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Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter explained background as well as motivation of the thesis. It is presented with six subsections: background, problem, purpose, delimitation and definition.

1.1 Background

Globalization, which has been frequently discussed during the past decades, is described as the process of international exchange of people and goods. It is majorly perceived as an economic concept because the globalization process is characterized by the integrated markets, frequent trades and capital mobility between countries. Nevertheless, globalization also embeds a cultural element; values and knowledge are met and exchanged as talents from different parts of world come across each other during the process of globalization (Ritzer, 2007).

As the process of globalization advances, many scholars acknowledge the need of cultural diversity as an inalienable part for organizations to remain competitive and effective in globalized markets (Cox & Blake, 1991; Martin, 2014). In addition to academic recognition, numerous organizations also actively appreciate and embrace cultural diversity. For example, EY, one of the *Big Four* accounting firms, states that they believe that ‘only the highest-performing teams, which maximize the power of different opinions, perspectives and cultural references, will succeed in the global marketplace’ (Ey.com, 2018).

The effects of globalization and cultural diversity in Sweden are also prominent. The export of raw material and manufacturing goods take up a significant part in Swedish economy. Despite of traditional export, many multinational companies originated from Sweden are expanding globally in a notable speed, such as *H&M*, *IKEA*, *Volvo* etc. (Vahlne & Ivarsson, 2013). Furthermore, according to *Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB)*, a.k.a. *Statics Sweden*, there are 163,000 immigrants flowing from different parts of world into Sweden, and the high rate of immigration is expected to maintain in the future (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2018). The great amount of immigrants will inevitably bring various cultural elements into Sweden. Overall, one might expect the business environment to be more culturally diverse than ever in Sweden.

Managers are of great significance in organizations. The vigorous trend of globalization and diverse cultural elements in workplace require managers to have additional mind-set and skills to properly handle new challenges. As Galbraith (2000) points out, an internationally working manager should be capable of building communication and cooperation across geographic, functional and cultural borders.

For managers to accomplish their jobs in a multicultural business environment, the importance of conflict management becomes rather conspicuous. First and foremost, conflict is an unavoidable reality in organizations. Boonsathorn (2007) points out that it needs much energy to solve interpersonal conflicts among people who have similar backgrounds, yet it will be even more difficult to deal with intercultural conflicts between people with distinct knowledge and behaviors that are resulted from cultural difference. In view of the extra dynamic that culturally diversity brings to conflict management scenarios, Ma, Lee & Yu (2008) suspect that future research of conflict management will continue to focus on conflict management styles with regard to cultural differences. Instead of conflict itself, it is the difference in conflict management styles that has a strong influence in organizations (Ting-Toomey et al., 1991). Putnam & Poole (1992) claim that, under constructive management, intercultural conflicts can be a source of competitive advantage by promoting decision making and producing effective decisions. In the light of previous studies, Rahim (2002) classifies five styles (*integrating, obliging, dominating, compromising* and *avoiding*) that people might adopt in conflict management.

When it comes to conflict management styles in cross-cultural situations, some scholars seek to study conflict management styles through the lens of cultural intelligence (Ramirez, 2010; Gonçalves et al., 2016). Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a relatively new conceptual model that measures individual cross-cultural capabilities from four dimensions (*cognitive CQ, metacognitive CQ, motivational CQ* and *behavioural CQ*). CQ appears to be a strong predictor for cross-cultural performance (Rockstuhl et al., 2011). Based on the result from empirical study, Ramirez (2010) argues that individuals with high CQ levels are prone to select effective approach to address conflicts in cross-cultural situations.

1.2. Problem

Nowadays, globalization is an influential phenomenon in business world. Considering Sweden, cultural diversity has been prominent in both business and societal environment (see 1.1 Background). Cultural diversity brings additional opportunities, as well as challenges for managers in cross-cultural organizations, especially in the aspect of conflict management. The cross-cultural dynamic increases the likelihood and subtlety of conflicts. Such conflicts require proper conflict management strategies to be effectively addressed. Given a cross-cultural working environment, CQ may provide a valuable insight into the study of conflict management style.

CQ is a relatively recent concept, hence the relevant studies are largely underdeveloped. Nevertheless, the implication of CQ in multicultural workplace conflicts has been studied in a limited amount of researches. Elkhoully & Gamaleldin (2012) test the relationship between cognitive CQ and the dominating conflict management style in industrial sector in Egypt. Gonçalves et al. (2016) show that meta-cognitive CQ positively predicted the integrating style using samples from Portugal. Moreover, Ramirez (2010) summarizes that individuals with high CQ tend to choose effective approaches to address conflicts.

As can be seen from above, previous studies are conducted in certain geographical regions. Studies that discuss CQ and conflict management styles in a Scandinavian setting appear to be absent in the field. Furthermore, a quantitative method has been the dominant approach for these existing studies with the intent to verify the relationship as a phenomenon, baring detailed reasoning and explanation behind it. Only a few studies attempt to investigate conflict management in a qualitative manner. For instance, Prause & Mujtaba (2015) discuss the effective procedures on conflict management within diverse workplace with a focus on gender differences. Nevertheless, the in-depth understanding of managers' conflict management styles, through the instrumentality of CQ model, appears to be lacking.

1.3 Purpose

The thesis intends to utilize the conceptual CQ model and the categorization of conflict management styles to acquire a thorough understanding of how managers perceive,

experience and settle conflicts occurred in cross-cultural workplace from management's perspective. New insights regarding the topic may emerge during the process of study.

1.4 Research Questions

The thesis intends to study following two research questions:

1. What are the typical types of conflicts in cross-cultural workplaces?
2. How do managers construct their conflict management style, during which if and how can CQ facilitate the conflict management?

1.5 Delimitation

This thesis primarily intends to study managers' conflict management styles in culturally diverse workplace in Sweden, through the lens of the conceptual framework of CQ and the categorization of 5-style conflict management styles. Hence, individual implicit and explicit behaviors behind conflict management will be the focus of this thesis. The causes and types of conflicts in diverse workplace are lightly explained merely in order to provide a context for the subject matter. Additionally, the consequence of conflict management will not be discussed in this thesis.

1.6 Definitions

Conflict Management Styles: There are five different strategies, including *integrating*, *dominating*, *compromising*, *obliging* and *avoiding* style, that person might adopt when handling conflicts. Different styles depend on (1) high or low attention to one's own result, and (2) high or low attention to others' outcomes (Rahim, 2002).

Cultural Intelligence (CQ): The ability to perceive, discern, and analyze sophisticated ethical and/or economic situations in a cross-cultural environment. The conceptual model of CQ is composed of four parts: *cognitive*, *metacognitive*, *motivational* and *behavioral* (Stewart, Wilson & Miles, 2014).

Crosscultural workplace: A workplace where cultural diversity exists, especially where individual beliefs, language and social norms are obviously different due to variance of cultural backgrounds (Mayhew, 2018).

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Chapter 2. Theoretical framework

In the following section, elaborated theoretical grounding will be presented, along with a detailed view of utilized concepts.

2.1 Manager

In academic field, detailed description and definition of managers are provided. Drucker (2012), who is often honored as ‘the father of management’, specifies the responsibilities of managers by outlining five tasks: 1. *Set Objectives*, 2. *Organize and Plan*, 3. *Motivate and Communicate*, 4. *Measure Performance*, and 5. *Develop Talent*.

In other words, a manager is someone who decides the goals; delegates work assignments to suitable people; promotes teamwork through communication; measures and controls performance; and develops talent employees. Due to the complicated daily job responsibilities, managers need to have comprehensive skills and an open mind-set to fulfill these responsibilities, such as interpersonal skills, analytical skills and planning skills (Drucker, 2012).

‘Manager’ is an indispensable element of modern organization. Without the existence of managers, no organizations can be functional (Paskewich, 2014). A good manager should enable employees to coordinate and collaborate within the organization, which requires the manager’s ability to utilize human resource to accomplish organizational targets in an effective and efficient manner. The cultural diversity in cross-cultural workplace could pose a challenge for managers regarding the fulfillment of managerial responsibilities and organizational goals because a culturally diverse workforce is sometimes difficult to cooperate internally and conflict-prone (Prause & Mujtaba, 2015).

2.2 Cultural Diversity

The topic of “cultural diversity” drew attention in the very nascent stage of globalization. Cox & Blake (1991) define cultural diversity as a variety of cultural element in a certain environment. Additionally, Cox & Blake (1991) reexamine previous studies of how cultural diversity management can contribute as a competitive advantage for organizations. They argue that the explicit connection between ‘cultural diversity management’ and ‘organizational competitiveness’ was lacking at the time. As an answer to the research gap, Cox & Blake (1991) provide six dimensions (*cost, resource-acquisition, market, creativity,*

problem-solving and *system flexibility*) where business performance is directly influenced by the management of cultural diversity. The theory is one of the ground-stone theories for cultural diversity management, and it is still frequently cited in recent studies (see in Bassett-Jones, 2005; Stahl et al., 2010; Trittin & Schoeneborn, 2017).

According to Cox & Blake (1991), a good cultural diversity management can benefit organizations in following ways: reducing cost, increasing creativity, constituting a flexible system, attracting prospective employees, providing supportive arguments for marketing operations, and bringing critical analysis to problem-solving. Despite of opportunities and benefits that cultural diversity can offer, dark side also exists. Negative impact of cultural diversity includes misunderstandings, communication barriers and defective adaptation behaviors of organizational personnel (Martin, 2014). Additionally, Martin (2014) points out that, provided cultural diversity in workplace, there will be an increased tendency of staff to engage in conflicts. One of the reason of such conflicts could be the lack of formal/informal education on cultural attitudes, convictions and sign languages. Insufficient communication caused by language difficulty and anxiety of informalities could also lead to conflicts. Additionally, the cultural variation of body language meanings can also lead misunderstanding among coworkers (Prause & Mujtaba, 2015). Thus, it is interesting for this study to investigate the conflicts and the styles of handling conflicts adopted by managers in such specific environment where people from different countries work together in an organization.

