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Intercultural Conflict Management in Business Organizations

An Investigation on Chinese Conflict Behavior

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1. Introduction

Since China implemented market reforms in 1978 it has undergone a rapid economic and social development. The World Bank states that the GDP growth averaging about 10 percent a year, has lifted more than 500 million people out of their poverty (worldbank.org, 2014). With the world's largest population of 1,3 billion people, China has become the second largest economy after the US, and is increasingly playing an important and influential role in the world economy (Bergmann 2014, on CNN.com). China's population simultaneously represents a huge consumer market, with an enormous purchasing power. Western business people are fully aware of the market potentials and are therefore constantly trying to establish and expand their business to China. Nevertheless, an unusually high number of global brands have failed to succeed. Google as the market leader for search engines and Amazon as the market leader in online trading, have failed to grab profits in China. Although these firms dominate their home markets and are widely internationally successful, their strategy did not seem to work on the Chinese market (Rein 2012, on cnbc.com).

This raises the question of what has been done wrong? Researchers recently started to search for answers on this topic. A lot of factors might have an influence for failing on the Chinese market, but no matter which foreign company is planning to do business in China, it will always face conflicts. As conflicts can occur in any situation and are unavoidable, they can have a great impact on corporate success. Ineffective negotiations and poor conflict management often contribute to problematic international operations. Not only do conflicts within a company need to be resolved appropriately, but also should the relationship between two business partners harmonize. Otherwise the stability of the company, or the market position can be threatened, due to unsuccessful and time-consuming negotiations. Another problem western business people are facing in China, is the foreign culture. A lack of language skills and cultural awareness, can quickly lead to misunderstandings and thus cause a conflict situation.

Once a conflict arises one should try to prevent the conflict from getting worse. At this point an appropriate conflict management is indispensable. How western business people can manage intercultural conflicts with their Chinese colleagues will be examined in the following work. I am going to do an investigation on how Chinese people deal with conflicts in order to help foreigners understand Chinese conflict behavior. With this knowledge western business people can adjust their conflict behavior in order to implement an appropriate Conflict Management.

At the beginning of my work I am going to take a closer look on the concept of conflict management in order to ensure a general understanding of this topic. I am going to explain the term conflict and describe in which situation conflict occurs, and why adequate Conflict Management is so important in business organizations. Afterwards I will represent some common Conflict Management Styles and the instruments for measuring these styles, in order to support the understanding of different conflict management approaches. On this basis I am going to examine the issue from a intercultural perspective, by giving a definition of culture and explaining why a specialization on intercultural conflict management is important. To give an impression on how culture can influence conflict behavior, I am going to contrast a common model of individualistic and collectivistic cultures, with their low context and high context communication patterns. After generating an overall comprehension on the topic of cultural conflict management, I am going to concentrate on the Chinese conflict behavior. This will be the main focus of my work and for this purpose I am taking a closer look on the Chinese culture, as one of the biggest influential factors on Chinese conflict management styles. Confucianism, face, harmony, guanxi and power are viewed as some of the most important values in Chinese culture and thus are significant aspects to be considered in Conflict management. By explaining the values I create an understanding for Chinese culture with its codes of behavior. To check if the assumptions on influencing values are right, I am going to examine the current state of research. I will collect and sort studies on how Chinese people are dealing with conflicts in international business organizations, due to their quality and will analyze them in detail. With the help of my investigation on existing studies, I am able to summarize the outcomes to give a valid answer on how Chinese people are dealing with conflicts and what strategies they are using. I will compare the outcome of my study with the assumption that cultural values have the biggest influence on conflict management. I will complete my work with a conclusion and some suggestions for future research.

2. The Importance of Appropriate Conflict Management in Business Organizations

2.1. Definition of Conflict

Interpersonal conflicts are an essential part of our daily life and are unavoidable in our interaction with other people. They can occur in any type of relationship, for example between individuals, group members, in organizations and so on (Jing Ji 2012, p. 69).

The management of conflict has long been a concern of scholars who generated various definitions of conflict and conflict management styles depending on their field of research (Jing Ji 2012, p. 69). Ting-Toomey states that conflicts typically emerge from violation of autonomous space, privacy, individual power, sense of individual fairness and equity (Ting-Toomey 1994, p.365). Cosier and Ruble describe conflict as an overt behavior deriving out of a process in which one party seeks the advancement of its own interests in the relationship with the other (Chew and Lim 1995. p.143). Another definition of conflict is provided by Putnam and Poole, they see a conflict as the interaction of independent people who realize the opposition of goals, aims, and values, and who think the other party is interfering with the realization of these goals (Yuan 2010, p.300). Although a lot of scholars are trying to provide a definition for conflict, the definitions are not consistent and thus the term has no single clear meaning. Even though all cited definitions have legitimacy, Putnam and Poole's definition on conflict seems most equivalent for my research. Because I am dealing with intercultural conflicts, the opposition of goals, aims and values might have a bigger impact on conflict situations, than the violation of autonomous space or selfishness.

Baron compared various definitions and summarized five elements of a conflict situation. First, a conflict consists of opposing interests between individuals or groups in a zero-sum situation and, second, these opposing interests must be recognized by both parties for a conflict to occur. Third, a conflict involves beliefs which are thwarted by the other party. Fourth, conflict is a process and develops out of existing relationships between individuals or groups and reflects their prior interactions plus the contexts in which these took place. Last but not least conflict includes actions by one or both sides which produce thwarting of others' goals (Baron 1990, p. 203).

Some conflicts are simple and relatively easy to resolve through an open discussion, the establishment of trust and mutual respect. In turn, other conflicts can be highly complex in relation to the cause, the symptoms and the solution. The resolution may require maturity,

psychological stability, high self-esteem, self-confidence, great interpersonal skills, keen insight and understanding of human behavior (Gray 1988, p.69).

2.2 Differentiating between Conflict Resolution and Conflict Management

Conflict resolution deals with the reduction, elimination, or termination of conflict (Rahim 2001, p.75). If a conflict is not managed well, it will result in undesirable and destructive behavior like harmful competition, suspicion, distrust, interference with goal attainment, and low productivity (Tang and Kirkbride, 1986, p. 287). Conflicts can threaten business activities severely, explaining why some managers consider the existence of conflict as necessary evil and thus spend a lot of their time and energy in coping with great worries associated with it. Some are arguing that an effective manager should be able to provide a working environment that does not allow the presence of conflict, and hence he/she should try to eliminate conflicts (Tang and Kirkbride 1986, p. 287).

However, appropriate conflict management is more important than conflict resolution as conflict management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction or termination of conflict, but involves creating effective strategies to minimize destructive functions of conflict and enhance the constructive functions (Rahim 2001, p.76). Today, conflict researchers consider conflict as an useful occurrence, which, if handled appropriately, can promote and enhance creativity and innovation through confrontation of contradictory views (Chan, Huang and Ng 2007, p.281). As interpersonal conflicts are inevitable in our daily interaction with others, the ability to cope with conflict is an important skill. Conflict management should be able to develop effective strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and maximize the constructive functions of conflict in order to support learning and effectiveness in an organization (Rahim, 2000, p. 5). Good Conflict Management should include effective, appropriate and creative communication in different conflict situations. People who want to approach effective conflict management should be knowledgeable and respectful of different worldviews and ways of dealing with a conflict situation. It requires sensitivity to the differences and similarities between communication patterns (Ting-Toomey 1994, p 368). In national as well as international companies, constructive conflict management is the key to the effectiveness and survival of the companies (Chen and Cheung, 2008, p. 17)

2.3 Conflict Management Styles and Instruments for Measurement

Studies on the management of organizational conflict have taken two directions. Some scholars focused on measuring the amount of conflict at different organizational levels and explored the sources of such conflict. Others tried to relate the various conflict management styles of the organizational participants and their effects on the quality of problem solution (Rahim 2001, p.80). In the field of intercultural communication, understanding the different conflict management styles of cultures can be essential to develop an appropriate conflict management. In conflict situations, people have various behavioral instincts and intuitions which are called conflict management styles. These conflict management styles impact the way they deal with interpersonal conflicts (Tsai and Chi 2009, p. 958). Gilkey and Greenhalgh define the styles as patterns in individuals behavior, that reappear in various situations, through the mechanism of predispositions toward specific courses of conduct. For example, people who strongly dislike interpersonal conflict, will likely carry this attitude into many of their interactions. This can influence their effectiveness when the dispute shows signs of becoming confrontational (Tsai and Chi 2009, p. 958).

A grid for classifying the modes of handling interpersonal conflicts was first generated by the researchers Blake and Mouton in 1964. It is called the "Managerial Grid" (Chan, Huang & Ng 2007, p. 280) and is one of the most common models in conflict management studies (Wei 2000, p. 2). The grid divides interpersonal conflicts into five types based on the attitude of the manager: concern for production and concern for people (Chan, Huang & Ng 2007, p. 280). This conflict management model is known in literature and has several variations, whereas all of them pretend that individuals choose different modes, strategies, or styles for handling conflict, based on some variations of two primary concerns/ interests: the concern for self and the concern for other. Thomas and Kilmann reinterpreted the model of Blake and Mouton and created a dual-concern model that is currently best known and most accepted.

2.3.1. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Thomas and Kilmann describe five different conflict-handling styles which are based on two dimensions: assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness demonstrates the extent to which an individual seeks to satisfy his/her own concerns. Cooperativeness measures the extent to which an individual tries to satisfy the other person's concerns. These two dimensions

include five conflict styles: competing, collaborating, compromising and avoiding (Ma 2007, p. 6).

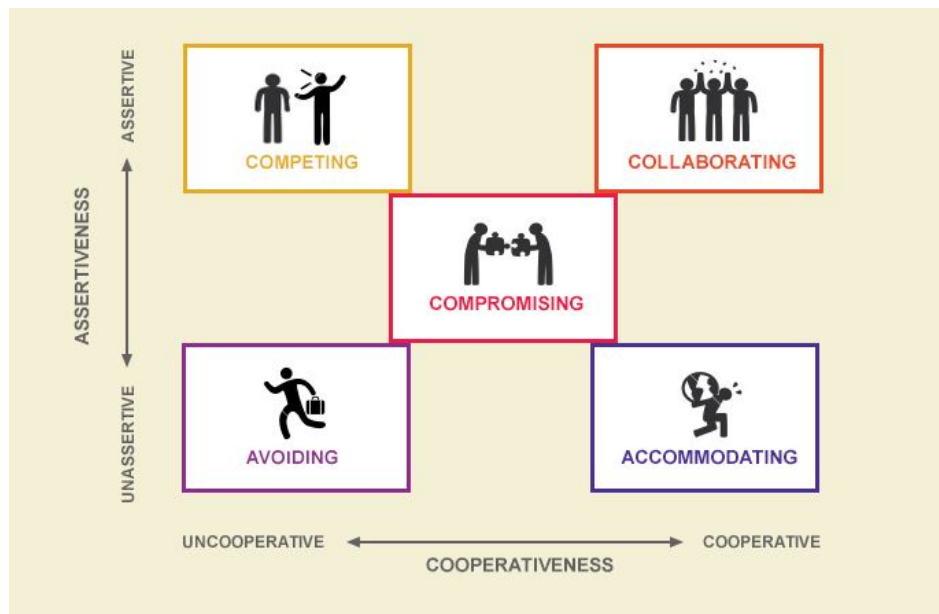


Figure 2: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes

Source: www.cpp.com

A person has a competitive conflict style when he/she is assertive and uncooperative in a conflict. This person is power orientated and defends his/her position at the expense of other persons. He/she has a high concern for himself/herself and a low concern for others. Collaborative individuals are both assertive and co-operative. It is a team-orientated mode, where the individual has a high concern for self and others and thus, attempts to solve problems. A compromising style shows moderate concern for oneself and for others, which means that individuals exchange concessions and therefore, it is middle-of-the-road or intermediate in assertiveness or cooperativeness. An avoiding style is both unassertive and uncooperative. The individual has a low concern for self and a low concern for others, and seeks to sidestep an issue or withdraw from a threatening situation. If an individual uses an accommodating style, he/she is unassertive but co-operative and he/she is willing to suppress his/her own concerns to satisfy the concern of others. This results in a low concern for self and a high concern for others (Chew & Lim 1995, p.147).

