows the future outcomes of any predictions that were made, are slightly weak, and could thus mean, that further investigation needs to be done. Nonetheless, the hypotheses were supported and based on the outcomes one can see that most managers had similar choices of answers. Thus,

4.4 Graph 1

H¹ (occur)   H² (manage)   H³ (face)
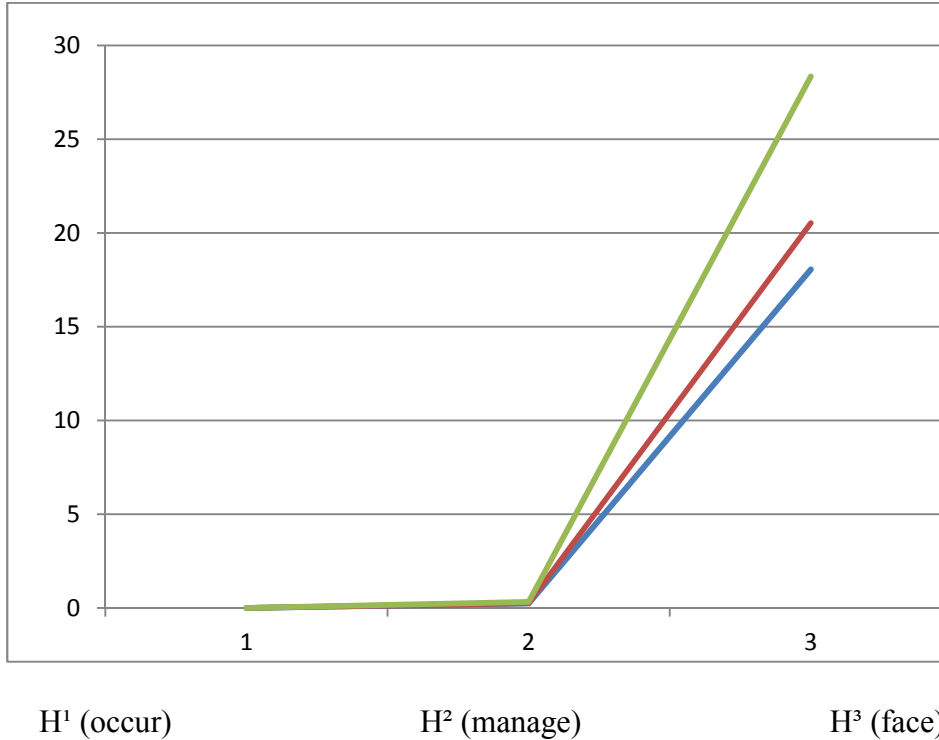
The graph shows the relationship between the three hypotheses and how H³ has the highest positive correlation compared to the remaining hypothesis. It shows that "face" saving theory has the most influence on conflict management styles in a cross-cultural work place. Results show that managers rely on the value of "face" and maintaining it has an influence on their conflict management styles.

5. Discussion

The present study was designed to determine the effect of intercultural study on conflict management styles among managers, particularly in American cooperation's. Factor that were taken into consideration and was believed to have an effect on conflict management styles and cultural interactions, was, how conflicts in cross-cultural settings occurred, were managed and how "face" was valued and had an influence on conflict behavior. Face is a universal concern because it is an extension of one's own self-concept. Brown and Levinson (1988) defined "face" as the public self-image that each member of society wants to claim for himself/herself. "Face" was mostly associated with the value on held for cultures and how that influenced conflict. According to Hoftsede, who in 1967 conducted a research study on "how values in the workplace are influenced by culture", it is believed that certain cultures are more concerned with their own "face". These cultures are often referred to as Western, such as, USA, Europe and Australia. However, collectivistic cultures, such as, Middle East, Asia and Africa, were more concerned in maintaining and valuing their opponent cultural "face".

It was also shown within this study that collectivistic cultures favor avoiding, obliging and compromising when getting into a conflict, while individualistic cultures favor dominance and integration. The result confirmed that there is a relationship between the type of culture and face concern, surprisingly, results also showed that the integration and compromising styles of conflict were mixed, nonetheless, different cultural and ethnic groups at work ascribed their own meanings to the terms "integrate" and "compromise".

The aim of this study was to help give better methods and clearer understanding of intercultural communication that help influence better conflict tactics and resolutions. This is done by ensuring higher cultural awareness and sensitivity and learning appropriate behavior for overcoming cultural differences in globally distributed collaborations. Furthermore, it is essential to realize that our world continues to change, expand and become more sophisticated due to technological advances. Thus, creating innovative ways of communicating and ways of cultural understanding that can be different from those we understand and relate to today. Throughout, it was also shown that culture, "face" and management all interact and help form the way conflict take places and the type of behavior that gets exhibited. Indeed, it does matter how society and culture perceives you has an impact on how you interact in a cross-cultural work setting and how conflicts take form.