2.3 Conflict

2.3.1 The definition of conflict

The topic regarding conflict reappeared in the researches of organizations from late 1960s. The researchers, which include Walton & McKersie (1965), Pondy (1967) and Thomas (1976), have put efforts in changing the view of conflict. Conflict is gradually regarded as a healthy process needed to be managed, rather than a dysfunctional role in organizations. And Janis (1982) considers that conflict could make the group more critical and attentive in assessing problems and making decisions. There is no universally acknowledged definition of conflict, and scholars have defined conflict from various perspectives, such as sociology, psychology and anthropology. Conflict has been described as “*a perceived or real incompatibility of values, expectations, processes or outcomes between one or more parties*”

in practical and/or relational issues” (Ting-Toomey, 1994, p. 360). Putnam & Poole (1987) define conflict as the interaction between individuals who have opposite perception of aims, beliefs and thinking, and who recognize the opposing party as a potential obstacle when they try to accomplish the goals (Easterbrook et al., 1993).

Despite of listed definitions of conflicts from various perspectives, intercultural conflict in the context of organization is emphasized in this thesis. Ting-Toomey (1999, p. 194) explains that intercultural conflicts are “the perceived or actual incompatibility of values, norms, process, or goals between a minimum of two [interdependent] cultural parties over content, identity, relational, and procedural issues”. Regarding conflicts within organizations, Putnam & Poole (1992) give a four types classification, which categorizes conflicts into interpersonal, bargaining & negotiation, intergroup, and inter-organizational. In other words, conflicts within organizations could be individual v.s. individual conflicts, group v.s. group conflicts, or organization v.s organization conflicts. However, based on the research purpose, the primary interest of this thesis is the interpersonal and intercultural conflicts that happen between colleagues or superiors & subordinates from different countries inside an organization.

Owens & Valesky (2007) assert that the conflicts within an organization is inevitable, and also regard conflict as a source of benefit which can stimulate creative solutions in solving problems if managed well. Additionally, when proper conflict management style is applied, the conflicts could encourage creativity and innovation, and do well to the whole organization (Gonçalves et al, 2016).

2.3.2 The causes of conflict in cultural diverse workplace

Oxenstierna et al. (2011) believe that workplace factors (such as work tasks, organizational resources and job conditions) can be potential resources for conflicts. However, personal differences of staff (such as personal values, beliefs and backgrounds) can also be influential factors that spark workplace conflicts.

Cultural diversity, on the other hand, is an additional source of conflicts. Such argument has deep roots in social psychology. Turner’s Social identity theory (cited in Stets & Burke, 2000)

suggests that human beings automatically *categorize, identify* and *compare* every individual that they come across. People naturally favor similarity rather than dissimilarity regarding both explicit factors (such as ages and races) and implicit factors (such as beliefs, value and attitudes). According to DeBruine (2002), the perceived similarity can breed trust and cooperation among people. On the contrary, when confronted with unfamiliar attitudes and attributes, people often feel bewildered and respond unsatisfactorily, hence causing conflicts.

Language barrier, could also be a potential cause of conflicts. A study conducted by Evans & Suklun (2017) shows that the language level is essential in communication. Foreign accents, different interpretation and connotation of word, and communicative styles that distract people from communication itself, might be the possible source of misunderstanding, which could potentially lead to conflicts. Also, Evans & Suklun (2017) note that individuals with relatively inferior language skill tend to be reticent or defensive, which sets an unhealthy base for effective conflict management style adoption.

2.3.3 The types of conflict in cultural diverse workplace

Despite the lack of a specific study that focuses on the general types of conflict in culturally diverse organization, many scholars (e.g. Nancarrow, 2002; Stahl et al., 2010; Hill, 2011) have used the model proposed by Jenhn & Mannix (2001) to illustrate the types of conflict in cultural diverse workplace. According to Jenhn & Mannix (2001), there are three main types of conflict in workgroups, including *relationship conflict*, *task conflict*, and *process conflict*. Relationship conflict refers to awareness of incompatibility between people, which involves emotional factors, such as feeling, friction, and tension. Thus, it focuses on the personal issues, for instance: the dislikes among group members and the feelings of trouble, frustration and annoyance. In terms of task conflict, it is the awareness of the different views and opinions held toward a specific task. It may coincide with intense discussion and personal excitement. In other words, task conflicts can possibly include negative emotions between people which are usually related to relationship conflicts. Lastly, the process conflict refers to the awareness of controversy about aspects of how the task will be completed. More specifically, it involves responsibility issues and resource distributions, such how much responsibility different people will have as and who should do what.

2.3.4 Conflict management styles

Regarding the five conflict management styles, there is a developing process in the research of that field. The managerial grid which is built up by Blake & Mouton (1964) has been seen as a leading literature in conflict management. Basing on a dual concern model: high or low concern for people and production, Blake & Mouton (1964) illustrate that there are five types of behaviors towards conflict, which are given name by smoothing, forcing, withdrawing, problem-solving, and compromising. Later on, the model is broadened to emphasize on the desire to satisfy your own concerns and the desire to satisfy the other's concerns (Thomas, 1976). Following the achievement done by previous scholars, Rahim & Ve Bonoma (1979) show the conflict management in two dimensions by differentiating the styles. Thomas (1992) names the five categories as integrating, competition, avoiding, compromising and accommodation. The model (see figure 1) cited in Rahim (2002) is consisted by the focus of whether one pays high or low attention to one's own result, at the same time, pays high or low attention to others' outcomes.

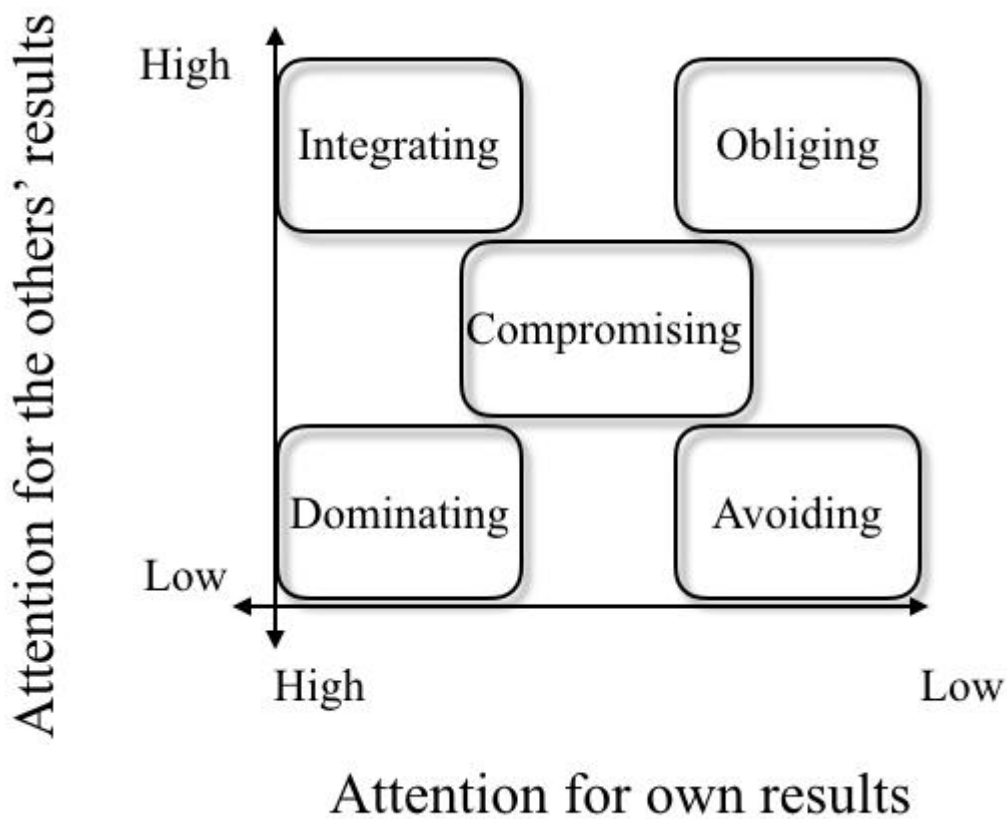


Figure 1. The dual concern model of conflict management styles among interpersonal conflicts. Source: Rahim (2002, p.217)

From the figure 1, it can be seen, **the integrating (also called as cooperating) style** shows that the person highly concerns both for himself/herself and others. The cooperation is highlighted in this style and it involves openness, exchange of information and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties (Elkhouly & Gamaleldin 2012). Rahim & Buntzman (1990) demonstrate that the managers who has such style will be less likely to experience ongoing conflict and controversy at work. Because of the win-win outcome generated from integrating style, it is considered as the most effective style which is preferred in organization (Gonçalves et al, 2016).

The dominating (or named as competing) style refers to the high concern for a person's own interest but low concern for other people. Gonçalves et al (2016) state that the dominating style is related to authoritarianism, which reflects a tendency to impose own interest. In other words, people with this style only care about their own goal when dealing with every single matter, and they often ignore the others' opinions. It shows a win-lose strategy, managers who use the competing style typically are ineffective in meeting their goals and inappropriate in their treatment to subordinates. As a result, the conflicts are likely to be escalated and employees will be less likely to comply with directives of management (Rahim & Buntzman, 1990). However, a quick decision would be useful in an imposed, unpopular or important situation (Rahim, 2002).