For probing the conflict management style, Thomas and Kilmann developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) as an assessment tool. It was developed to explicitly include the five conflict approaches posted by the Dual Concerns Model. By using the five approaches, the TKI allows the analysis of self-reported preferences or predispositions. (Tsai and Chi 2009, pp. 958-959). The TKI consists of thirty questions, and

for each the respondents are asked to select one situation out of two that best describes their preferred behavior (Chew and Lim 1995, p. 147). Typically, the responses are contrasting, such as "I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself" and "I try to win my position" (Ma 2007, p.12). Each of the five conflict approaches is represented by 12 sentences. The TKI has been used in numerous studies on conflict management in both single culture research and cross-cultural studies (Ma 2007, p.12). Tsai and Chi criticize that the TKI does not support the subjects to make their choices based on what they would do in a given conflict, relationship, or social setting. Therefore, the results show general predispositions rather than best practices for resolving any particular conflict-of-interest situation (Tsai and Chi 2009, p.959).

2.3.2. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory

Based on Thomas dual concern model of conflict management, Rahim and Bonoma used a similar conceptualization to define five conflict styles: dominating, integrating, compromising, obliging and avoiding. These are based on two dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. The domination-oriented person shows a high concern for self and low concern for others. The person will achieve his/her goals due to forceful behavior or ignoring the needs of others. This approach causes a win-lose conflict resolution strategy. An integrated-oriented person shows high concerns for both self and others, and attempts to reach an acceptable and shared solution by collaborating. This results in a win-win approach. The compromising-oriented person focuses on the intermediation of a conflict. He/she tries to create a give-and-take situation in which both parties give up something to reach an agreement, with no-win or no-lose approach. An obliging-oriented person emphasizes the commonalities but overlooks the differences, which displays a low concern for self and a high concern for others. The person focuses mainly on satisfying the other party and, hence, reaches an agreement. This is a lose-win outcome. A person who has low concern for both self and others is avoidant-oriented, and has the tendency to withdraw from or avoid conflict situations. This strategy results in a lose-lose situation (Yuan 2010, pp.300-301).

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) was developed to measure the different Conflict Styles and has been used in various investigations. The instrument consists of 28 items for self-assessment. The items describe a conflict behavior during a dispute, and the participants have to rate in how far this behavior corresponds to their own conflict behavior. The ratings are related to a five-step scale, where 5 = "strongly agree" and 1 =

"strongly disagree". Altogether the instrument has three variations depending on the field of research. It can either measure disputes with superiors, with subordinates or peers (Bilsky and Wülker 2000, p.5).

3. Culture as a reason for Conflict

3.1 Definition of Culture

Triandis defines culture as a shared meaning system among people who speak a particular language or dialect, during a specific historic period, and in a definable geographic region. It helps to improve the adaptation of its members to a particular ecology and includes the knowledge that people need in order to function effectively in their social environment (Triandis 2000, p. 146). It is transmitted by symbols and represents the distinctive achievements of human groups with their embodiments in artifacts. Traditional, i.e. historically derived and selected ideas and in particular their attached value, are forming the essential core of a culture. On the one hand, cultural systems may be considered as products of actions and on the other hand, as conditioning elements of further action (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, p.181)

Knutson summarized six elements defining a culture. First, human beings are not born with culture. It is learned through our interaction with other members of our culture. Second, a culture is defined by its rules for appropriate and acceptable behavior in terms of values, beliefs, and norms. It defines a desirable behavior for its members and structures their daily life by providing a means of organizing and classifying their environment in distinctive ways. Fourth, culture offers meaning and reality to one's existence and shows ways of seeing the world. Fifth, culture gives consistency and tradition to the group because it is transmitted from generation to generation. Changes take place relatively slowly. Sixth, the common code of culture is language as employed in rituals, education, institutions, politics, religion and myths, which are designed to condition people (Knutson 1994, p.2).

3.2 The Importance of Intercultural Conflict Management

Since multinational cooperation and organizations mushroom, Intercultural Conflict Management has gained new importance. Basically, the conceptualizations and theories of conflict and conflict management were developed from a western point of view, but researchers have recently begun to consider the role of Asian values in intercultural conflicts, too (Chen 2000, p. 2). Cultural differences as well as their impact on human behavior have become an important consideration in today's global interactions (Chen 2000, pp.1-2). Amason and Schweiger argued that the potential for conflict in culturally diverse workgroups is greater than in homogeneous workgroups. Intercultural contact is not inevitably causing conflicts, but most of the studies show that cultural interference may lead to some kind of interpersonal irritation (Busch, 2011, p.10). Wang is convinced that everyone is a prisoner of his own culture, which means that people sharing the same cultural circumstances will certainly have some similar behaviors in their ideology or materiality, and they have the same attitudes towards the way they communicate. Actually, few humans are consciously aware of their culture and thus, lack the ability to contrast between their own culture and a foreign one. Because of the missing consciousness, problems can occur when people from different cultures work and live together (Wang 2012, p. 118). The greater cultural distances are, the more likely miscommunication occurs (Triandis 2000, p. 151). For example, in Germany a exquisite clock would be a good present for an elder relative, but in China people would be offended because a clock is associated with bad luck, expressing that their time is running out (Wang 2012, p. 118). Intercultural conflict typically starts off with miscommunication which often accompanies with misinterpretations, violations of normative expectations and pseudo-conflict. It is inevitable that people hold anticipations or expectations of how other people should or should not behave in any communicative situation. (Ting-Toomey 1994, pp.360-363).

If a conflict is not managed adequate, it can cause mistrust, lack of cooperation, stress, low organizational commitment and high turnover rates. An appropriate management of conflict has been found to have an positive impact on organizational performance (Yuan 2010, p.300). To understand differences and similarities in communication across cultures, it is crucial to have a framework to explain why and how cultures are different or similar. Among the many different dimensions of culture, one that has received general attention from both cross-cultural researchers and psychologist around the world is individualism-collectivism. A lot of cross-cultural studies have provided theoretical and empirical evidence that the value

orientations of individualism and collectivism are widespread in numerous cultures (Ting-Toomey 1994, p.360).

3.2.1 The role of Individualism-Collectivism for Conflict Management

Individualism- Collectivism describes the extent to which individuals are integrated into groups. The ties between individuals in an individualist society are loose, which implies that everyone looks after himself or herself and the immediate family (Hofstede and Bond 1988, p.10). Individualistic Cultures tend to emphasize the importance of individual identity over group identity, individual rights over group rights, and individual needs over group needs, whereas collectivistic cultures attach great importance to the "we" identity over the "I" identity (Ting-Toomey 1994, p.361). Members of a collectivist society are from birth onward integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups (Hofstede and Bond 1988, p.10). As a result, the members emphasize group obligations over individual rights, and ingroup-oriented needs over individual wants and desires.

The ingroup can be defined as a group whose values, norms and rules are considered as salient to the effective functioning of the group in the society. These norms also function as guiding criteria for everyday behaviors. The outgroup is a group whose values, norms and rules are perceived as inconsistent with those of the ingroup (Ting-Toomey 1994, p.361). The "we feeling" among ingroup members greatly reduces the possibility of confrontation or conflict, while harmony often becomes a victim of distrusting outgroup membership (Chen and Sarosta, 1997, p.6).

Intercultural communication research has, for example, identified Australia, Canada and the United States as individualistic cultures, while China, Taiwan and Korea can be described as collectivistic, group-based cultures (Ting-Toomey 1994, p.361). Because collectivistic societies attach importance to social relationships and social harmony, collectivism tends to motivate avoiding and indirect styles while displaying concerns for others. The preservation of harmony takes precedence over task accomplishment and personal desires. Individual effort and achievement are expected to contribute to the collective good. As China is a highly collectivistic culture, it can be assumed that Chinese people use more non-confrontational styles like accommodating, compromising, and avoiding styles in conflict situations such as business negotiation. (Ma 2007, p. 6). People of an individualistic society (i.e. Germany and America) value harmony, assertiveness, competition and individual achievement. They strive

for personal satisfaction and achievement even at the expense of social relationships. It can be concluded that individualism encourages direct, task-oriented conflict management styles with a high concern for self and a low concern for others (Ma 2007, p. 6).

3.2.2 Low Context and High Context

Edward T. Hall's low-context and high-context communication can be seen as an addition to individualism-collectivism. It helps to enhance the understanding of individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Ting-Toomey 1994, p.362).

He explains that a high-context communication consists of minimal information in the message but that the receiver has preprogrammed information that is needed and used to understand the message. On the contrary, in a low-context communication, most of the information needs to be in the transmitted text to complete what is missing in the context (Hall 1976, p.101). No culture exists exclusively at one extreme of the communication spectrum, but in general, high-context communication has patterns of spiral logic interaction approach, indirect verbal negotiation mode, subtle nonverbal nuances, responsive intention interference and interpreter-sensitive value. They prefer an indirect communication style which is more silent with the usage of ambiguous expressions. Indirect communicators avoid saying "no" directly to others in order to foster or maintain harmony. A low-context communication includes patterns of linear logic interaction approach, direct verbal interaction style, overt intention expressions and transmitter-oriented value. The direct communication style implies a value of self-expression, verbal fluency, eloquent speech and has a tendency to persuade counterparts to accept their viewpoints by directly expressing their opinions (Chen and Sarosta 1997, pp.1-2). Patterns of low-context communication have been found especially in individualistic cultures while high-context communication patterns are found in collectivistic cultures (Ting-Toomey 1994, p. 362). People of high-context cultures usually enter into conflict when their cultural and normative expectations are violated. In a conflict situation they prefer a non-confrontational and indirect attitude, whereas low context cultures have a confrontational and direct attitude towards the conflict. They get into a conflict when their personal normative expectations are violated (Chen and Starosta 1997, p 1).