Finally, the purpose of this study and the reason why it was done was due to the practical application it has on our world today. We live in a world in where businesses are created and shared across the globe. The increase of diversity and cultural interactions are inevitable and most businesses today survive on targeting different cultures and countries. Learning the necessary understanding about cultures and the increase of global business help managers gain the necessary advantage needed to succeed.

5.1 Limitations and further research

For further research in regards to this study it is recommended to apply a larger sample and involve more countries in where new ways of methods are used for effective results and understanding. According to Deardorff (2006), many regions in the world are becoming more aware when there is potential for conflict, as well as, the increase of realization of cultural diversity that is being experienced both in society as a whole, on a professional and private level. As a result of this increase it is essential to further this knowledge by the ability to deal constructively on interpersonal levels. Cultural diversity and a multitude of attitudes, values, norms, belief systems and ways of life will not only remain a key qualification required by managers to obtain but also a requirement of the general population. Essentially this is a way for our world to contribute towards social cohesion and reducing exclusion. Thus, allowing for cultural diversity to be experienced positively.

Nonetheless, limitations of this study were encountered mainly through the questionnaires that were given out to the respondents (See Appendix 1). As much as hours of effort and work were put in to create neutral questions for respondents to answer, it was undeniably a challenge. The challenge was a result of biased outcomes and reflections on the choices and answers of the questionnaires. Mainly the effects that were prone to being biased included, subjects generally behave, respondent's answers and choices that might be exaggerated. Respondents might have

felt that it was too embarrassing to reveal private details which might jeopardize their social desirability and status at work (Norhayati Zakaria, 2008, p.120).

Questionnaires that were done by the researcher are often referred to as "self-report" studies which are fundamentally biased by the person's feelings during the time they fill out the questionnaire. If a person is having a bad day, their choices and answers might be more negative, however, if the person is having a great day, their choices and answers might be more positive than usual. As a result, these reasons it is possible for the results to turn out biased, thus, for future research one could say that care should be taken to try to avoid these biases and use a more extensive used questionnaire that's applicable, such as a 5-scale likert questionnaire.

The aim of the study showed support in towards the hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis. The results show significant outcomes between the link of conflict management style and how conflicts occur, how conflicts are managed and how the "face" negotiation theory plays a positive role in terms of conflict management. Evidently, the results showed weak support between the relationships of conflict management style and how conflict occurs, is managed and how "face" has an impact. For further research in the future it is essential to include more time for both the researcher and the respondents which could be achieved by targeting culture and conflict separately. These two factors could be integrated later on when performing analysis, which allows for stronger support and higher probability in the analysis.

Another limitation that definitely could be improved for future research is that the scales that were used in the study among various managers and the statements issued might not fit the cultural orientation of the sample for each individual of this study. Thus, it might be necessary to test each respondent and make sure they match the exact criteria that are necessary. This could be done through interviews or personal questionnaires that target individual characteristics and types of personality.

Conclusion

Cultural diversity will continue to increase and expand across the world. Globalization will become a neutral part of our society and human race. How we interact on cultural basis and form different conflict management styles will become an essential part in most work settings. It is then important to further people's understanding and exposition towards difference in cultural habits, awareness and actions. This will help minimize conflicting situations to occur and strengthen business relationships. Finally, culture is something that we always come across and how we accept different cultures will help minimize discrimination, expectations and favoritism.

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Appendix

Conflict management
This questionnaire is distributed in order to gather information regarding the role of conflict management in intercultural settings at work as well as its disadvantages and advantages. Through your participation, the study will be able to make possible recommendations that will highlight the functions of conflict management during intercultural situations. The following questions that you will read below pertain to your perception of how you handle conflict within intercultural settings amongst employees and employers. Please encircle the number of your choice and please try the best that you can to answer the questions as honestly as possible. Thank you very much for your cooperation.
Profile of the respondent:

Please circle the following:
1.   18-24   25-32   35-40   40-60   65-100
2.   Gender   Female   Male

A)   To discover how conflicts occur due to the difference in cultural background.

A) What do you experience (think) is the main reason for conflict to arise in a work environment between managers?
    a) Having different values, goals and needs
    b) Misunderstanding of the organizations future goals

A) Do you think that communication with people from different backgrounds is the same as communicating with people from the same background?
a)   Yes
b)   No

A) Do you experience that reporting to two managers can be a main reason for conflicts to occur?
a) Yes
b) No

A) In order to have efficient work relationships, hierarchical lines (relationship between managers and subordinates) should be avoided within an organization.
  a) Yes   b) No

A) What do think of intercultural groups in a work environment?
 a) It will create variety and a wider range of thoughts   b) Conflicts may arise within the group
a)   There's no special effect on the work environment

B)   To see how conflict is managed in multi-cultural work-settings

•   Do you experience daily communication within your workplace with people from different backgrounds?
a)   Yes
b)   No

•   Select one of the options in your opinion that is the best strategy to use when managing a conflict?
c)   Negotiate so that both parties meet in the middle
d)   Stick to your "guns"
e)   Using a devils advocate