The compromising style can be found in a person who has moderate concern for both himself/herself and others. The two parties each, one-self and the other, have to make concessions in order to get agreement (Gonçalves et al, 2016). Therefore, neither one-self nor the other is totally satisfied, and that might create new conflicts in the future. Moreover, Rahim (2002) suggests that this style will fail in identifying complicated issues.

The obliging style tends to show that person concerns much for the others but ignores own interest. It seems like that individuals who choose this style will maximize the others' requirements but minimize their own differences to get a job done. Saeed et al. (2014) view that the obliging style is used to protect and maintain a good relationship with others, instead of keeping and meeting one's own concerns. Standing from another point of view, the party in a weaker position will choose this style to produce more favorable results by giving up own interests (Rahim, 2002). Meanwhile, obliging style is reasonable to be applied when facing some specific conditions, like time pressure (Rubin, 1994).

The avoiding style presents a behavior adopted by a person who does not care neither his/her own interest nor the others. It is a style which links to withdrawal or dodge from the problems, thus, it is indirect and uncooperative (Saeed et al., 2014). Gross & Guerrero (2000) call this style as non-confrontation and inaction, and regard it as an ineffective and inappropriate style. Additionally, Rahim (2002) points out that it will cause serious results if the parties withdraw from important conflicts which require quick responsible decisions.

Generally, the study of conflict management in the context of organizations shows that the style of integrating is related to the effective management of conflicts and positively correlated with individual and organizational outcomes (Burke, 1970; Rahim, 2002). On the contrary, the styles of avoiding and dominating are associated with ineffective conflict management (Rahim, 2002). Although these styles are often applied to organizational contexts, they can be generalized to scenarios involving interpersonal relationships (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006) or culturally diverse backgrounds (Kim et al., 2015).

2.4 Managers and conflict management in cross-cultural workplace

The two dominant reasons of manager failures are 1. *Inadequate communication* and 2. *Poor workplace relationship* (Longenecker, Neubert, & Fink, 2007). Chen, Liu & Tjosvold (2005) suggest that conflict management styles are closely linked to the quality of communication and workplace relationship. Avoiding conflict increases competitive frictions and animosity, while a cooperative approach can produce productive outcomes from conflicts without severely damaging the workplace relationship. For example, inadequate managers were found

to avoid conflicts; these avoiding managers deteriorate employee commitment and workplace harmony (Barker, Tjosvold & Andrews, 1988). Cooperative managers appear more open and communicative in their conflict management, hence more likely to generate productive results for the organizations through conflict management.

As can be seen from the relationship between conflict management styles and communication & relationship, conflict management is important for managers because it can decide whether a manager is successful or not. Compared to managers working in a domestic environment, managers working in a cross-cultural environment face greater challenges. As Galbraith (2000) points out that a manager in a cross-cultural working environment must be able to establish communication and collaboration beyond geographical, functional and cultural differences. Cultural difference is resulted from the cultural diversity in a cross-cultural workplace, and becomes one of the main challenges for managers in term of establishing beneficial cooperation and communication among employees (Earley & Peterson, 2004).

2.5 Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

2.5.1 The conceptualization of CQ

As the phenomenon of globalization gradually shows its impact on the business environment around the world, the need of researches that focus on factor that could indicate individual cross-cultural performance simultaneously increases. As a response to such need, Ang & Early (2003) develop a CQ model, which can be shortly summarized as an indicator of cross-cultural workplace performance.

Before Ang & Early's (2003) integral CQ model, a great amount of studies and literature concern cross-cultural abilities, for which a detailed and inclusive review can be found in Paige (2004). Previous studies prior to Ang & Earley (2003) largely lack a clear definition and a comprehensive approach, leading to a sporadic catalog of multicultural competencies without theoretical integrity (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). The construct of CQ, on the other hand, followed the theoretical structure of multiple intelligence, and should offer a methodical explanation and rationalization for the performance in cross-cultural situations. With its theoretical coherence as a major advantage, CQ model has been intensify applied in management researches as well as management practices (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004).

By definition, CQ (cultural intelligence) refers to the ability to perceive, discern, and analyze sophisticated ethical and/or economic situations in a cross-cultural environment (Stewart, Wilson & Miles, 2014). The conceptual CQ model has four aspects: *cognition, meta-cognition, motivation* and *behavior* (Eken, Ozturgut & Craven, 2014). High level of CQ results in a good understanding both of self and others in an adaptable way that enables appropriate behaviors in a multicultural situation (Rockstuhl et al., 2011). Contrarily, insufficient level of CQ often leads to biased prejudice, additional conflicts and teamwork failures (Alon & Higgins, 2005).

CQ serves as an indicator of practical intelligence with regards to the realities of globalization in a specific domain of intercultural situation (Early & Ang, 2003). Starting from the 21st century, CQ became important largely due to the escalating process of globalization (VanderPal, 2014). Rockstuhl et al. (2011) argue that the practical meaning of CQ is that it can provide prediction for employee performance in cross-cultural work settings, complementary to *IQ (analytical intelligence)* and *EQ (emotional intelligence)*, two indicators traditionally used to predict general employee work performance.

2.5.2 Four-Factor CQ model

The currently widely-adopted CQ model is composed of four aspects: *cognition, meta-cognition, motivation* and *behavior* (Eken, Ozturgut & Craven, 2014). Cognition, metacognition and motivation are mental abilities inside human beings' heads, which would altogether influence explicit behavioral abilities.

Cognitive CQ indicates the general understanding about various cultures, such as information about economic, legal and social systems in a given region. Cognitive CQ recognizes the knowledge as an inalienable component of intelligence. People with high cognitive CQ are equipped with sufficient knowledge about exotic culture that is accumulated either from past experience or education (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Motivational CQ is defined as the personal enthusiasm for exploring other cultures and interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. People with high motivational CQ are characterized by the willingness and intrinsic interest to explore exotic cultures with confidence. The enthusiasm towards other cultures sets a basic tone for individual's CQ level (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Behavioral CQ refers to an individual's capability to behave appropriately when facing culturally unfamiliar situations. The appropriate behaviors include both verbal and non-verbal actions, such as suitable words, speaking tone and volume, body language and facial expressions (Li, Mobley & Kelly, 2012).

Meta-cognitive CQ indicates the level of cultural awareness toward others' cultural predisposition. It reflects strategies that individuals utilize to cope with cross-cultural situations, such as collecting and understanding cultural knowledge (Earley & Ang, 2003).

CQ is an aggregate multidimensional structure. In other words, the general ability of individuals to perform effectively in multicultural workplace settings is determined by all the four substantially distinct dimensions of CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003).

2.5.3 The development of CQ

CQ is considered as an indicator for individual performance under the multicultural environment, yet the development of CQ has not been thoroughly examined. The studies regarding CQ and CQ development often fall into "chicken and egg" tautology; the ambiguity lays in the question of whether CQ facilitates multicultural interactions or multicultural interactions promotes CQ.

Ng, Van Dyn & Ang (2009) describe CQ as a learning capability which can increase the likelihood of positive outcomes from oversea experience. According to Ng, Van Dyn & Ang (2009), CQ is the major determinant of whether an individual can benefit from cross-cultural interactions. Individuals with high CQ in multicultural situations will actively and effectively engage in communications and interactions, which facilitates learning. On the contrary,

individual with low CQ might feel negative emotions, such as unease, anxiety and insecurity, which block learning process.

Earley & Ang (2003) argue that CQ is a product of a continuously learning process rather than a born characteristic, hence presumably people can make an effort to build and cultivate their CQ levels. The mainstream view of the effective approach to develop individual CQ is the experiential learning theory (ELT) (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). Kolb (1984) defines ELT as the progress through which knowledge is generated via experience. The theory highlights the significance of experience in the knowledge development and considers learning as an integral procedure of adaptation.

Culture is abstract, sophisticate and complex, which weakens the impact of desktop learning and classroom training. As Li, Mobley & Kelly (2012) conclude, ELT, the learning by doing way, is the most efficient approach for CQ development. Additionally, several studies (see Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004) show, an individual who takes sufficient time exploring and engaging in interaction with a different culture has more likelihood to develop his/her CQ level in regards of all four of CQ aspects. Despite of the individual difference (some might benefit more from cross-cultural experience due to initial CQ level differences), the length of oversea assignments and multicultural working experience is the most crucial factor in the process of CQ development (Li, Mobley & Kelly, 2012).

2.6 Conflict Management Styles and CQ

The close link between ‘conflict management style’ and ‘CQ’ can be noticed through various perspective. ‘CQ’ and ‘conflict management styles’, respectively, relate to expected employee performance as illustrated above. Individual personality also provides a solid linkage between conflict management styles and CQ.

In the establishment of CQ construct, Earley & Ang (2003) clarify that CQ, which describes individual flexible ability to properly handle people from other cultural backgrounds, as a state rather than a characteristic. Although there is a distinction between state-like individual difference (CQ) and trait-like individual difference (personality), CQ clearly has its root on

personality. According to Earley & Ang (2003): “Personality characteristics are conceptualized as antecedents or causal agents of CQ” (p. 160).

Similarly, personality traits have been argued to be a predictor for conflicts management styles along with other variables (such as gender and bilingualism). Even in an early stage of academic research, the relationship between personality and conflict management styles has been supported by numerous scholars (Terhune, 1970; Chanin and Schneer, 1984). In terms of contemporary studies, Park & Antonioni (2007) discover that individuals that are outgoing, open-minded, conscious and agreeable are much likely to adopt the most efficient approach (which in most circumstances refers to integrating conflict management style) to address conflicts, hence yielding a win-win outcome.

Through empirical study, Ang, Van Dyne & Koh (2006) identify ‘openness to experience’ as a crucial personality trait that can significantly influence individual performance in diverse cultural environment as it positively related to all four dimensions of CQ. Park & Antonioni (2007) also argue that openness is a good characteristic to have regarding conflict settlement because it positively related to integrating style (the efficient one) and negatively related to avoiding style (the not so efficient one).