4. Conflict Management in China - Influential Factors on Chinese Conflict Behavior

As mentioned in the sections before, culture has a great impact on the conflict behavior and management styles of people. Various factors and values like Confucianism, harmony, face and guanxi - to mention the significant ones, are found to influence the Chinese conflict behavior.

4.1 Confucianism

Confucianism has been predominant in China for more than 2000 years and has long been a significant influence on the behavior of Chinese people (Wei 2000, p. 91). According to the Confucian teachings, a human being is not primarily an individual but rather a member of a family (Liu and Chen 2000, p. 72). To Chinese people, family relationships and other relational ties are important to achieve one's personal goals (Wei 2000, p.91). Therefore, the family is valued over the individual. The strong sense of group identification is fostered from an early age when children have to learn to restrain their individuality and maintain harmony. Individual achievement can be considered as a source of group honor whereas individual misconduct is a source of group shame. The social order of the family even acts as a guideline for conduct in Chinese organizations (Liu and Chen 2000, p. 72).

Due to the Confucian teachings an individual exists through and is defined by its relationships to others (Bond 1986, p.216). The stability of a society is based on unequal relationships between people, which are called "wu-lun" (Hofstede and Bond 1988, p.8). Each party has to honor its role in the relationship to maintain stability (Bond 1986, p.216). Wu-lun describes five cardinal relations which prioritize roles and loyalties due to five basic social relationships, including the love and respect between father and son, the loyalty and duty between sovereign and subject, the affection between husband and wife, the seniority of the old over the young and good faith between friends (Chew and Lim 1995, p.144).

Chew and Lim define conformity, collectivism, large power distance, harmony and trustworthiness as relevant Confucian values. They describe Conformity as a central value in Chinese societies, that is related to the key humanistic Confucian values of "Li" and "Jen". Li describes the rules of correct behavior in a social context (Chew and Lim 1995, p.144). It is a means to achieve harmony by showing respect or reverence to others (Chen and Sarosta 1997, p. 5). Jen is the virtue of reaching a benevolent relationship between a man and his followers.

It emphasizes the idea of a holistic and proactive individual that is not isolated or divorced from the world. This value determines Chinese society as a collectivistic one in comparison to the individualist western society. Because Chinese people value conformity and collective orientation, the relationship between themselves and other parties play a crucial factor in conflict situations. For example, literature suggest that Chinese tend to avoid confrontation for fear of disturbing their relationships and mutual dependence. In a dispute with a superior, the subordinate would accommodate to the superior's wishes because of the person's natural deference to the authority. Large power distance implies that the relative status and authority of a person are considered and can become a key issue in determining conflict behavior. Subordination is a result of power distance, a hierarchical relationship and face. The willingness to develop trust for others depends on values, such as good faith and reciprocation. Missing trust threatens the relationship among people (Chew and Lim, 1995, pp.145-146).

4.2 Face

Face is a well-known value in the Chinese culture and characterizes dignity, identity, reputation, status and authority (Mellen 1998, p.211). It can be described as a projected image of an individual in a relationship network (Chen and Sarosta 1997, p. 6). Face can be enhanced or threatened in any uncertain social situation (Ting-Toomey 1998, p. 187). The concept of face can be understood as a reciprocal relationship of respect and deference (Chen 2000, p. 12). Due to reciprocity, one can maintain a good relationship and face by returning something done or given by others (Mellen 1998, p.214). Situations, such as conflict management and business negotiation, entail active facework management. Interpersonal relationship development and relationship-building also involve culture-sensitive facework communication. Facework is done in order to regulate ones social dignity and support or challenge other's social dignity (Ting-Toomey 1998, p. 188). Because of the concern for face, Chinese people tend to adopt strategies in conflict situations to save others' persons' faces as well as to protect their own faces (Chen 2000, p.12). A primary source of conflicts among Chinese are face threatening moves. If the moves are skillfully transformed into face enhancing skills, conflicts can usually be avoided and the relational harmony can be maintained. If not, the harmony is threatened, since the moves can generate bad feelings because of the loss of face (Jia 1997, p.8). Thus the Chinese tend to use all kinds of means to "earn face" and to "make face" for others to establish a harmonious atmosphere (Chen and

Sarosta 1997, p. 5). In a shame-oriented culture like China, Chinese people are extremely face-conscious (Mellen 1998, p.211). Chinese Culture is considered as a shame-oriented culture because its people have a general sense of shame and without it, they would be humiliated as wanting no face. A sense of shame is a combination of conscience and self-respect that guards people against inappropriate behavior (Mellen, 1998, p. 219).

When an individual has face, it also has the respect of the group for a good moral reputation. A face loss goes along with a condemnation by the group for immoral or socially disagreeable behavior. Condemnation consists of displacing the member outside of the group and putting them into isolated and insecure situations. Fear of losing face therefore indicates a fear of social sanctions. Someone who loses his face might be excluded from the community. Only keeping face contributes to the normal functioning of the community. Members who retain their faces are accepted as a full member of the community. Due to this construct, face can be seen as a substitute for the law (Jia 1997, pp. 4-46).

4.3 Harmony

Harmony is a concept with long history in Confucian societies (Leung, Koch and Lu 2002, p.202) and is one of the primordial values of the Chinese culture. In Chinese, culture harmony is considered as the universal path which all people should pursue (Chen and Sarosta 1997, p. 5). Confucianism attaches importance on harmony between man and nature, man and heaven and man and man (Kirkbride, Tang and Westwood 1991, p.367). Only when harmony is reached and prevails throughout heaven and earth, everything can flourish and can be nourished. As a result, communication should develop and keep a harmonious relationship in a continuously transforming process of mutual dependency among actors (Chen and Sarosta 1997, p.5). It supports collectivism and urges individuals to control their own emotions, to avoid confusion, competition and conflict and to keep their inner harmony (Kirkbride, Tang and Westwood 1991, p.367). According to Chinese people, conflicts are not communicative problems but rather distractors from harmony (Chen and Sarosta 1997, p. 5). Harmony plays an important role in interpersonal relations between and among friends, relatives, colleagues and members of any group or organization in Chinese societies. In order to achieve harmony, individualism is discouraged and group thinking is emphasized. To keep harmony and peace, a non-aggressive behavior is highly valued in Chinese culture (Lew 1998, p. 210). Social harmony depends on the maintenance of correct relationships among individuals as well as on

the protection of an individual's face or dignity, self-respect, and prestige (Chen 2000, p. 73). Respect by others in an authoritarian and hierarchical society like China is earnestly sought. Chinese people believe that only harmony can produce fortune and hence, workers should strive for a good interpersonal relationship to their immediate supervisors and co-workers (Liu and Chen 2000, p.73).

In some cases, when interpersonal conflicts have damaged the relationship, but both parties still have to interact with each other within the same power structure, they may be forced to keep a superficial harmony by still following the social manners (Hwang 1997, p. 29). They will continue to do their best to give the respective other person face in front of outsiders, in order to let the outsiders perceive them as in-group. In this situation they obey publicly but defy privately.

4.4 Guanxi

As a collectivistic society, the Chinese society has a strong relationship orientation and guanxi can be defined as a strong personal connection and a foundation for productive collaboration. It refers to relationships between family, friends, supervisor/subordinate, teacher/student, coworkers and so on (Feng, Tjosvold and Peiguan 2008, p. 2441). Chen and Sarosta (1997) define guanxi as the structural pattern of Chinese social fabric wherein face is the operational mechanism that connects the nodes of the guanxi network. Guanxi is a set of specific communication rules and patterns that can be seen as a guide to avoid embarrassing conflicts in Chinese society (Chen 2000, p.73). Through guanxi an individual can achieve humanity in the Chinese society (Wei 2000, p. 91). It describes a relationship that functions on the basis of mutual benefit (Chen 2000, p.9) and refers to the status and intensity of an ongoing relationship between two parties (Kirkbride, Tang and Westwood 1991, p.370). Because Chinese people pay great attention to guanxi, they are more aware of continuing long-term relationships. They appear to seek mutually satisfying compromises or accommodation in conflict situations to improve guanxi (Chen 2000, p.11). In the process of conflict management, guanxi is used as a tool of persuasion, influence and control (Chen 2000, p.73). In China, relationships are thought to facilitate leader effectiveness. A good relationship between managers and employees can contribute to an effective leadership. But even though Chinese people value relationships, this does not automatically imply that leaders and employees naturally or even easily develop guanxi.

Guanxi can also be applied to antisocial ends when individuals use their relationships to seek their own personal benefits at the expense of the organization (Feng, Tjosvold and Peiguan 2008, p. 2442).

4.5 Power

In Chinese culture, high power is related to seniority and authority. This means that men, elders, higher ranked employees, and those having longer work experience are considered to be more knowledgeable and powerful in the process of conflict (Liu and Chen 2000, p. 74). The age and status of the counterpart affects the manner in conflict handling. Relationships with older people and higher ranked people are more highly valued, and there will be greater attempts to maintain guanxi and to protect face in conflict situations (Kirkbride, Tang and Westwood 1991, p.370). Chinese people learn that they have to respect their superior during childhood. The hierarchical level of the relationship between superior and subordinate is accepted as natural law (Chew and Lim, 1995, p. 146). The respect of a subordinate to his superior includes a large set of behavioral rules including traditional ways of dealing with superiors in everyday life (Bond, 1986, p.84). In some situations, the subordinate may experience the feeling of strong conflict with his superior because his personal goals are affected, but under the power of the superior he tends to give up the personal goal by following the practice of endurance (Hwang 1997, p 28).

5. Investigation on conflict management between Western people and Chinese people

The importance of China in our global activities has increased rapidly over the last years. More and more Chinese business people have expanded their business into the western countries, as well as western people have expanded their business to China. This trend has led to an increased interaction between Chinese people and western people, which demands an extensive understanding of the foreign culture. Managers and employees in China, as well as in other countries, are confronted with conflict when they make decisions and solve problems. Researchers have admitted an increased interest in management in a cross-cultural context, but existing literature on cross-cultural and intercultural research is not as rich in conflict management as in other fields (Ma 2007, p.3). And although an abundant literature on

Chinese culture with its communicative behaviors exists, very few studies explore the issue from the perspective of conflict management. The lack of international studies has to do with the field of conflict management and the focus on the field of conflict management between Chinese people and western people, being relatively young. Many studies about conflict management examine the single culture case with most samples from western cultures. Because conflict is a culturally defined and regulated event, conflict management should differ across cultures. But still few studies have explored conflict styles in non-western cultures. In order to provide important information on conflict management for the globalized working environment, international studies with samples from non-western cultures are required (Ma 2007, p. 4). I collected studies dealing with the Conflict Management between Chinese and western employees to give an overview of the existing literature on this field. The current research will be presented hereafter.