•   Some scholars believe that conflicts (if managed properly) can create inspirational outcomes, while other scholars believe that reducing conflicts are more appropriate. Which of the ideas do you agree on the most?
a)   1st option
b)   2nd option

•   Do you think that the intercultural work barrier can be reduced or exaggerated during time of crisis?
b)   Yes, because people tend to unite during critical times
c)   No, because people can get caught up in the crisis and forget what's important

• As an intercultural work manager, do you think anticipating employee's cultural habits can increase (creates) conflict chances?
a) Yes, because your anticipations might be wrong
b) No, because often anticipating makes it easier to understand the employee's thoughts

C) To find out whether or not owns own reputation and status plays a role in how to solve conflicts in cross-cultural work settings.

a) Do you think that the pressure of one's own status at work place can sometimes cause miscommunication during a cross-cultural conversation at work?
b) Yes
c) No

• When a conflict arises in an intercultural working group ,can strategies such as maintain reputation for oneself help solve the conflict?
a) Yes, because people tend to value their status and reputation much more than a conflict that occurs in public that could make them look bad.
b) No, because in multicultural environments, what comes naturally to people from one cultural may not seem like an appropriate communication style to individuals from another culture.

• Do you believe that maintaining high status and reputation is associated with compromising during a conflict episode?
a) Yes, I have to compromise and show my managerial skills in order to main and gain higher acceptance, power and status
b) No, I will stick to my opinion regardless of my power status in my working community

• Conflicts tend to occur less in collectivism cultures than in individualistic culture. Why?
a) Individuals from a collectivist culture value and expect to maintain their reputation and social status as well as work status in their community at all times
b) Individuals from an individualistic culture are not concerned as much with the effect that a conflict can have on their reputation and status, because it can be easily mended if actions are taken immediately.

• In your opinion, do you think that conflicts can sometimes be a threatening act to your own reputation and social status?
a) Yes, Because often times you need to show that you are controlled and collected during stressful times, to come out stronger than expected.
b) No, Because often times in a conflict, you might get emotionally involved beyond your self-control, such as, getting angry and not being able to control the outcome.

Consent form

Graduate research paper: An Intercultural competence study of conflict management style amongst managers in cross-cultural American organizations, QualComm and Genentech.

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Samah Alnashi, a graduate student attending University of Gothenburg. We hope to learn the relationship between intercultural competence and conflict management styles among employees in American multi-cultural organizations. You were selected as a possible candidate in study because you can offer insights and help to identify how conflict management styles within intercultural settings. If you decide to participate, we, Samah Alnashi and Nataliya Lindstrom will hand you a questionnaire which involves answering a set of basic questions that can take up to 15 minutes. There might be some sensitive questions involved in terms of defining your personality and your ways of dealing with conflicts.

This study offers no benefits and is strictly based on a graduate research paper within the School of Communications. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. If you give us your permission by signing this document we plan to disclose it among the student, the professor mentioned above and the committee of graduate counselors.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with San Diego State University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. The professor Dr.Nataliya Lindstrom has reviewed and approved the present research. If you have any questions please ask us and if you have any additional questions later, Dr.Nataliya Lindstrom, +46317865556, University of Gothenburg, Forskningsgangen 6, 41296, Gothenburg, Sweden, who will be happy to answer them.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNAUTRE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABVOVE.

   Date   Signature

Debrief Form

An Intercultural competence study of conflict management style amongst managers in cross-cultural American organizations, QualComm and Genentech.

The purpose of this research study is to determine whether conflict management in multicultural work settings is different due to different cultural background. I also wanted to find out how

conflict was managed during these work settings and if "saving face" played role depending on your background and where you come from. It has been demonstrated that cultural background do indeed, because different ways of dealing with conflicts and situations, that is cultural conflict is bound to happen. While individuals from different cultural elicit the same behavior effect in general, it has been shown through research on students in school that differences to tend to rise more often than we like to acknowledge and understand.

In this study, I presented you with a questionnaire that measures your way of dealing with conflicts at work, especially when coming across individuals from different cultures and backgrounds. This way, if I find that cultural differences do play a role in how you solve a conflict in a work setting, I will be able to attribute a cleared understanding of what could be prevented and what time of future studies that could be made to further investigate the issue. I also looked at how "saving face" (if you care about your image and how people perceive you) played a role in cultural work settings.

If you are interested in this area of research, the following introductory resources are available at the library:

•   Dee, Dixon. L, Friedrich. G, O'Hair. D (2011). Strategic Communication in Business and the Professions 7th edition.

•   Miller. K. (2011). Organizational Communication, Approaches and processes, 5th edition.

If you have any complaints, concerns, or questions about this research, please feel free to contact, Dr. Nataliya Lindstrom, berlinds@chalmers.se, +46317865556, University of Gothenburg, Forskningsgangen 6, 41296, Gothenburg, Sweden, who will be happy to answer. Finally, thank you again for helping me with this research.