Furthermore, the connection between ‘conflict management styles’ and ‘CQ’ draws attention from several researchers. Gonçalves et al. (2016) propose that CQ is a potent predictor for conflict management styles by pointing out that meta-cognitive CQ is positively related to the integrating style. Elkhoully & Gamaleldin (2012) test the relationship between cognitive CQ and the dominating conflict management style. Overall, Ramirez (2010) claims that CQ performs as a reasonable predictor for conflict management styles. Individuals with high CQ tend to choose effective approaches to address conflicts. Previous studies shed light on the topic of ‘conflict management style’ and ‘CQ’, however, the in-depth understanding, based on the conceptual CQ model, regarding individual perception, experience, and reaction in conflict management appears to be lacking.

Chapter 3. Methodology

In the following section, detailed explanation about adopted methodology will be presented.

3.1 Research Philosophy

In pursuance of a dependable part of the study that helps to fulfill the thesis purpose, *Ontology* and *Epistemology* are applied as the basic research philosophical concepts. Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) illustrate that ontology can be categorized as the study of existential and natural facts whereas epistemology pertains to the investigation of knowledge and theory. Both concepts help researchers to develop a way to advance research methodological concerns.

Ontology concerns the existence of and connection between individuals, society and the entire world. The focal question is “What exists in the world?”. Following the ontological assumptions, the subjectivist view, along with a constructionist view, is employed in this study. Subjectivism and constructionism altogether constitute as one aspect of ontology, which surmises that the reality is perceived subjectively and built upon perceptions and experiences that may vary with individuals, and differs over time and situations (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Hence, it assumes that the social reality is an outcome generated by the social interaction of social actors. With the aim of investigating how managers manage conflicts in the cross-cultural workplace, the thesis utilizes conversational interviews as the major resource from which identical and/or distinct thoughts and behaviors of individuals are obtained. Interviews are considered as a reliable source because this thesis recognizes the reality as perceived subjectively by individuals and produced dependently through the interaction between people in cultural diversity workplace.

Epistemology deals with the nature, the resources, and the limitations of knowledge. More broadly, epistemology describes by what means knowledge can be generated and be encouraged (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Within the boundary of epistemology, there are many possible directions, such as empiricism, subjectivism, and substantialism, which correlate to several philosophical positions, including positivism, interpretivism, and critical

realism. Regarding this thesis, the subjectivism, which is related to the philosophical position of interpretivism, is adopted.

Positivism emphasizes on the knowledge acquired through the application of scientific approaches to happenings and to realist word (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In other words, a universal truth is pursued from the experiment in which the measurement is the essence. Contrastingly, the interpretivism and constructionism focus on the shared meaning and subjectiveness. These two philosophical positions are keen on people's explanation and understanding towards social happenings and situations, either as individuals or as a group. Meanwhile, Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) state that the reality is constructed through social interaction. Beyond of the contents of empirical data, interpretative and constructionist researches also focus on the manner through which theses contents are generated (such as language practices). Moreover, instead of determining dependent and independent variables in advance, research conducted based on these two philosophical positions concentrates on the entire complexity of human rationalization process when situations occur. It also embraced the idea that many possible explanations can be generated from the same data, all of which are likely to be meaningful.

Additionally, reflexivity is significantly highlighted in epistemological assumptions. It asks for the transparency of theoretical claims and knowledge resources, which is relevant to the fundamental presumptions of knowledge creation, utilized theories and approaches, and to the outcome of the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

As for the logical considerations on which theories are generated, the inductive reasoning is considered as the central guidance for this thesis. There are two main basic logical models, namely *deduction* and *induction*, which are used to bring knowledge to the stage (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Deductive reasoning refers to the methodological process by which a result regarding a particular case is derived upon a presumably true premise (Zikmund et al., 2010). It largely concerns testing hypotheses which are generated with certain related theories. On the other hand, according to Zikmund et al (2010), inductive reasoning demonstrates how a general proposition is logically built from the examination of specific facts. Contrast to the

deduction, induction theories are products of empirical observations. These theories can also be viewed as corrective mode in regard to findings that emerge during the process of researches. This thesis aims at investigating the implicit and explicit behaviors of conflict management styles in multicultural workplace, while remains open to any new associated ideas. Rather than testing any plausible relationship, this study is designed to deepen the understanding of conflict management within a certain context, namely, the cross-cultural workplace. Therefore, inductive reasoning is seen as the fundamental logic model in theory building for this thesis.

Based on the ontological and epistemological positions as illustrated above, authors' stance in this thesis will be a detached and constructionist one. Detached signifies that authors will attempt to remain a neutral position and to generate an objective evaluation during interactions with respondents while collecting data. The constructionist position, on the other hand, suggests that authors will regard data and consequent findings as the outcome of respondents' complicated socio-cultural activities that constitute a component of a broader society.

3.2 Research Approach

According to the research purpose, implicit elements (such as the person's own beliefs, skills and intelligence) are the main study subject of the thesis, thus, a qualitative research approach is applied. A qualitative approach outperforms a quantitative method when it comes to providing a thorough insight into complicated phenomena (Sofaer, 1999). The qualitative study addresses the genuine inside nuance and provides new understanding. Moreover, it is often utilized in favor of elicitation of subjective feelings, individual judgement and inner incentives (Cooper et al, 2003). That is also highly correspond to the philosophy employed in this study (ontology), where the subjectivism is focal point of reality. In contrast, the quantitative research is emphasizing objectives by analyzing numerical data to test hypothesis (Zikmund et al., 2010).

3.3 Research Strategy

Saunders et al. (2015) suggest three types of research: exploratory research, descriptive research and explanatory research. An exploratory research aims to investigate the nature of happening events, to pursue new insights, and to evaluate phenomena in a new angle (Robson,

2002). This approach is mostly adopted to examine relatively new topics because these topics are usually troublesome to be investigated in a systematic way. A descriptive research is usually utilized to depict characteristics of selected population or phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). The intention of a descriptive research is to provide an exact description. Questions start with ‘what’ are largely addressed by descriptive studies, while questions start with ‘how’, ‘when’, and ‘why’ usually cannot be answered. An explanatory research focuses on the investigation of the cause and effect relationships, indicating that researchers’ intent to further study the relationship between dependent and independent variables based on previous researches (Saunders et al., 2015). The thesis intends to explore an in-depth understanding in conflicts management in cross-cultural workplace through a lens of cultural intelligence. The research purpose is clear and relatively new in the field. Given the novelty of assessing conflict management through cultural intelligence, an exploratory study is justified to be suitable for the thesis.

3.4 Primary and Secondary Data

Primary data is crucial for the study since it serves as the fundamental source of empirical discoveries. In this thesis, the semi-structured interview, which is undertaken with experienced people in cultural diverse working environment in organizations in Sweden, is the main source of the primary data. And the basic introduction about the company is obtained from its official website. The question guide (see appendix 1), related to the research purpose, are prescribed and asked in pursuance of openness and elasticity. Considering the suggestions from Easterby-Smith et al (2015), the questions in interviews will be deliberated and delivered in a manner that avoids the direct usage of related theories and concepts. Additionally, the questions are specially formulated with open ends in order to prevent biases. Bearing these considerations, questions related to cultural intelligence have been rephrased in a relatively common and plain way, while maintaining the essence. For example, the motivational CQ stands for the willingness of experiencing a different culture (Earley & Ang, 2003). Questions that directly concern the importance of motivational CQ are replaced by open-ended questions (such as: Are you interested in exotic cultures?). However, for the primary data, the interviewees and their companies should be anonymous when ethical issues are considered. Denscombe (2011) suggests that the researchers are expected to harm participants at a minimum level, and to do that, respondents will be anonymous, and the data will be respected as confidential information. Moreover, the voluntarily of involvement, the

notice about the purpose, and discussion associated with the study were ensured by the foregoing email or message contacts.

Relevant secondary data can be used for research as complementing materials for primary data (Hanson, 2010). Second-hand data is cost-effective and time-saving; thus, it is the preferred source of information. In the study, the company's official website of each interview is the main source of the second-hand data, and it is acquired as supplementary material to gain some background information about interviewees, for the sake of precise understanding and interpretation of empirical results.

3.4.1 Semi-structured Interview

An interviewee can be conducted in (a) structured (2) unstructured or (3) semi-structured manner (Saunders et al., 2015). A structured interview is performed on the basis of predetermined interview questions while an unstructured interview requires no predetermined interview questions at all (Saunders et al., 2015). Semi-structured interview is designed with open-ended questions that focus on a specific topic. Generally speaking, open-ended questions intend to obtain knowledge regarding the attitude, experience and described behaviors of the interviewee without predetermining answer options or guiding interviewees to any particular response. Furthermore, it allows probing, which means additional reasoning and descriptions can be gathered during the discussion with interviewees (Zikmund et al., 2010). The thesis aims to gain a thorough understanding of managers' conflict management styles with the help of conceptual CQ model. Managers' thinking and behaviors are studied and analyzed in order to achieve the research purpose. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews are selected as a suitable manner for this thesis.