5.1 Examining the current state of research

As a guideline for my research, I used the criteria for developing a meta-analysis. The aim of a meta-analysis is to represent the current state of research on a special topic or issue. The construction of a meta-analysis can happen in seven steps. In the first step, the research question has to be defined. In the second step, literature research has to be done in regard to equivalent sources and search terms. The third step includes the assembly of facts and information into a data base. With help of the data base, criteria for qualified studies should be identified and applied. In the fifth and sixth step, the outcomes should be analyzed and interpreted in terms of commonalities and differences, characteristics and generalization of the results. In the last step, outcomes and limitations should be summarized (Tischler n.y., p.3) When I started doing research on the topic of cultural conflict management with Chinese people, I used the internet as the first medium to get an overview of this field. I decided to use the Internet because it provides plenty of various and suitably presented information that can be gathered very quickly. Keywords for my research included the terms "conflict", "conflict management", "intercultural conflict", "conflict Chinese German", "International Companies" and more. At the beginning, I focused on finding German literature on this field and searched for information about how Chinese people are dealing with conflicts and how companies with German and Chinese employees are affected from intercultural conflicts. I was interested in how the companies would try to manage disputes. Soon I recognized that there is manifold

information about the Chinese Culture in itself, as well as general information about intercultural conflicts in multinational companies, but German investigation is still insufficient and totally lacks the issue of conflict management with Chinese people.

After realizing that nearly all the studies on this field were performed by American researchers I widened my investigation using the university library to get access to essential journals, books and eBooks. Books that were not available at my university were borrowed by interlending. To extend my literature on this topic I also used the references of the books and journals. This method proved to be effective and helped me to achieve a wide range of comprehensive information and literature.

All in all I found 15 studies dealing with conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict behavior of Chinese people, which I considered as more than enough for my scope of work. The studies were all mixed in terms of sample, methods and specifications of the subject matter. This is due to the fact that I had focused on finding studies about conflict management in China in general. In order to get an overview of the studies, I generated a table which I divided into seven columns. The first six columns contain information about the title, author, participants, subject matter, implementation/ methods and outcomes of the study. The seventh column was used to collect notes and additional information for myself (see appendix, p. IV).

5.1.1. First Impression

By using my chart, I was able to get an overview of the existing studies. It is conspicuous that the studies are predominantly quantitative. All in all, only 5 of the 15 studies were qualitative, what implies that most of the data are generalizing and statistic. I differentiated the studies into qualitative or quantitative research based on their methods. If researchers used questionnaires, I classified them into quantitative research. Quantitative research works with fixed answers in order to develop a statistical analysis. Qualitative research focuses on an individual's perspective on a specific topic without fixed answers, in order to get realistic data. This data can be obtained through discussions or Interviews.

Literature on conflict management is fragmented, as the outcomes of the studies are very different. Knutson, Hwang and Deng (2000) analyzed the conflict management styles between Taiwanese and US business employees and observed that the Taiwanese employees perceived conflict less frequently than the US Americans. The researchers concluded that the Taiwanese tend to ignore and play down existing conflicts. They have also found that the conflict styles

depend on the situation. A conflict between colleagues who have to interact daily will be handled with an indirect and non-confrontational style, whereas conflicting parties with no close face-to-face interaction will adopt a direct and control-oriented or solution oriented style. In case of unequal power, the person with more power will act control-oriented, while the person with less power will act indirect and non-confrontational. Beside Knutson, Hwang and Deng's study, disappointingly few researchers considered situational influences, such as power of the conflicting parties or frequency of daily interactions. The majority of studies only give answers on how Chinese people deal with conflicts in general.

According to the various outcomes, no clear conclusion on one universal Chinese conflict style can be drawn. But it can be assumed that Chinese people tend to use compromising and collaborating styles most frequently, followed by avoiding and competing styles in no particular order. The least applied style would be accommodating or obliging. This result was surprising since a lot of theories suggest that Chinese people tend to use avoiding and accommodating approaches most.

The reason for dissimilarities can be traced back to the difference in quality. Although the studies all deal with conflict management, they examine the issue from different perspectives, what influenced the outcomes. For example, Chen, Peng and Ng's (2007) "Managers' conflict management styles and employee attitudinal outcomes: The mediating role of trust" only took the role of trust in conflicts into consideration. In order to get homogeneous and representative results, the studies have to be sorted by their qualification.

5.1.2. Selecting the studies

Based on the table, I created some selection criteria and selected the studies due to their quality. In the first step, I divided the studies by their composition of samples. My research was focused on conflict behavior between managers and employees in multinational companies. Out of the fifteen studies I had examined, five ones explored the conflict behavior of students. Although the students had to interact in sceneries like a business negotiation, this method did not seem appropriate to me, as the students did not have real work experiences and thus, the outcomes did not reflect reality. Another criteria for me was the structure of the samples. Some studies only focused on the conflict behavior between Chinese people and therefore, only worked with Chinese participants. I excluded these studies from consideration too, as they do not represent intercultural conflict behavior between Chinese and Western

people. Other studies were not taken into consideration because the subject matter was too specific and thus, the outcome did not fit my research criteria. Tjosvold and Sun (2003) with their study of "Openness Among Chinese in Conflict: Effects of Direct Discussion and Warmth on Integrative Decision Making" concentrated on the effects of open discussion and, expression of interpersonal warmth in a conflict. First of all, this topic was too precise for my scope of work and second, the outcomes did not show reasons or preferences for conflict behavior but the impact of openness. Jia's (1997) study on "Facework as Chinese Conflict-Preventive Mechanism" was also not taken into consideration by me because the methods were not suitable. Jia videotaped a group of professors and students discussing the issues of Chinese culture and facework. As I mentioned before, only few people are fully aware of their culture and I do not think that a discussion on face can show all aspects of the issue, as self-assessment always shows signs of distorted reality. Although not all studies matched my research criteria, they still helped me to get an overview of conflict behavior among Chinese people.

After selecting the studies due to my criteria, six studies dealing with American and Chinese managers or employees, who had experienced a conflict situation with the foreign culture, remain. They had been published between 2000 and 2010 and are thus, representative because they are up to date. Out of the six remaining studies, three analyzed the conflicts from an intercultural perspective, while the others analyzed the conflicts from a cross-cultural perspective. While cross-cultural studies are comparing and contrasting cultures, intercultural studies deal with the interaction itself and are interested in the building, transformation and forming of relationships through experiences with each other.

I will give a short overview of the three cross-cultural studies and go more into detail with the intercultural ones, as they are more interesting for getting a real image of how Chinese people behave in conflicts with western counterparts. Furthermore, during my investigation on this topic, I recognized that very few scholars tried to analyze conflicts from an intercultural perspective. This may be due to its level of difficulty as Chinese and American cultures have already been widely investigated, and a comparison of both cultures is thus easier than to draw one's own conclusion.

5.2 Brief overview on Cross- Cultural studies of Conflict Management

5.2.1. Study 1: Assessing Chinese Conflict Management Styles in Joint Ventures

In their study "Assessing Chinese Conflict Management Styles in Joint Ventures", Liu and Chen (2000) examined participants from four large joint venture companies in northern China, including Chinese staff and managers who had experienced interpersonal communication with foreigners. Their aim was to apply existing literature on conflict management to assess the Chinese conflict behaviors in joint ventures. The researchers used the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode and distributed 110 questionnaires with the help of one staff working in each company. The outcome of this study was that Chinese managers and employees tend to adopt collaboration strategies more frequently than control strategies and control strategies more often than non-confrontation strategies. Noticeable is that managers adopted control strategies more often than staff. In this study, collaboration seems to be the most preferred conflict management style. That control is used less frequently than collaboration shows that reconciliation is preferred over competition because the latter can damage a harmonious relationship in the long run.

5.2.2. Study 2: Chinese Conflict Management in Intercultural Context

Knutson, Hwang and Deng's "Chinese Conflict Management in Intercultural Context" is a comparative study on conflict and conflict resolution styles of Taiwanese and US business employees. The participants prepared four conflict scenarios in a business setting and asked the respondents to choose a preferred solution among a set of structured choices. The participants were supposed to further indicate whether a scenario described a conflict situation. In case they considered it a conflict situation, they were supposed to indicate the degree of intensity. The majority of respondents perceived conflict in all scenarios, but the US Americans noticed conflict more frequently than the Taiwanese participants. The Taiwanese outnumbered the US Americans among those who could not see an existent conflict. This shows that the Taiwanese participants played down conflicts in order to save face and maintain a pleasant relationship. The American participants emphasized self-face and were more willing to end their relationships. No divergent patterns of conflict management

strategies were found in the study because they seem to depend on various factors like social status, daily face-to-face interactions, frequency of conflict episodes and so on.

5.2.3. Study 3: Cross-cultural differences in conflict management- An inductive study of Chinese and American Managers

Doucet, Jehn, Weldon, Chen and Wang's "Cross-cultural differences in conflict management- An inductive study of Chinese and American Managers" compares the various conflict management behaviors of American and Chinese managers who interacted frequently with different-culture and same-culture managers. The aim was to show cultural differences in the ways American managers approach conflict. They collected stories about conflicts between American and Chinese managers, selected one out of them and created two versions of that scenario. One scenario was from an American perspective with an American manager in conflict with an American colleague, and a Chinese version described a Chinese manager in conflict with a Chinese colleague. The American managers read the American stories, and the other way around, the Chinese managers read the Chinese version.

As suggested, the behaviors of Chinese and American Managers are different. For the Chinese managers, embarrassing and teaching the colleague a moral lesson was an important element in conflict resolution. But for the American managers this was not an aspect of conflict management. They often exercised hostility and vengefulness due to the extent of the conflict. Both cultures showed approaches of avoidance but the underlying intentions for Americans was a lack of confidence.

5.2.4. Outcomes

The outcomes of the cross-cultural studies cannot be summarized because they do not show a tendency for conflict management approaches of Chinese people. Liu and Chen believe that Chinese people are cooperative, while Knutson, Hwang and Deng say that the conflict style depends on the situation. This result may be due to the methods. Liu and Chen used the Thomas Kilmann-Conflict Mode for general conflict behavior, whereas Knutson, Hwang and Deng prepared a business scenario. Additionally, the latter dealt with intercultural literature beforehand and was aware about situational influences having an impact on conflict behavior.

Thereupon, they might have adjusted their research according to their knowledge. Doucet, Jehn, Weldon, Chen and Wang did not clearly provide management styles in their findings but stated how the managers would punish their counterpart.

5.3 Analyzing existing Intercultural studies on Conflict Management

Wei's "Chinese-Style Conflict Resolution: A Case of Taiwanese Business Immigrants in Australia", Chen and Cheung's "Management of Intercultural Conflict: A preliminary study of Chinese managers and western subordinates" and Yuan's "Conflict Management among American and Chinese employees in multinational organizations in China" all deal with conflicts from an intercultural perspective, which means that they analyze the conflict behaviors with their modifications. They belong to those few researchers who tried to understand intercultural conflict behavior instead of simply comparing cross-cultural conflict behavior. Because very few studies on this field exist, I will represent them in detail in the following passage.