3.5 Sample Selection

According to the purpose of the research, the research aims at finding managers who have relatively rich experience in a multicultural environment with a base in Sweden. Through interviews with them, the goal is to obtain their views and behaviors in handling conflicts occurred in interactions with others who have different culture backgrounds. The sampling method, which is set upon prescribed categories from literature, is described as purposive sampling by Easterby-Smith et al. (2015). For purposive sampling, researchers seek individuals that satisfy specified criteria on the basis of research purpose. Given that the

thesis plans to discuss conflicts management styles in culturally diverse workplace, managers with long working experience in that cross-cultural environment in Sweden are considered as target interviewees. Due to the significant role of multinational corporations (MNCs) as channels for the international integration of global business and human resources usage to a specific area (Ponce-pura, 2014), the probability of being in a culture diversity workplace is higher in MNCs. In order to reach target interviewees, HRs in MNCs, as well as managers who work for MNCs in Sweden, were contacted. As a result, eight managers from different companies who have relatively rich experience in culturally diverse workplace were selected and interviewed. The basic information of these ten people will be shown in table 1.

Interviewee	Company	Gender	Age	The number of years of involving in culture diversity workplaces	Position
1	A	Female	33 years old	more than 3 years	manager
2	B	Female	In her thirties	15 years	manager
3	C	Female	45 years old	13 years	manager
4	C	Male	31 years old	more than 10 years	manager
5	D	Male	49 years old	20 years	manager
6	E	Female	49 years old	20 years	Head of group accounting
7	B	Male	34 years old	4 years	manager
8	C	Male	46 years old	more than 13 years	CCO

Table 1. The basic information of interviewees

3.6 Data Collection

As discussed above, the interviewees have been chosen for collecting data. Before each interview, the preparatory works were conducted, which include the explanation of the central topic and confirmation of voluntary participation through emails. Either having a telephone or face-to-face interview has been decided by interviewees, depending on their time schedule and preference. The details of each interview will be presented in table 2.

Interviewee	Date to be interviewed	Duration	Types
1	30th March	40 minutes	Telephone
2	4th April	45 minutes	Face-to-face
3	6th April	40 minutes	Telephone
4	6th April	45 minutes	Telephone
5	8th April	1 hour	Face-to-face
6	8th April	1 hour	Face-to-face
7	9th April	45 minutes	Face-to-face
8	10th April	40 minutes	Telephone

Table 2. The detailed information of each interview

3.7 Data Analysis - Content analysis

Standing from the research purpose, the thesis intents to study the types of conflicts occurred, in what styles experienced people practically manage conflicts in culturally diverse workplace, and if and which dimensions of CQ could benefit the process of conflict management. The content analysis was the selected data analysis method. Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) show that the content analysis is grounded on methodical assumptions that are derived from qualitative data with a set of concepts. Via content analysis, researchers are able

either to examine collected data based on predefined classifications from literature, or to allow findings and categories arise from data through open conversations.

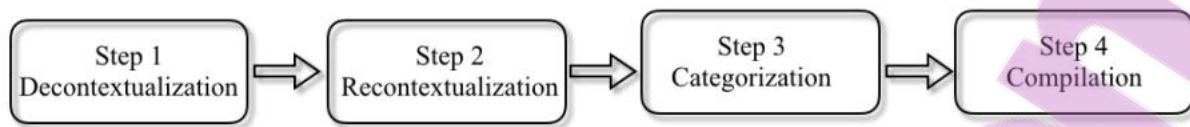


Figure 2. Bengtsson (2016) Content analysis

A four-step analysis procedure introduced by Bengtsson (2016) is employed in the thesis (see figure 2). The first step is *decontextualisation*. Researchers must be familiar with transcriptions of interviews in order to fully understand them. Researchers must determine the smallest unit of view that containing the insights the researcher seeks to respond to the research goals (Bengtsson, 2016). The second step is called *recontextualisation*, which requires the researchers to ensure the totality of the text has been scrutinized with regard to the study purpose. Researchers could begin with categorization on the basis of the similarities and dissimilarities of responses. The examination of original data should be in consonance with conceptual theories, which facilitates the construction and analysis of the data. The labels are designated to chosen content data according to the in-vivo coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The information should be examined in order to see if it is helpful for the purpose of the study. In case of any detected ‘dross’ that appears meaningless for the study purpose, authors can advise that irrelevant content should be discarded.

Categorisation is the third step. Bengtsson (2016) stresses that it is necessary to summarize implicit messages in a way that keeps the original meaning before categorisation. Bearing such intention in mind, Bengtsson (2016) recommends that the theoretical framework from which the questions are derived or equivalently integrating factors (such as the questions used for interviews) can be utilized as the base of division for categorizing the essence. The answers regarding (a) types, (b) application of conflict management styles and (c) comments on CQ can be separately classified. The information that fails to fit any categories will be placed into *Other category*. After the collation of all data, the Other category will be scrutinized in order to discover whether common subjects or types exist or not. The examination of Other category enables a clear outline of similarities and differences of data

from different interviewees, which contributes to the conclusion of common and/or distinct behaviors regarding conflict management. Lastly, *Compilation* is conducted as the final stage, which focuses on the display of data and analysis. The level of analysis that researcher can accomplish is determined largely by the data collection approach. *A manifest analysis* aims to provide a precise reading by focusing on the spoken content from interviewees, whilst *a latent analysis* provides a deep reading by discussing the unspoken yet intended content from interviewees. Bengtsson (2016) emphasizes that regardless of selected analysis level, researchers need to preserve an unbiased and neutral viewpoint towards collected data.

3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

Given's framework (2008) serves as the guide in this thesis for the sake of academic value of qualitative researches. It consists of four parts: transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability. The criteria for transferability focus on the applicability of research results to different situations, whether broad or narrow. The contiguity of respondents to the research background and its boundaries constitute two determinants of transferability. Considering the proximity of participants to the investigated situation, a satisfying outcome appears to be achieved, despite of various limitations. The access to 8 interviewees with relative plentiful experience in diverse workplaces was gained. Their opinions, and behaviors, related to conflicts management styles and CQ were obtained. Saunders et al. (2015) suggest that a trustworthy sample size should vary from 5 to 25. Furthermore, clearer boundaries of the thesis will be presented through a deep depiction of every interview respondents in the Analysis section

Credibility should be infused throughout the whole thesis as the thesis is based on scrupulous assessment and judgement from researchers (Given, 2008). The consistent credibility appears to be retained in this thesis largely because that the data collection and analysis method are aligned with the research purpose, hence yielding a sound case. The thesis aims at analyzing experienced managers' implicit and explicit behaviors of conflict management styles in cross-cultural workplace, with the help of CQ model. Hence, the five-style conflict management theory and the conceptual model of CQ can provide an appropriate theoretical framework which enables the analysis of conflict management from individual perspective within a cross-cultural environment. Semi-structured interviews appear to be a credible method choice because free discussion regarding central topics can thrive during semi-

structured interviews. To enhance dependability, a substantial theoretical framework which provides the base for the research is needed. Lastly, Confirmability is based on the theoretical framework which provides the review criteria for researchers' interpretation of qualitative data, given that qualitative data usually requires interpretative analysis. Therefore, Confirmability represents the extent to which research results correspond to the purpose of the study, instead of the investigator's previous intentions and biases. In order to maintain the verifiable nature of the research, the authors strive to criticize the research results and present the results in a transparent manner.

Chapter 4. Empirical Results

In the following chapter, a description of codes that are adopted will be presented, along with their linkage to the interviews. First, the basic information about interviewees will be provided and the transferability will also be discussed. The chapter intends to provide a summary about the types & cause of cross-cultural conflicts and conflict management style in the lens of cultural intelligence.

4.1 Description of studied interviewees

In this section, through their self-introduction, the basic information of each interviewee related to the central topic will be presented. Along with that, the transferability of this study can be examined.

Interviewee 1 comes from an Asian country, but she has been living and working in Sweden for a long period. Interviewee 1 firstly studied in university in Sweden, and then begun to work. Currently, she works with colleagues with 2 different nationalities within business support and product administration department in company A. The company is a multinational manufacturing company which has numerous international employees from Europe, Asia, and America. During daily work, interviewee 1 has to interact with colleagues with different cultures in addition to international colleagues of her own department.

Interviewee 2 and 7 are managers in different departments of company B which is in retailing business. Interviewee 2 has a relative longer working experience in that company, which is around 15 years, and interviewee 7 has been working for company B for about 4 years. Furthermore, interviewee 2 spent some time as an expatriate manager in a foreign European Country. The working environment that interviewee 2 had to deal with is rather diverse, which consists of more than 3 different nationalities. The organizational culture, which emphasizes on appreciating cultural diversity, has been highlighted by both interviewee 2 and 7. For interviewee 7, he was born in a foreign country, but he moved to Sweden since he was 8 years old and was raised up in Sweden. Therefore, he was equipped with two cultural backgrounds. During his work, he is responsible for the overall management of turnovers and

co-workers from different countries within the department. The cultural diversity of employees within his department largely coincides with the diverse customer base.

Interviewee 3, 4 and 8 are from the company C, which provides products and services regarding substance protection and moderation. The company is a Swedish company with international working environment. It has employees who are from 20 different countries, and sub-offices across 6 countries. Interviewee 3 is global HR manager. In the office that she works in, there are 18 people, but only 3 of them are from Sweden. She gained more than 10 years of experience working in a culturally diverse workplace. During her daily job, she needs to connect with colleagues from many different areas in the world, from Europe to Asia. Additionally, she has an international family background. The interviewee herself recognized the influence of multicultural family background on her mind-set.

Interviewee 4 is a sales manager in company C, and he has a quite rich multicultural experience. He referred himself as “Third Culture Kid”. He grew up in 3 different countries. The multicultural experience granted him with multilingual skills. He speaks Swedish, English and German, depending on the situation and location. Interviewee 4 is responsible for sales and U.S. and Europe are his main target markets. Interviewee 8 is American, but he has been working and living in Sweden for a quite long period. Additionally, he has a Swedish spouse. He works as an Interim Chief Commercial Officer in company C. He has about 13-year experience working in diverse workplace in Sweden. Before working in Sweden, he has worked internationally for about 6 years.

Interviewee 5 is a newly-appointed Vice President in a company now. Because of the new position, he discusses his experience in multicultural workplace using his previous jobs as main reference. He was sales and marketing director in company D which focuses on the sealing system. During his more than 20-year work experience, he has traveled a lot places, including Asia, Europe and US. The experience related to culture diversity is not only from co-workers, but also the company’s customers spreading all over the world. Moreover, in company D, the top management has a rather diverse composition in terms cultural backgrounds and nationalities.

Lastly, interviewee 6 is head of group accounting in company E. The company group E is within the field of retail. The company group has lots of offices in different countries, such as Asian countries, European countries, and Latin American countries. She is in charge of different sub offices reporting the accounting data to parent company. Thus, the employees whom she has to contact with through Skype, phone, emails are from different countries across the world, as well as the co-workers in her office. She has been in a diverse working environment for more than 20 years.

4.2 Description of coding process

By following Bengtsson's (2016) four-step method of content analysis, the category which is the types of conflicts would be used as an example in order to show how the coding procedure is handled by the authors.

At first, it is the *Decontextualisation*. In this step, the authors went through all the texts obtained and collated from the interviews and made sure that all texts were fully understood. After that, the authors identified meaning units which revealed as types of conflicts in culturally diverse workplace. For that, as the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the codes were given, including relationship conflict, task conflict and process conflict. *Recontextualisation* is the second step. For this step, the text that has not been coded in the transcriptions would be the focus. By scrutinizing those texts, the authors examined whether the content is helpful towards the purpose of the study. Otherwise, the meaningless unit will be carefully deleted. Thirdly, it is the *Categorisation* where authors review their coding outcomes and remove replicate entries. After integrating the coding system, authors have examined the transcriptions for one last time. Lastly, it is *Compilation*. The complete collection of the coding system can be found in the Appendix 2.

4.3 Conflicts in culturally diverse workplaces

4.3.1 Types and causes of conflicts

At beginning, the interviewees were asked to share their stories and experience about intercultural and interpersonal conflicts in a cross-cultural workplace with multinational staff. The results show that conflicts can often be found in culturally diverse workplaces. From the

data of eight interviewees, it can be seen that mixed conflict types are normal. Conflicts occurred in the cross-cultural workplace sometimes cannot simply be categorized as one single type. Additionally, the existence of conflicts does not vary with industries or departments in organization. The pervasiveness of conflicts can be seen from interviewees' reflections. For example:

“You know, conflicts are very common in workplaces, even among Swedish colleagues.

---Interviewee 3”

“I think conflicts always exist when colleagues, from different cultural backgrounds, do not have a good way to moderate and utilize such differences.

---Interviewee 8”

Conflicts are rather common in workplaces. However, the types of conflicts are different according to the illustration of interviewees. For the benefit of the analysis, a list of codes was developed from literature review which categorizes conflicts into three types: *relationship conflicts, task conflicts and process conflicts.*

In attempt to accurately identify the nature of conflicts, interviewees were asked to reflect the situations of conflict from various perspectives, including interviewees' thinking, feeling and action towards the other party. From the description, relationship conflicts can be seen because feelings of upset and uneasy emerged during the process. For example, Interviewee 3, 6 and 7 illustrate the spontaneous feeling of frustration and upset in the beginning phase of cross-cultural workplace communication.

“I used to be nervous when I thought they were angry... (when facing a colleague with loud voice and extensive body languages)

---Interviewee 3”

“If I speak to my colleagues in a way that is common in other countries rather than Sweden, I could possibly be perceived as being strange or angry.

---Interviewee 7”

“First of all, I was easier to get upset or furious by how people didn’t get what I meant.

---Interviewee 6”

Additionally, different management approaches can also induce the negative feelings when the approach seems strange in a specific workplace environment. Example:

“Earlier, we have an American product manager. He is all American style in the office. For example, a manager from Sweden will not give you an assignment when the day is almost over and tell you that he would like to see this assignment finished in tomorrow. But this American manager sometimes will hand out an assignment around the ending period of the day. He does not really care if you have to work extra time or something. However, in Sweden, managers seldom do so. It feels more equal between employees and managers. When giving assignments, Swedish managers tend to respect individual spare time of employees, and not to put pressure of ‘deadline in tomorrow’ on them.

---Interviewee 1”

The example above shows that managers’ different ways towards general management and assignment delegation will influence employees’ feelings. Different levels of consideration regarding the board-line between work time and leisure time may vary from cultures. To assign tasks at the ending period of a day indicates less consideration about the boundary between professional and private time, which would possibly make employees (from a different cultural context) feel uncomfortable, hence leading to conflicts.

Process conflicts can be discovered from the illustration of interviewees. Interviewee 6 and 8 comments about differences regarding process due to different cultural backgrounds. For

example, German are more meticulous about details and Swedish are used to a cooperative approach in the workplace.

“I have experience from different countries. For example, German, they are so strict and obsessed with details. You can get irritated a little. When you give instructions, they call you five minutes later and have a whole group of people analyzing what you just wrote so you know everything is right down to very slight details.. I mean, how hard could it be? Just do it.

---Interviewee 6”

“Early on, when I moved to Sweden. I had a project manager role. I find it difficult because it took longer to make a decision, because you have a dynamic way of approaching a problem. It is a tremendous strength also slows things down. That was early on now, I see it as a strength. Later I moved to us for four years now, and I find myself to have a more Swedish style of settling things down. Yeah, in the beginning it was awkward, but now I got used to it..... Conflicts may arise if I take a decision, then I advise people this is what we going to do

---Interviewee 8”

Task conflicts can also be found in the answers of interviewees. The example illustrated by interviewee 2 shows that hybrid conflicts existing at work. The two distinct ways to do a task reflect different perspectives about how to complete a specific task while the emotional expression can be linked to relationship conflicts.

“For example, the German and Austria guys like to plan everything in detail. Everything is just so well planned. And Italians don't. So, German guys were worried about Italian guys, like 'oh they don't plan, they have no control and they just let everything go blablabla'. So, we had that conflict. Then in the built-up phase where we actually were building up the store. If something went wrong, you know, something didn't fit the plan, Germans and Austrians were standing there in panic 'ah I don't know what to do about it'. Then Italians would step in the picture and started to fix things.

---Interviewee 2”

In addition to description of conflicts, interviewees were asked to reflect the reasons of cross-cultural conflicts in a retrospective manner. Communication is repeatedly mentioned by interviewees. Examples:

“Communication is an issue, for example, what to and what not to communicate, how to communicate, and how directly should be. I think that could be a cause of conflicts.

---Interviewee 3”

“In my company, we often speak English, even if two people are both Sweds, it is often that they speak English, sometimes, sometimes not. Because I believe if you are not able to be a part of the office chat (how’s your weekend and etc) because you can’t speak the language. If you are the only one in the office can’t speak the language, I think the problem is on you.

---Interviewee 4”

“The main reason of conflicts, if any, is actually not about culture itself, it is about communication, or lack of communication, and different ways of communication. Every time you interact someone, you often face different levels of language skills, which is really essential.

---Interviewee 5”

“Sometime Danish and Norwegian are unwilling to admit that they don’t understand what I said. I know that because sometimes I don’t understand what they say. So, I will propose to change to English to make sure there is no misunderstanding.

--Interviewee 6”

4.3.2 Conflict management styles

The interviewees were asked questions regarding their management approach in a conflict situations, from which their conflict management styles could be revealed. Through the descriptions and reflections of interviewees, conflict management styles can be identified. From five conflict management styles (*integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding*), all interviewees adopt the integrating style to manage conflicts.

Interviewee 3 seeks cooperative way to manage conflicts by engaging people in honest, direct and open conversations.

“I really try to encourage people to talk directly when I see conflicts. There is an additional problem because we are not in the same office, not in the same time zone. Still, I will try as much as I can to encourage people to talk directly. Good communication is always the best way to solve conflicts... Yeah. Honest and direct communication.

---Interviewee 3”

In the example given by interviewee 5, the way to communication has to be changed when needed to ensure correct information delivery, which hopefully can lead to an agreement based on dual parties’ stance and understanding. Furthermore, interviewee 5 also gave a specific example of how direct or indirect the communication could be and how to settle conflicts that are induced by the differences in the communication approaches.

“Sometime the problem could be about how directly you talk towards the other person. One sales manager was reporting to me. He is responsible for a specific customer in auto motor industry. He managed to achieve a new contract with the customer. The task right now was only to make sure that we, as a company, can deliver this business. In this specific case, the production should be taken place in one of our factories in Germany. So, he needed to contact to a great extent to the project managers in Germany. My sales manager, P, is a very direct guy. He was really on the customers’ side. He was talking to the customers, and

customers have a lot of demand of this and that. So, P transferred these demands to the factory, like 'we need this and that by this date and that date'. That is what we promised towards customers. He was just telling the German guy what to do, then there were some disturbances and interruptions. They kind have a huge conflict. What P hadn't done from the beginning is telling the factory that these demands are from customers. So, Germany side was thinking that P was using his own power. So, the German guy talked to his manager, then the manager called me and told me that there is an issue needs to be solved, and my guy and your guy are kind of debating. As a result, four of us had a meeting. We went through things from the very beginning. We made it clear that all the demands P forwarded were from the customer's side. This was kind of conflicts and it started from the lack of communication of people involved. But after we have a good discussion about it, the rest of the process went really smoothly. Again, you need to be aligned despite of cultures and languages, and you had better check it once, twice or more to make sure everyone is understood what to do.

---Interviewee 5"

Additionally, the notice of differences and adjustment undertaken towards different people or workplaces influences the effectiveness of communication, thus conflicts management.