I will represent the studies in order of their date of publication, starting with the oldest from Wei, which was published in 2000: "Chinese-Style Conflict Resolution: A Case of Taiwanese Business Immigrants in Australia."

5.3.1. Study 1: Chinese-Style Conflict Resolution: A Case of Taiwanese Business Immigrants in Australia

Wei analyzed the Conflict Management Styles of Chinese immigrants in an Australian setting. For this purpose, he conducted the owner of a Taiwanese foam manufactory who has immigrated to Australia and has started to extend his business to Australia. In order to protect the identity of those involved, the names were changed in all studies.

During the first eight years in Australia, Mr. Ma had constant trouble with his Australian General Managers and replaced four General Managers in this time. The first one was the founder of the company who has sold the company to Mr. Ma. Both had a good relationship and Mr. Ma trusted him. When the first manager retired, Mr. Ma had to look for a successor. The second General Manager, Greg, started to lose Mr. Ma's trust through false decisions which cost the company a lot of money. He continued straining Mr. Ma's patience as he

received an approval from Mr. Ma for a A\$ 24,000 new car, but kept demanding a more expensive one. Furthermore, Mr. Ma discovered that Greg transferred cash from sales for his own use. Although Mr. Ma was not happy about the situation, he kept silent and even agreed on the more expensive car. Greg not only had disagreements with Mr. Ma but was also in conflict with the sales person, Andrew, who left the company because of this issue. The situation became worse when Greg started to lay off non-English speaking workers because they did not understand the language and hence, he spent too much time on explaining. Mr. Ma began to look for another General Manager but still avoided talking to Greg directly. When he found one, both took action against Greg. Mr. Ma did not confront Greg directly but asked the new General Manager to take care of the matter.

Mr. Ma was in Taiwan when his problems with Ron, the third General Manager, even got worse. Not only did Ron dismiss employees of the company who went to court blaming the company for unfair dismissal and accounting the company for A\$ 8,000 in total, he also started to neglect his position after he had bought his own company. The company became unstable, no one made important decisions, and the staff began to be absent. When Mr. Ma came back, he considered to close the company. But some friends of him convinced him to keep the business without Ron. After thinking about this option, he hired his tutor Tim for the position. This time, Mr. Ma talked directly to Ron and adopted a strong approach towards him without compromising. However for the sake of harmony, he still hired Ron as a consultant for a one-year term. In the following time, Mr. Ma started to change his management system and introduced new regulations and rules. Instead of a fixed figure bonus, Tim was rewarded due to his performance and the company's profits. This reward was based on the Taiwanese red envelope bonus. Mr. Ma was satisfied with Tim's work and the new General Manager also seemed to be comfortable with the new system.

During the eight years, Mr. Ma has adopted different conflict management styles. In the dispute with the second General Manager, Greg, he adopted the harmony model that emphasizes cooperative behavior in managing conflicts. Mr. Ma tolerated Greg's behavior until he could not endure it further. In the second conflict with Ron, Mr. Ma used a confrontational model but, after terminating his appointment, he still tried to maintain Ron's face as the company's consultant for a further year. Finally, with the last General Manager, Tim, a regulative model with universalistic principles and rules was used. Mr. Ma learned from the experiences with the General Managers knowing that he has to use different styles to solve similar problems. With Tim he knew that he had to set up very clear guidelines.

5.3.2. Study 2: Management of Intercultural Conflict: A preliminary study of Chinese managers and western subordinates

"Management of Intercultural Conflict: A preliminary study of Chinese managers and western subordinates" is a study performed by Chen and Cheung. They wanted to explore intercultural conflicts between Chinese Managers and Western subordinates and point out how they handle such conflicts. The researchers conducted a face-to-face interview with ten participants from a non-Chinese business organization in Hong Kong who had experience with Western employees or Chinese managers. The Chinese sample included people from Hong Kong, Taiwan or China, while Western people came from Australia, Western Europe or the United States.

The interview was divided into two parts. The first part included an open-ended interview with follow-up questions about the interviewees' conflict experiences, their perceptions of their counterparts and strategies used by themselves and the counterparts. The second part of the interview included a short conflict case with a Chinese manager who assigned a sudden and urgent project to a very reluctant Western employee. The interviewees were asked to specify how they would handle such a conflict if it had happened to them.

Chen and Cheung provide three conflict scenarios from the open-ended interview including a Chinese Director, Chinese General Manager and a Chinese leader, all having disputes with their western subordinates. In order to maintain clarity, I will only represent two conflict cases in the following.

Case 1

In the first case, a Chinese director, Mandy, was getting along fine with her subordinate Bill at the beginning. But when Mandy asked Bill to prepare a business proposal within a short period of time, he had some problems and asked Mandy for support. Mandy failed to provide solutions but still used forcing and authoritarian approaches to push Bill getting the results. Thereupon, Bill confronted Mandy and told her off to the upper management, which ended the direct contact between both. Bill still wanted to talk directly to Mandy about the problem, but she started ignoring him. In answer to Bill's behavior and in order to protect her from blame for failing to submit the report on the proposal, Mandy began to collect Bill's mistakes. She asked Bill to report to her in writing every week. Later, she publicized all his mistakes

through an accusing mail to him, copied to others including the upper managers. This way, she wanted to prove his incompetence. Mandy switched from an forcing and authoritarian approach to an avoiding and regulative one, via formal means, to manage the conflict. Bill confronted the action by distributing the reply mail to the same group, complaining about Mandy not supporting him. He argued that she criticizes him without getting the facts first. At the same time, Mandy prepared evidence for a file for Human Resources that would prove Bill's incompetence. This way she could have the third party with her to solve the conflict. There was no direct interaction between Mandy and Bill and Mandy began to rely on the third party to handle the conflict. She used the third-party approach several more times. In one situation, for example, she tried to prevent Bill from receiving an award for a project done earlier in a management meeting by using the management team as a third party. She had no success. Later, Bill was transferred to another location and the conflict ended.

During the conflict, Bill has used direct and problem solving approaches to ask Mandy for her directions and solutions. Although he had some serious argument with Mandy and she ignored him, he still tried to solve the problem by talking to her. When Mandy emailed Bill's mistakes to the whole department and the managing director he confronted it with the same strategy. Later he stopped confronting Mandy and requested a transfer from the Human Resources Department in Australia.

Mandy approached various styles of conflict management during the dispute. First, she used the harmony approach followed by a forcing/ authoritarian approach. With the latter, she tried to protect her face by not disclosing her management weakness, after she had failed to provide Bill will information. Mandy used her power several times to force Bill to do things. Also, when Mandy made Bill's mistakes public, she asserted her power and authority to all concerned. She also tried to make Bill lose face, but when Bill fought back with an returning E-Mail, Mandy lost her face. When Mandy ignored Bill, she used an avoiding approach. At the end, when the conflict seemed unsolvable, she used a third party. She wanted Human Resources to arbitrate the issue.

Case 2

The second scenario includes a General Manager who had to deal with conflicts among employees in a business meeting. When Betty, a Chinese, said the sales targets could not be reached due to missing deadlines on several publications, the US American manager, Simon, inquired as to the real reason. Simon used a direct and problem solving approach by

confronting Betty in front of all participants. At the beginning, the General Manager tried to avoid getting involved in the discussion between his subordinates but after realizing that the argument would not stop, she used an authoritarian approach to end the argument without giving any reasons or solutions. When Simon was blamed in the following by a Chinese employee for not preparing replacement titles to meet the sales goal, the General Manager interrupted the conflict and simply forced Simon to give her solutions on this. She used the authoritarian approach again to deal with Simon. During the meeting, Ron, an Australian employee, asked for the General Managers' decision and approval of a budget to install a better system network in the office. The General Manager tried to avoid answering Ron directly and said that this budget was too high and she could not come up with a decision yet. But when Ron kept asking for a date of decision, she protected her face and used an authoritarian approach to stop the conflict. She used her power to criticize Ron and told him that he did not know much about the situation in the company.

During the meeting, Simon, the US American manager, used a direct and problem solving solution when he argued with Betty about the sales target.

The General Manager used avoiding and authoritarian approaches several times to deal with the conflict. In order to at least harmonize the tensed atmosphere in the meeting, the General Manager invited the team to go out for lunch. The General Manager used the avoiding approach as long as possible, but when she saw that the conflict would not end she used an authoritarian style.

The Chinese superiors changed their conflict strategies over time depending on the situations they faced with their Western subordinates. The patterns in all cases seem to be consistent as the Chinese managers usually start with harmony, following a traditional Chinese value of treating people with "li". When they were confronted with issues they could not solve, they used an avoidant style. In order to save their face, or when they became challenged, they used the authoritarian or forcing approach to manage the situation. As a last resort, the managers used a third party when they needed somebody to back them up.

Surprisingly, though the Chinese managers changed their conflict strategies, none of the Western subordinates did that. They kept confrontational, direct and used problem solving approaches regardless of the situations. They did not adjust their conflict management styles, even though they were subordinates with less power in the company.

A reason why the Western subordinates did not change their conflict behavior could be related to their expectations. They might have expected the managers to be authoritarian,

wielding power from the top and providing solutions. An avoiding strategy created an impression of weakness which caused the Western subordinates to treat their Chinese managers as equals.

The second part of the interview, where participants were asked to give their opinion on a generated conflict case, yielded the same results. The Chinese managers mentioned that they preferred to use a harmony strategy, but when the conflict became too serious because a project or the company was threatened, they would use an authoritarian and forcing approach. They stated, that they would use different methods according to the situation. Both sides agreed on the confrontational, direct and straight forward conflict style of western people. The western employees thought that their Chinese managers rather used an avoidant approach than an harmony approach. But they felt that the managers used authoritarian and forcing approaches from time to time, too.

For the Chinese managers, power and face were important for dealing with conflict, while the western subordinates thought that status-achievement and impartial-approach are important.

5.3.3. Study 3: Conflict management among American and Chinese employees in multinational organizations in China

Yuan's "Conflict management among American and Chinese employees in multinational organizations in China" is a study on how American and Chinese employees of multinational organizations deal with conflict between them. Yuan conducted face-to-face interviews with 42 American and Chinese employees from 28 multinational organizations operating in China. The participants all had experience in communicating with the foreign culture.

Yuan found that both American and Chinese participants used different strategies to deal with conflict. He examined approaches of integrating, insisting on one's own idea, compromising, complying with authority (accommodating), avoiding, passive resistance, dissolving the relationship and a third party approach. To explain these approaches, he gives some short examples from the interviewees.

Some conflicts of the participants were solved through constructive communication. An American manager, for example, tried to create a mutual way of thinking when a problem existed due to miscommunication or misunderstanding. He was convinced that a discussion can help both persons to understand the other persons view. Chinese interviewees supported this argument by saying that through more interactions the American manager learned about

the Chinese behavior. They felt, that after communicating with each other and realizing that both sides share the same goal, conflicts became less and less.

The strategy of insisting on one's own idea was used when the participants were sure that they were right, or when they had more power. Chinese employees tried to persuade their American supervisors or coworkers to conform to Chinese standards. Once, an American manager thought his Chinese employee would bribe a journalist for writing a report on the organization. But when the employee explained that this is a commonly accepted norm in China, the American manager finally accepted it. However, the Chinese participants thought that American managers were willing to adopt Chinese employees' suggestions if they were not related to major principles. In the latter case they would not compromise.

Sometimes, both parties were using a compromising approach. They gave up some of their own interests in order to reach a mutually acceptable decision. One of the Chinese participants gives an example by explaining that one of her subordinates was not satisfied with the salary and hence, sent an e-mail to the American boss. The boss then asked her if the request was reasonable. At the end, the person received a higher salary, but the boss did not give him exactly what he asked for.

In the study, power played an important role when participants used to comply with the authority. They gave up their own interest not because they were wrong but because the other party had more power. Chinese employees were more likely to comply with their supervisors than American employees. One American participant noticed that the Chinese are more passive than Americans in the face of authority. The Chinese participants agreed that the supervisor has the final say even though the subordinate may be unhappy with it. An American participant stated that, no matter whether one is in China or in the USA, if one is higher in the company, one will more likely say his or her opinion.

According to the study, avoiding was adopted by the Chinese employees most frequently, and also the American interviewees stated that Chinese people are non-confrontational and that there is a huge interest in not having conflict in China. Chinese participants noticed more conflicts among Americans and between Chinese and American employees because Americans directly speak out what they think. Chinese people are more reserved and care about their face. Some Chinese employees do not think it is necessary to have conflict. One American experienced that conflicts in China have the tendency to dissolve itself. He said all he had to do is wait a couple days and smile at the other person. This leads to passive resistance. Passive resistance occurs when people pretend that a conflict does not exist but still have negative feelings on the inside. An American participant noticed that sometimes

people will smile to one's face but talk behind one's back. A Chinese interviewee agreed and said that Chinese employees tend to keep silent because they think it will not make a difference if they speak out.

A third party was used to mediate a conflict situation when the two disputants could not solve the conflict themselves. One Chinese called it as escalating the conflict to the upper level. A supervisor or upper-level manager, for example, could be used as a third party. They will judge the issue and make a decision. One Chinese participant said that using an authoritarian figure to coordinate the situation is useful because of the face concern. The American approach of sitting together and expressing one's own opinion would not work.

Results of the study show that Chinese tend to use avoiding approaches because they think it contributes to the relationship maintenance. They attach great importance to maintain harmony and thus, consider conflict as a detractor of it. Chinese avoid conflict to protect each other's faces. Both American and Chinese employees insisted on their idea when it would benefit their organization. American participants were more likely to confront the conflict, but both sides reported that their conflict strategies depended on the situation.

5.3.4 Findings

The findings on the intercultural studies are very important as they provide new perspectives on conflict management. While most researches only summarize that Chinese people are less confrontational than western people and that Chinese people tend to use compromising and collaborating styles, the studies from Wei, Chen and Cheung, and Yuan show that Chinese managers or employees use different styles for conflict management. They learn from their disputes and try to adapt their conflict management styles depending on the situation they are facing with their western counterparts. The conflict management of Chinese people seems to be a process which consistently starts off with a harmony approach. At the beginning of an intercultural conflict, Chinese people usually try to keep a good relationship and maintain the other persons face. But when they recognize that this approach would not contribute to solving the problem or when they feared to lose their face, they change into an authoritarian, forcing or confrontational approach. Especially when they have the power, they will use it to overpower the counterpart to deal with the conflict. An avoiding conflict style would occur when the Chinese participants had no idea about the topic, nor could they provide a solution for the problem. In all three studies, the Chinese participants used a third party and let them

judge on the dispute. This approach was used when both sides would not come to an agreement and thus, the decision of an upper-level third party was needed. Although the Chinese participants used different styles for conflict management, their cultural values continuously guided them through the disputes. They always considered harmony, power and face.

Another unexpected insight in conflict management could be made on the western part. Surprisingly, the western participants seemed not to change their conflict behavior during their disputes. No matter in which situation they were or with whom, they kept confrontational and direct. They insisted on their idea when they thought they were right, and they were more likely to dissolve a relationship. Even if the Chinese participants showed moves of adaption, neither American nor Chinese considered the role of culture in their conflict management completely. They often carried on as if they shared the same culture with each other.

I see a point of criticism in Yuan's study. Even though he noticed that Chinese employees would vary between different conflict styles he does not give examples of conflict situations, like Wei, Chen and Cheung. I would have preferred an analysis of a conflict case with Chinese employees' conflict management approaches, instead of a comparison of American and Chinese conflict styles. From this point of view Yuan's study has characteristics of a cross-cultural approach.

6. Conclusion

The aim of my study was to analyze and understand the conflict behavior of Chinese managers and employees, in a conflict with western managers or employees. Because China's economic role is constantly increasing, more and more western business people expand their business to China, facing new conflicts which need to be resolved. My examination helped me to understand that conflicts are unavoidable and therefore conflict management is indispensable. If conflicts are not taken seriously they can harm business activities through harmful competition, mistrust, low productivity and so forth. It is important not to avoid conflicts or to terminate them, because this won't be possible on the one hand, and on the other hand, this can even worsen the conflict. It is recommendable to create strategies, to enhance the constructive functions of a conflict. Even if a lot of people think that conflicts are bad, they can be useful because they can promote and enhance creativity and innovation.

People have behavioral characteristics which influence their Conflict Management Styles and have an impact on the way they are dealing with their conflicts. Thomas and Kilmann, and Rahim created models and instruments to measure and explain these Conflict Management Styles. The Conflict Management Styles are heavily influenced by Culture, whereby Culture even seems to be the major influence in conflict behavior. Because few people are aware of their culture, they hold anticipations of how other people, no matter which cultural background they have, should behave in a communicative situation. This leads to misunderstandings, which again cause conflicts. Western managers and employees should be aware of the Chinese culture, because it is the underlying factor of Chinese thinking patterns and sets rules for appropriate behavior. Chinese people strongly hold onto the rules of their society, because they are members of a collectivistic culture and collectivists value the group identity. The common good is more important than one's own interest, because collectivists identify themselves through the social groups they are living in. Only when they are integrated and have good social relationships to the group-members, they can attain their goals. Important cultural values in Chinese society are Confucianism, face, harmony, guanxi and power. All these values are building a social web connecting the people who are willing to obey the rules.

Current research on cultural conflict management is fragmented and only few researchers examine the conflict behavior of Chinese people. Furthermore, very few qualitative studies have been conducted to provide a comprehensive view of Chinese conflict management. Wei, Chen and Cheung, and Yuan have examined Chinese conflict behaviors in disputes with western managers, or employees. Results are surprising, as Chinese people do not always maintain harmony for the sake of a good relationship but would adapt various conflict management styles during the years. The Conflict Management of Chinese managers and employees is a learning process. Through experiences with their western counterparts, Chinese people adapt their Conflict Management styles, depending on the situation they are facing. At the beginning of a conflict, Chinese people are trying to keep a harmonious relationship and may cooperate and tolerate. When a conflict is not going to end, or if facework is not supported, Chinese managers and employees will try to save their face by using authoritarian and forcing approaches, to end the conflict. This shows that Chinese people will not, as lot of literature suggests, keep harmony and accommodate at any price. When a conflict really gets worse, the last move will be the escalation of the conflict to an upper-level and let a third party make a decision. Chinese people might try to get the third party on their side by blaming the counterpart and saving their own face.

My investigation shows, that Chinese cultural values play an important role in Chinese Conflict Management. Guanxi and harmony can be seen as underlying factors for conflict behavior, while power and face have a strong presence. Power has the biggest noticeable influence since it is a criteria for selecting a Conflict Management Strategy. Subordinates will usually accommodate to the superior's decision in conflict, while superiors use their power to enforce their will. Nonetheless, as long as a possibility for keeping harmony exists, the manager will try it. This has to do with the face-concern. Every action a Chinese will take in a conflict will be focused on saving and giving face.

The findings of this study are important for multinational organizations dealing with Chinese business partners, because it can help them to become more aware of cultural conflicts. The study might help western managers to better understand Chinese employees assumptions and motivations in a conflict situation.

7. Suggestions for Future Research

According to the studies, there are some suggestions for further research. First of all, more qualitative studies are needed in order to get a more comprehensive picture of how Chinese people and Western people behave in conflict situations. Furthermore, a greater number of Chinese and Western employees need to be questioned in order to get a representative database which can be applied. The more participants are examined, the more realistic are the interpretations, because people are still individuals and may not always act as expected. Because conflict management has almost been examined from an cross-cultural perspective, future research should necessarily focus on intercultural context as this field is still unexplored and thus, lacks clear assumptions. Only intercultural studies can support a better understanding of how people react and behave when they are in conflict with a person from a different cultural background. Furthermore, situational influences on resolutions styles are interesting to consider, as well as investigation on relations. This means a differentiation of conflict behavior between manager-manager, manager-subordinate and between subordinate-subordinate. Research on gender could show if women behave different than men, because of the hierarchical structure of the Chinese society. Last but not least, future research should take a closer look on social changes in society, that might have influenced Conflict Management preferences over time.