"It could be about communication, not what we communicate, but how we communicate. I talked about several countries before, where we talk freely and directly. If I speak to my colleagues in a way that is common in other countries rather than Sweden, I could possibly be perceived as being strange or angry. ...For me, as a manager, there are always two things I have with me. One thing is 'Do I know those who I work with', the other is 'Do I like them?'. I think everything can be solved by this two questions. If I know if you don't like the way I communicate, I can bear it in mind to avoid conflicts. So, I believe leading this group is to know who you work with. Our colleagues also need to know each other, what is normal to you, what is strange to you. We should be straightforward and honest with everyone. If I know you are not from Sweden, I have to learn more about your habits so I know how I can say things to you. This is my perspective as a manager.

---Interviewee 7"

On the other hand, interviewee 8 illustrates how he managed different expectations in a cooperative way regarding management approach that raised due to different cultural backgrounds.

“An example in U.S. is that you act as you go, maybe don’t get a feedback from the team. Here is more common that you try to capture feedback, or maybe even adjust accordingly to the feedback. So, the execution part takes more time in Sweden. ...When I am in Sweden, I understand in order to get the result that I want, I have to apply the right tools, these tools are you collaborate towards decision. Conflicts may arise if I take a decision, then I advise people this is what we going to do. The way to settle it is to say that I talked to maybe some of you. I could also explain the reason why I want to hurry it, maybe because of the tight time of the business or revenue, something that helps to explain why we have to go fast. Next time when we have the conditions, we will of course collaborate towards the final results. I also would like them to reach out along the way. Instead of waiting for meetings, they should provide feedback anytime during the process. That also speaks up for the collaboration. Technology also helps to promote constant flows of communication. Gradually you are approaching the decision anyway. It is then all about reaffirming everyone understands that and executing on that.

---Interviewee 8”

Furthermore, interviewee 8 shows a strong propensity and determination towards cooperation despite possible difficulties and conflicts that may happen in a cross-cultural workplace. Respect, good-will and consideration of others’ benefits are highlighted by interviewee 8 as essence.

“Either you appreciate the difference or you don’t. It doesn’t matter which country you come from and which culture you grew up in, it is most important for being open, curious, and respect everyone. I think everything is built on respect. That I think is more important than the language. If I mean well and want good for you, then we may work through the challenge of language and conflicts.

---Interviewee 8”

In summary, in addition to the content of communication, the appropriate approach towards communication appears significant, which involves consideration about the level of directness, the language skill and so on (as disclosed by interviewee 3, 4, 5 and 6). The different adoption and expectation regarding communication approach is associated with cultural intelligence, as revealed by interviewees’ reflection and their experience. Further information would be shown in following section.

4.4 Cultural intelligence

As explained in Chapter 2, culture intelligence can be understood as the ability to gain full understanding among all parties and behave properly when interacting with people who have different cultural backgrounds. A set of code was draw from that Earley & Ang (2003)’s model, which involves four parts:

1. Cognitive CQ
2. Motivational CQ
3. Behavioral CQ
4. Meta-cognitive CQ

4.4.1 Cognitive CQ

In attempt to assess interviewees’ cognitive CQ, questions related to understanding about foreign cultures were asked, which including knowledge of economic system, social norms and language skills in a given country. Interviewees generally show the potency of language skills. The significance of good language skills is also recognized by interviewees, for example:

“Language also can cause a lot of problems, I think.

---Interviewee 6”

“I also know it is very hard to be yourself, to present argument, to give inputs and to collaborate if you don’t know the language. If I’m uncomfortable with English or Swedish, I become far more reserved. I think it is a big challenge for someone that is uncomfortable with the language being spoken.

---Interviewee 8”

The detailed knowledge about other cultures varies with individuals. According to the Interviewee 4, as one example, specifically points out that the need of learning detailed cultural knowledge in an international working environment is not dominant.

“So I do believe that in my work or in my network, I work with a group of culturally open or culturally intelligence people. In other words, culturally negligent people because I don’t bring my Swedish culture with me when I am in the cross-cultural workplace, neither do Spanish people bring their Spanish culture with them, except that we will eat Tapas when we are in Barcelona. But it’s not like I will adapt myself to Spanish culture or speak Spanish language.

---Interviewee 4”

On the other hand, interviewee 1, who works in a Swedish-based multinational company in a manufacturing industry, recognized the importance of learning Swedish language and culture.

“They will learn about these things [Swedish culture and language], I guess. The company provides Swedish courses for foreign employees. Generally, foreign employees will come to realize that it needs more than a decent English to be competitive in the workplace.

---Interviewee 1”

4.4.2 Motivational CQ

In order to discover interviewees' motivational CQ, questions regarding interviewees' inherent motivation and willingness to understand and experience other cultures were asked. All interviewees acknowledged that they would like to experience other cultures, to meet different people, and to learn from them. For example, interviewee 2 shows a strong tendency to appreciate the culture diversity. Interviewee 3 and 8 demonstrate the inherent curiosity and openness towards other cultures.

“In many ways, our culture and values are the basics for us. So, we recruit people on the cultural values as the first base, and then we actually add the layer of competence and diplomas or education. But first base is culture, to see if their values fit into our cultures. On the one hand, we work with this (standard) in our recruitment process to make sure that people who get in are on the sort of the same value base. We have different people. One of our cultural values is to appreciate people who are different. It is also important when it comes to my recruitment process, and I always try to include different people, different cultural background as possible to my management team, for example because we know that diversity is very good. So those things come together. We say that the value base must be there, but diversity is important.”

---Interviewee 2”

“To be interested in people, I think this is important. You have to have the curiosity about why people act in this way, to listen, and to be open with this.

---Interviewee 3”

“Either you appreciate the difference or you don't. It doesn't matter which country you come from and which culture you grew up in, it is most important for being open, curious, and respect everyone. I think everything is built on respect. That I think is more important than the language. If I mean well and want good for you, then we may work through the challenge of language and conflicts.

---Interviewee 8”

Notably, Interviewee 4 argues that he would expect his colleagues that choose to work in an international environment are innately interested in cross-cultural communication because multicultural working environment itself could be an attraction to individuals that are interested in cross-cultural interaction.

“They also have an interest moving from their home cities to a new city. Just like you, you are curious, and you want to leave your home countries to explore something completely different. I do believe you have to be a certain type. You are the type of the person that I will be working with.

---Interviewee 4”

4.4.3 Behavioral CQ

In pursuance of assessment of interviewees’ behavioral CQ, interviewees were asked to reflect and describe their actions in conflict management. Through the examination of interviews, it can be noticed that interviewees with relatively long experience show a greater extent of understanding and a better adjustment towards different situations. For instance:

“Though I work with the management level for all the countries. The cooperation quality depends on both the individual and the climate of the country. I worked with so many countries, so I know. If I am going to Eastern Europe, I will do as Eastern European do; If I am going to America, I will do as American do; and etc. ... we usually use ‘bad English’ when communicating with people from different countries. If we talk too professionally and fast, you scare them off. They will be afraid to ask questions. When we have a first meeting with a new company, it is very good to use slow and plain English, at the same time, try to get a feeling of their backgrounds are. If we find out that the persons we are talking to are expert in English, then there is no problem at all. Well, maybe there will be other problems, but not in terms of language. Some people I met from my previous experience are not very good at English, so they would like to have things on written text, such as email. When I called them, they appeared very nervous. I found out about this. I said to them that I could e-mail to you about what we just discussed and what we just decided, so we could reach a genuine agreement. So, both talking slowly and sending text to get a confirmation are essential.

---Interviewee 6”

According to interviewees, the action and reaction regarding body languages often plays a role in the cross-cultural communication. For examples:

“These things [body languages] are unique to some countries, which means we have to learn if we are new to these countries.

---Interviewee 2”

“I perceived people there being very angry because they were talking very loudly and using extensive body languages. In Sweden, if you shout at somebody, you are very mad. It took a while for me to understand that they were not mad. It is just the way they talk.

---Interviewee 3”

“I had a habit from my Italian heritage that I used to be animated with my body language. When I shook somebody’s hand, I would pat his shoulder to show affection. I hold my right hand, and put my left hand to grab them on the shoulder. I was going to meet someone in Finland, who I have been working for a month on the phone. I met him for the first time. When I put up my hand upon his shoulder, he thought I was going to give him a hug. So we had a really awkward hug.

---Interviewee 8”

4.4.4 Meta-cognitive CQ

In attempt to evaluate managers’ meta-cognitive CQ, questions that aim to investigate strategies that individuals utilize to cope with cross-cultural situations (such as collecting and understanding cultural knowledge) were asked. Interviewee 3 showed a culturally strategic ability, which is reflected in the constant check and adjustment about cultural knowledge and accompanying behaviors during the interaction. For example:

“I think it’s good to check religions and traditions of certain countries. At the same time, it’s still important to remember that we are dealing with individuals here. Even if they come from the same country, they are still independent individuals. Yeah. I would say it’s overall beneficial to have some knowledge beforehand.

---Interviewee 3”

Interviewee 5 illustrated a strategic mind-set that could facilitate cross-cultural interaction, which is to collect basic information before interacting with foreign colleagues.

“I think it’s important when you start to deal with new people from new countries, new regions, or new areas. Try to learn, at least the basics. You can ask colleagues who have lived in that country before. ... What you should do is to try to find out as much as possible. ...At least you are prepared and get a general idea about what could be expected and what could you possibly face while you were there. Even I call a friend and he tells me you should be careful about this and that. These things he told me could not happen anyway because the person I meet could be influenced by Western cultures. So, you should be aware of the cultural peculiarity, but you shouldn’t expect these things will definitely happen.

---Interviewee 5”

Interviewee 6 expressed that she would try to assess the other party’s language skill in the first meeting, then decided to use ‘plain’ English or ‘fancy’ English. Such concern showed interviewee 6’s strategic consideration towards mutual understanding, which provides a great foundation for future conflict management.