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Appendix

Title	Autor	Participants	Subject Matter	Implementation/ Methods	Outcome	Additional Information
A Confucian perspective on conflict resolution International Journal Human Resource Management 6: 1 February 1995	Irene K.H. Chew Christophe r Lim	- 33 CEOs (covering industries of manufacturing, services, trading, construction...) - reside in China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore - completed primary+ secondary school education	relationship between traditional Confucian cultural values and modes of conflict resolution preferred by Chinese business managers	- using TKI - study: 30 Questions of Thomas Kilmann Conflict mode (classify conflict behavior) and Confucian Value Questionnaire	- Chinese business managers prefer compromising as conflict resolution style - followed collaborating - avoiding - competing, accommodating - Compromise indicate affinity in Chinese for teamwork+ brotherhood -Confucian values = reason for less aggressive + emotional behavior in Conflict -compromise: <i>to get smth, one must give first</i> -for not being labeled as uncooperative manager must be able empathize with view of his/her business opponents	- TKI = useful construct in deciphering Chinese conflict management style - self-report instrument > can measure only reported preferences not actual conflict behavior - more qualitative research and content interviews have to be conducted - quantitative
Assessing Chinese Conflict Management Styles in Joint Ventures Intercultural Communication Studies IX-2 2000	Shuang Liu Guo-Ming Chen	-participants from four large joint venture companies -82 participants filled + returned questionnaires (110 all in all) -Age: 20 to 55 -84 % <40 years -48 male -34 female. -65% university education - staff + managers with experience in	- apply existing literature on conflict management to assess Chinese conflict behaviors in joint ventures	-35 questions, 30 questions TKI and 5 demographic -7point-scale modified into 5 point scale -original questionnaire was double back translated into Chinese by two graduate students and two faculties in the English department of a university in China - Questionnaires distributed with help of one staff working in each company	-Chinese managers + employees adopt collaboration more frequently → control - control more frequently → non-confrontation -non-confrontation accounted for biggest percentage (avoidance, accommodation, compromise) -managers control strategies more → staff -control used less frequently → collaboration → illustrated if confrontation inevitable, reconciliation preferred to competition (may damage harmonious relationship in long run) -collaboration highest mean -collaboration most attractive approach to conflict management in this study	- future research may address whether styles are relatively stable or whether they vary across situations by using more participants. -quantitative

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		interpersonal communication with foreigners selected				
Competing or Accommodating? An Empirical Test of Chinese Conflict Management Styles Contemporary Management Research Pages 3-22, Vol.3, No.1, March 2007	Zhenzhong Ma	-200 Chinese students, undergraduates -business school Beijing -between 20 and 26 years -70 per cent male -participated in order to fulfill course requirements	- conflict preferences and their impact in the process of conflict resolution -how Chinese people solve conflicts -how preferred conflict management styles affect negotiation behavior + outcomes in business negotiation	-3 different negotiation simulations → investigate conflict styles in China + explore effects of different styles on negotiation process+ outcomes - Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument - <u>1st case</u> : Used Car case → price only issue to negotiate - <u>2nd case</u> : most complex → 8 issues to be negotiated (royalties, signing bonus, duration contract...) → have to come agreement on all 8 issues - <u>3rd case</u> Knight/Excalibur case → middle → negotiate price, buyer could give seller free ride ad → seller might receive orders from government in future if seller lower price -30 minutes reading + Preparing, pre-negotiation questionnaire, 30 minutes to negotiate an agreement, post negotiation questionnaire	-compromising, avoiding and competing, collaborating, accommodating -Chinese not sacrifice themselves for sake of relationship building, as expected -Chinese tend use non-confrontational style to resolve conflicts - more likely to use compromising as a way to handle conflicts - compromising position rejected / when compromising doesn't resolve conflict → feel hurt believing that opponents not giving face → power-oriented, win-lose competing style way to fight back -no connection → Conflict Style + conflict-resolving behaviors found -extreme first offer can be favorable to the provider → hard bargainer → recipient more likely offer concessions - too extreme offer will discredit provider to point of breaking negotiation -current study supports positive effect of an extreme first offer for obtaining best individual results	- student sample might be different from general population sample - no professional negotiation experiences -future research: using different sample to replicate study is reasonable extension - if conflict styles not valid predictors of negotiating behaviors in China → what are valid ones? -quantitative
Managers' conflict management styles and employee	Ka Wai Chan & Xu Huang & Peng Man Ng	- non-managerial employees of direct marketing company Guangzhou - 148 questionnaires	-mediating effects of trust on the relationships between	- Survey was administered at the company site during office hours - researcher collected questionnaires immediately	- cooperative CMS of managers positively related to job satisfaction of subordinates + negatively related to turnover - No relationship between uncooperative CMS (Avoiding, Dominating) and subordinates'	-finding highlights importance of trustbuilding in the supervisor-subordinate

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attitudinal outcomes: The mediating role of trust Asia Pacific Journal of Management June 2007, Volume 25, Issue 2, pp 277-295		distributed, 126 responded, 121 usable -76% female -20-49 years > 63 % 20 to 30 years	manager's conflict management styles and employee attitudinal outcomes	after completion - English and Chinese <u>-Measures</u> Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI) - Trust in Supervisor = McAllister's (1995) five items that measure affect-based trust+ six items that measure cognition-based trust - Job Satisfaction = The three-item job satisfaction scale - turnover intention variable was operationalized as a three item scale adapted from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979) 5-point Likert-type scale	attitudinal outcomes. -significant relationships between trust and all three of the cooperative but not in any of the uncooperative CMS - uncooperative CMS not related to subordinate job satisfaction + turnover intention - fully supported: argument concerning potential deviations of CMS in relationship between managerial uncooperative CMS and subordinates' trust, attitudinal outcomes - Integrating CMS by manager → positive subordinate outcomes - managers' effective CMS → better social exchange process with their subordinate→ subordinate's positive work attitudes - trust in supervisor fully mediates the positive relationship between integrating CMS + subordinate job satisfaction, negative relationship between integrating CMS and subordinate turnover intention - obliging, compromising not related to trust in supervisor - collectivist Chinese more likely use compromising to resolve conflict→ provides solid evidence for universality of conflict management theory -dual-concerned model based conflict theory proves its utility in collectivist culture	relationship -Limitations: measures used = self-reported - relatively small sample - study only focused on individual level to investigate the relationship between CMS and individual outcomes; future studies should focus on different levels, such as the team level -quantitative
Management of Intercultural Conflict: A preliminary study of Chinese managers and western	Ling Chen & Kat C. F. Cheung Hong Kong Baptist University	-10 participants - non-Chinese business organization in Hong Kong -participants respective experience with Western employees	study of intercultural conflicts between Chinese managers and Western subordinates (how they	- face-to-face individual interview outside of working hours. - conversations conducted in interviewees' mother tongue - 45 to 60 minutes each - 1st part open-ended + follow-up questions about interviewees' conflict	- avoiding and harmony approaches not only choices of conflict-handling strategies by the Chinese superiors - Chinese superior disputants employ different conflict management strategies when interacting with their foreign counterparts - Harmony → Forcing / Authoritarian → Avoiding / Regulative → Use of Third Party - Avoiding → Authoritarian → Avoiding →	-limitations are to be noted of the small sample size, convenient sampling, the nature of the organization, etc. -qualitative

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subordinates Intercultural Communication Studies XVII: 4 2008		or Chinese managers(at least 3 months) -Chinese = Hong Kong, Taiwan, or China -Western = working professionals from Australia, Western Europe, or the United States	handle conflicts)	experiences + perceptions of their counterparts, conflict management, and strategies used by themselves and their counterparts - asked to describe conflicts they had experienced - asked freely express their views of the conflict +of the parties involved - collected outcomes of specific conflicts referred to in the interviews - 2nd part used the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) - short conflict case generated from examples provided by people familiar with multi-cultural work situation from their recent experience - interviewees did not agree to audio taping - detailed notes were taken at all the interviews - Important non-verbal cues → facial expression, body languages, tone also noted down to assist in interpreting the data	Authoritarian → Harmony - Authoritarian → Avoiding → Third Party→ Authoritarian → Regulative - Chinese superiors had changed conflict strategies over time - 1 usually started with harmony, following a traditional Chinese value of treating people with li (courtesy) - 2 issues about which they had no ideas or solutions, they would avoid them - 3 challenged/ save face→ use the authoritarian or forcing approach to manage their conflicts -4 As a last resort, Chinese managers would evoke a third party when they needed someone to back them up - Western subordinates consistent in their conflict management in all three cases - confrontational, direct, and problem solving approaches to conflicts with their Chinese superior - Chinese not always avoiding → In order to overpower counterparts in unavoidable conflicts when a harmonious approach fails to work, use authoritarian approach - Chinese would use authoritarian style to manage the conflict when they had the power -Chinese managers ranked power, personality, inter-relation, and severity of conflicts as important for intercultural conflicts -Neither made room for cultural differences in conflict management, carried on as if they shared the same culture with the other	
Chinese Conflict Management in	Thomas J. Knutson John C.Hwang	-318 Taiwanese, 245 US business employees	-results of comparative study on conflict+	-answering questions -four conflict scenarios in business setting - ask respondents choose	-majority of respondents in both samples perceived conflict in all scenarios -U.S Americans more frequently than Taiwanese	Disadvantage: more males in Taiwanese sample -Taiwanese sample

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Intercultural Context Intercultural Communication Studies, Volume 9, no. 2 Spring 2000	Bill C. Deng Guo-Ming Chen		conflict resolution styles	preferred solution among set of structured choices -Conflikt management instruments: CMS Hall 1973 MODE Thomas & Kilmann 1974 -CMMS Ross & DeWine -ROCI-2 Rhim 1983 -OCCI Putnam& Wilson 1982 -1st scenario: conflict of shared job responsibility between two equals -2nd conflict: of job assignments between 2 individuals of unequal power status -3: matter of unethical and illegal professional conduct between 2 individuals of unequal power status + close interpersonal relations -4: conflict between 2 department heads of equal power who must represent + protect respective departmental interests -participants asked→ indicate whether scenario constituted conflict situation, indicate degree of intensity -six alternatives could be choose for conflict resolution	-Taiwanese outnumbered U.S among those who could not decide/not see existence of conflict -data suggest Chinese respondents more likely to ignore/ play down conflicts -respondents would maintain pleasant personal relationship in spite of highly substantive conflict with other party -both cultures exhibited general tendency diminish amicable personal relationship in face of intensive substantive conflict -individualistic U.S American culture → more likely assert independence, claim ownership of feelings, reduce importance of maintaining pleasant interpersonal relationship -in Chinese culture overt face concerns+ pleasant working relationships receive more value -Chinese less likely terminate pleasant personal relationship in work environment during conflict episodes - <u>case 1</u> : team workers close face-to-face daily interactions → US solution.oriented style, non-confrontation-oriented style → Taiwanese: indirect, non-confrontational style, solution-oriented style - <u>case 4</u> : no close face-to-face daily interactions → both direct, control-oriented style followed solution-oriented, least indirect, non-confrontational - <u>case 2</u> : unequal power status: control-oriented , indirect non- confrontational - <u>case 3</u> : both solution-oriented, non-confrontational, least control-oriented	fewer business executives, greater percentage average workers -more from Taiwanese in trade industry -no Taiwanese in service business category -Chinese/Taiwanese experiencing shift, powerful social changes -quantitative
Influences of Chinese Cultural	Jiin-Song Tsai1 and Cheryl S.	-students of civil engineering and 2 engineers in	-Influence of Chinese Culture on	-conflict situations for students in particular associated with their class works+ after class	- cultural orientations affect conflict management styles -dominating approach to handle differences	Cultural Dimensions Five Conflict Handling

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Orientations and Conflict Management Styles on Construction Dispute Resolving Strategies Journal of Construction Engineering and Management 135:10, 955-964 2009	F. Chi2	construction industry -people with very little and sufficient practical experiences -National Cheng Kung University -62 students and 64 engineers -110 males 50 students and 60 engineers and 16 females 12 students and 4 engineers -student respondents are seniors and postgraduates	Construction Dispute resolving Strategies	activities -survey begins with briefing of the purpose +procedure -writers personally distribute questionnaires to each participant along with additional illustration for completing instrument -investigation follows up with some personal interviews to better understand the meaning of the survey responses	straightforwardly, while accommodating/ avoiding approaches more likely facing conflicts with supervisors +peers -power distance correlated with tendency of employing dominating or accommodating → people's mindset toward social status identity or equality between people behaves differently -uncertainty avoidance related to tendency of employing collaborating, avoiding -collectivism →collaborating +accommodating approaches -individualism →dominating, avoiding due to emphases on relatedness/ self-fulfillment -masculinity → dominating and collaborating - femininity →avoiding and accommodating approaches -long-term orientation → compromising approach, involves give-and-take to reach a mutually acceptable agreement, since it encourages the concern of future gain which might be at the expense of the past or the present having -short-term orientation is less likely to motivate any adjustment of style against situation changes	Approaches Assessment of Conflict Management Styles People -qualitative
Chinese People's Self-Construal and Its Relationship with Conflict Management Styles Public	By Jing Ji, PhD Candidate	- 190 (55 males, 135 females) - undergraduates in a university	relationship between self-construal and CMS	-tests of self-construal and CMSs were within-subject design -for balancing order effect, half of subjects first answered the questionnaire of the sixfold self-construal, then answered the questionnaire of CMS, and the other half in reverse - was confirmed that it had not an engender order effect	- almost all kinds of self-construal for Chinese people had high probability to adopt integrating, compromising, and obliging - integrating, compromising obliging styles three common methods to be used -none tended to use neglect management style - Chinese people with higher vertical relation self-construal tended to adopt integrating, obliging, and avoiding conflict management styles + tended to adopt integrating - People with higher horizontal-collective tended to adopt an obliging style	- Self-construal → how people perceive their thoughts, feelings, and actions to be linked (or not) with other people -making mistakes would be inevitable if simply copying Western theories for

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Personnel Management Volume 41 No. 5 Special Issue 2012					-people with higher humanity-bound self-concepts tended to use compromising and dominating styles.	explaining Chinese people's behaviors -important to study the CMS under specific situations -quantitative
Conflict management among American and Chinese employees in multinational organizations in China Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal Vol. 17 No. 3, 2010 pp. 299-311 Emerald	Wenli Yuan	-Beijing, Qingdao - 42 employees from 28 multinational organizations operating in China - Participants were American and Chinese employees who worked in a multinational organization and had experience communicating with their intercultural counterpart - 20 non-Chinese Americans, 19 Chinese citizens, 3 Chinese Americans -12 female. 30 male -at least Bachelor degree - majority of American lived abroad before moving to China -most less than 40 years old	how American and Chinese employees of multinational organizations deal with conflict between them	- In-depth face-to-face interviews - comparative method was used to analyze the data - qualitative approach -data collected 2005 -interviews transcribed verbatim - All but three interviews were tape recorded	- both American and Chinese employees used various strategies to deal with conflict - depends on situations -integrating - insisting on one's own solution when participants believed that they were right, or when then had more power) -compromising -yielding to authority -avoiding - passive resistance -dissolving the relationship -third-party approach - American participants more likely to confront a conflict than Chinese participants -findings indicate that differing motivations lead to the utilization of common conflict management strategy -Chinese participants consider in conflict stakes,power, relationships, situations, and possible consequences	-limitations: -self reported responses - researchers need to further clarify definitions of conflict management styles and pay more attention to adaptation during the process of intercultural conflict resolution -younger generation Chinese who have been exposed to Western cultures, are less likely to conform to traditional Chinese values -qualitative

Title	Autor	Participants	Subject Matter	Implementation/ Methods	Outcome	Additional Information
New Manager Socialization and Conflict Management Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 2011, 41, 2, pp. 332–356.	Nancy Yifeng Chen Dean Tjosvold Xu Huang Da Xu	-64 middle managers, large state owned enterprise in China -confederate = 4 graduate students 32 years -15hr of training	-discussions about work distributions -effective socialization of new employees -role of relationships + open discussion → effect on CM	3 phases 1) 2 groups each with one participant + 1 confederate -discussion to solve conflict 2) discussion - after 8 min questionnaire -unexpected exchange questionnaires → participant could read confederates voting -continue discussion -complete discussion report 3) post-questionnaire fully debriefed	-showing relationship values help new managers develop cooperative interdependence with existing employees -seek mutual understanding in CM -become socialized to organization -participants more willing understand position of existing members for CM -open to different ideas -curious about other ideas	Limited by sample + operations Field studies needed -quantitative
Openness Among Chinese in Conflict: Effects of Direct Discussion and Warmth on Integrative Decision Making Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 2003, 33, 9, pp. 1878-1897	Dean Tjosvold Haifa F. Sun	-80 male undergraduates University Guangzhou -4 undergraduate students = confederates -15h training how induce participants involvement	-investigate open discussion, compared to avoiding approach -expression interpersonal warmth rather coldness - conflict resolution mechanisms used by Chinese immigrants in an Australian setting	-3 phases -discussion on work distribution with partner/ with person with opposing opinion 1) participants divided 2 groups each with 1 participant, one confederate, different rooms, preparation 2) discussion with briefing sheet outlining six arguments - after 8 min complete mid-discussion - exchanged questionnaires → participant could read confederate's voting 3) complete decision report, post-discussion questionnaire, participants fully debriefed	-open discussion compared to avoiding = cooperative relationship+ open-minded understanding of opposing view -communication of warmth compared coldness = cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship, exploration opposing view, integration opposing ideas into decision, confidence in future joint work -warm condition - participants greater effort to integrate opposing view, greater confidence that they could work with the in future -openness + warmth compared make task conflicts constructive -participants tried → understand opposing position demonstrated more knowledge -open discussion can build relationships + contribute to CM in China	-result challenges traditional theorizing that open discussion of conflict harms relationship and CM in China -Researchers found earlier that Chinese Managers+ employees tend to avoid and smooth over conflicts to maintain relationship -results limited by the sample and operations -quantitative
Chinese-Style	Ho-Ching	-research was	Conflict	-two research methods to	- structure of Chinese society is hierarchical,	-difficult to integrate

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Conflict Resolution: A Case of Taiwanese Business Immigrants in Australia* Intercultural Communication Studies IX-2 2000	Wei	conducted from July 1994 to May 1998 -July 1994 interview owner-manager (Mr. Ma), his wife +General Manager of the company	Behavior of Chinese in Australian Setting	explore the situation in the company in different phases -July 1994 open-ended questionnaire and interview (to study the background of the company) -second, a longitudinal approach (to observe the company) - author visited the company once a week to observe the interactions between the owner-manager (and his wife) and the General Manager - author and owner-manager reviewed the company's management processes together once every three months - three sets of data were collected and analyzed: (1) the major conflicts that occurred in the company, (2) the styles the owner-manager chose to solve the conflicts, and (3) the factors affecting the choice of the styles	formal, and strict - interpersonal relationships regulated by specific sets of norms and moral principles - most of Australian in the case did not understand the Chinese rules - loyalty is one of the most important factors in Chinese firms - understanding the value of face is another important factor in dealing with Chinese conflicts - Westerners tend to ignore that saving face is related to renqing, which demands a mutual appreciation between giver and receiver - Chinese like to rely on third parties to resolve conflicts - resolution between immigrant Chinese and Australians is a learning process - when Chinese business immigrants first came to the host country, they continued to use their antecedent modes of (Confucian) thinking to solve conflicts -later adopt the Western ways to manage their conflict	a conflict resolution model by using a case study - future research in this area should include a larger sample because a case study may not represent the whole population -qualitative
Facework as a Chinese Conflict-Preventive Mechanism - A Cultural/Discourse Analysis Intercultural	Wenshan Jia	-colleges in the northeastern United States - four Chinese professors - group of Chinese students	draw relevant connections between Chinese facework and Chinese conflict prevention and cultivation	- videotaped interaction in a naturally occurring academic environment between four Chinese professors and a group of Chinese students enrolling in colleges in the northeastern United States -language Chinese - discuss issues about the Chinese Culture	- facework can (1) proactively create a harmonious relationship in which human conflicts are minimized (2) deactivate, disintegrate or decompose the emergent sources of human conflicts at any cost as soon as such sources are identified (3) actively trivialize big conflicts and eliminate the existence of small conflicts	-qualitative

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Communication Studies VII: 1 1997-8			of harmony			
Cross-cultural differences in conflict management An inductive study of Chinese and American Managers International Journal of Conflict Management Vol. 20 No. 4, 2009 pp. 355-376	Lorna Doucet Karen A. Jehn Elizabeth Weldon Xiangming Chen Zhongming Wang	-66 American -52 Chinese managers working in China - US-Chinese joint venture / Chinese operation of American firm - predominantly male (92 percent) and ranged in age from 30 to 65 years old - All interacted frequently (often daily) with different-culture and same-culture managers	-compare conflict management behaviors of American and Chinese managers -uncover cultural differences in the way Chinese and American managers approach conflict	-structured interviews and multidimensional scaling techniques are used -9 steps - <u>step 1</u> , collected stories about conflict from American and Chinese managers - <u>step 2</u> , selected one story created two versions of that scenario: an American version describing an American manager in conflict with an American colleague and a Chinese version describing a Chinese manager in conflict with a Chinese colleague - <u>step 3</u> , asked American managers to read the American story and Chinese managers to read Chinese story and tell what they would do in that situation - <u>steps 4-7</u> , collected the data required to conduct and interpret two MDS analyses - <u>steps 8-9</u> used the results of the two MDS analyses to answer the research questions	-conflict management behaviors suggested by American and Chinese managers are different -For Chinese managers alone, embarrassing the colleague and teaching moral lesson important element -For American managers alone, hostility, vengefulness are important elements - both cultures acknowledge avoidant approaches, but the underlying intentions for Americans alone are associated with a lack of confidence - for Chinese managers, embarrassing the colleague and trying to teach a moral lesson was an important element of conflict management - American managers did not generally find this to be an aspect of conflict management - Americans focused on the extent	- managers should consider cultural differences in conflict management when diagnosing and intervening in conflict situations in different cultures -qualitative
Conflict Management for Effective Top Management	Guoquan Chen, Chunhong Liu and Dean	-378 executives from 105 organizations in China - 105 CEOs from	how top management teams manage conflict	-questionnaires -completed measures of conflict management and productive conflict -CEOs indicated their	-cooperative conflict management promotes productive conflict and top management team effectiveness that in turn result in organizational innovation -Cooperative conflict positively +significantly	-quantitative

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Teams and Innovation in China Journal of Management Studies 42:2 March 2005	Tjosvold	these firms Beijing, China -171 sets of replies were returned 66 of the returned sets incomplete -105 complete sets of questionnaires for analysis -average age 38 - 66.1% had bachelor's degree, 18.7% master's degree, 3.2% doctoral degree and 12% less than bachelor's degree; 79.7% of the participants were males.	can greatly contribute to their effective leadership of organization + innovation	team's effectiveness and their organization's innovativeness	correlated with productive conflict - productive conflict affects team effectiveness	

Statutory Declaration

I declare that I have authored this thesis independently, that I have not used other than the declared sources / resources, and that I have explicitly marked all material which has been quoted either literally or by content from the used sources.

Georgenthal, July 30th

Huong Luong Thu