“When we have a first meeting with a new company, it is very good to use slow and plain English, at the same time, try to get a feeling of their backgrounds are. If we find out that the persons we are talking to are expert in English, then there is no problem at all. Well, maybe there will be other problems, but not in terms of language. Some people I met from my previous experience are not very good at English, so they would like to have things on written text, such as email.

---Interviewee 6”

4.4.5 Development of CQ

In order to investigate the development of CQ, interviewees were asked to reflect their conflict management styles from a time horizon, meaning that they were requested to compare their current conflict management with conflict management in earlier years. Most interviewees acknowledge an improvement. The ability and aptitude of cross-cultural conflict management increases as time and experience accumulates. When an individual spends a considerable time in a new environment, the overall performance tends to increase. Examples could be:

“As the time goes on, you experience more, and accordingly, you will have a good knowledge base and a rich experience of how to properly deal with conflicts and other issues in a cross-cultural workplace. Yeah, it definitely has something to do with experience. I also believe conflicts could appear anywhere in the world.

-Interviewee 7”

“That being said, I do believe if you have new people, after a while, the cultural disagreement completely disappeared. Let me give you an example. In Sweden, we are quite self-driven. In some countries, particular, some Asian countries, you are supposed to respect your managers and do what your manager said. My experience from working with somebody from Asia, after a few months when they feel a little bit shocked, they start to work in the way as we do.

---Interviewee 4”

Besides objective conditions, such as the accumulation of time and experience, some interviewees (for example, interviewee 1 and 2) suggested social activities would also be beneficial in terms of the development of CQ and mutual understanding.

“I think it is a great way to understand and to communicate with my colleagues during fika. By doing so, I can practice my Swedish, and also to know how they make usual talks and how

they make jokes and so on. All the personal stuff that one is unlikely to know from the workplace conversations. Afterwork is also a great way.

---Interviewee 1”

“But back then, we organize some special time to talk to each other. What does this word mean to you? What do you find normal or strange? What is conscious?”

---Interviewee 2”

4.5 New insights

After the interview material has been compiled into stated categories, several insights appear valuable regarding the central topic but fail to fit in any existing categories. These data are considered as *Other Category*.

The interviewee 2 and interviewee 7 are from the same company E, and they concern about the influence of *Organizational culture* in cross-cultural workplace communication. A coherent and strong organizational culture can unit its employees regardless of their original cultural backgrounds. As a result, the influence of cultural intelligence might be downplayed in a dominating organizational culture.

“In many ways, our culture and values are the basics for us...My colleagues are going to India, to open stores in there. ...it is not only about the Indian culture but how to combine that cultural elements into Company E culture. Because we are E, no matter where we go, we are still E. Of course, in every country you go, you have to find a mix between the local culture and organizational culture..... When we go into a new country, we give all new coworkers training. We teach them about our cultures and values. And we will talk about education... But still, we should see what not to compromise in the Company E culture.

---Interviewee 2”

“The Company E value is on the top of mind, the priority. It doesn't mean that we have to be strictly following every detail of rules. You are allowed to have different personalities, but

should all fit in the value... Yeah. We go back to the fundamental company value when have disagreement. We have “Togetherness”, it may mean different things to me or to you. But what it means to the company itself is the key point. I believe and accept that you have a different view because your cultural backgrounds and previous experience. But we should all agree on what it means for the company, otherwise you shouldn’t be working in here... I would say it’s good to have organizational values. I have been working for other companies before which don’t have a standard set of organizational values. I can tell the difference and it’s harder to settle conflicts when organizational values are lacking. In that situation, manager’s words are the only thing that count, basically.

---Interviewee 7”

Interviewee 4 provides a rather interesting insight about that culturally intelligent individuals might lead to a culturally homogeneous working environment. He suggests that being culturally negligent might be part of being culturally intelligent. In other words, experienced international managers tend to not bring cultural peculiarities into workplace. The manager might adopt thinking and behaviors that are already universally accepted in a cross-cultural workplace, while keeping the culturally particularities in personal life rather than professional workplace.

“So I do believe that in my work or in my network, I work with a group of culturally open or culturally intelligence people. In other words, culturally negligent people because I don’t bring my Swedish culture with me when I am in the cross-cultural workplace, neither do Spanish people bring their Spanish culture with them, except that we will eat Tapas when we are in Barcelona. But it’s not like I will adapt myself to Spanish culture or speak Spanish language.

---Interviewee 4”

Chapter 5. Analysis

In the following section, authors will provide an analysis using interviews as the material. The analysis will be guided by the purpose and research question, which are (1) identifying typical types of conflict that working people report experiencing in cross-cultural workplace and (2) investigating how do managers construct their conflict management style, during which if and how CQ can facilitate the conflict management.

5.1 Conflicts in culturally diverse workplace

All interviewees (for example, interviewee 3 and 8) acknowledged the presence of conflicts in a cross-cultural workplace, of which the cultural difference could be a potential source. The sources and types will be elaborated in the following sub-sections.

5.1.1 Types and causes of conflicts

Jehn & Mannix (2001) summarize three fundamental types of conflicts in workplace, which are relationship conflict, task conflict and process conflict. Relationship conflict means the awareness of discordance among people which involves emotional elements, such as perception, animosity and stress. Relationship conflict also can be related to personal issues, such as the aversion within a group and feelings of difficulty and annoyance. When it comes to task conflict, it largely refers to the understanding of distinct opinions from individuals towards a particular task, which may be accompanied with intensive discussion and individual emotions. The process conflicts refer to controversial aspects of the approach by which a task will be achieved. Specifically speaking, process conflict involves issues relate to responsibility and resource distribution.

Oxenstierna et al. (2011) classify the causes of conflicts into two categories: workplace factors and personal difference. Personal difference of employee includes factors such as personal beliefs, values and thinking, which are largely cultivated by the native culture and shaped by previous experience of individuals. In a cross-cultural workplace where employees are expected to collaborate with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds, the personal difference is likely to be exaggerated and outstanding. According to DeBruine (2002), the perceived difference or dissimilarity is likely to increase the difficulty of cooperation, which reinforces the high possibility of encountering conflicts in a cross-cultural workplace. In

addition to perceived or actual difference, the other potential source of misunderstanding and conflicts, is the language skill as suggested by Evans & Suklun (2017).

Based on the interviews conducted for the thesis's purpose, all three types of the conflicts can be found. Notably, some interviewees report more than a single conflict type, indicating the complexity of conflicts in a cross-cultural situation.

Among these three types of conflicts, relationship conflicts appear to be the most common one in a cross-cultural workplace. As Jehn & Mannix (2001) suggest, relationship conflict is embedded in personal and emotional issues, which lurks in a subconscious layer of human mind. The particular psychological states that could trigger or reflect relationship conflict include the feelings of aversion (towards a group member), hardship, distress or fear when individuals are exposed to an unfamiliar cultural setting. The fundamental reason of relationship conflict in a cross-cultural workplace could largely be explained by Oxenstierna (2011) and DeBruine (2002). Personal difference appears substantially noticeable when one is facing someone from a different cultural background, hence triggering the negative emotion and reaction towards dissimilarities, an innate reaction that is hard-wired on human minds. Language barrier could exacerbate the misunderstanding and perceived difference. As disclosed by interviewees, the specific trigger of relationship conflict contains different views about communication methods of their cross-cultural colleagues. Several interviewees (such as interviewee 3, 6 and 7) mention unfamiliar communication approach can also be an origin of a sense of strangeness and uneasiness. Without proper adjustment, the negative feelings towards unfamiliarity can further broaden to animosity, which in turn worsens the relationship conflicts. Interviewee 1 also mentioned that management approaches can be a cause of relationship conflicts.

Process conflicts can also be discovered throughout the description of interviewees, which involve conflicting ideas regarding how a task can be accomplished (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Despite of the possible emergence of personal emotion during the procedure, the leading focus of process conflicts should be the actual method or approach by which an assignment is finished. To be more specific, the cause of process conflicts could be that an approach that is

considered as conventional in one culture can be considered as inefficient in another culture, as disclosed by interviewees. Interviewee 6 expresses a specific view that Germans hold towards process-the meticulous attention to details, which might seem strange for foreigners, hence leading to conflicts. Similarly, as interviewee 8 reports, it took time for him to get used to a 'Swedish way of working'. He describes 'the Swedish way' as a way that emphasizes the importance of collaboration of employees, in which a decision took by a manager should gain consent of all relative employees. Such process could be considered as a 'tremendous strength', but also a fairly time-consuming procedure. It requires time and energy for a manager, who is used to a relatively anarchic leadership, to adjust into a new expectation of leadership style. Interviewee 8 recognizes that such difference could be seen as related to cultural backgrounds, and also inductive to conflicts provided time and performance stress.

While process conflicts involve a general difference regarding approaches towards work assignments, task conflicts refer to conflicting views about a specific task. The task conflict can be seen from the example illustrated by the interviewee 2. The interviewee shares the experience of building up a new store in a foreign country where she had to lead a team composed of individuals from various nationalities. She recalls that some conflicts during this specific task were due to the different opinions towards the specific task of store construction. The Germans in her team held a relatively rigorous view towards the task; they would like to plan every detail beforehand. On the contrary, the Italians were adopting a more spontaneous way towards the task; they felt more comfortable to settle problems as they arose instead of designing an inclusive plan in advance. Interviewee 6 acknowledges that it was a challenge to reconcile the distinct views, which are sprouted from different cultural backgrounds.

Regarding the causes of conflicts, many interviewees (for example, interviewee 3, 4, 5 and 6) consider communication as the primary reason. The importance of communication as the source of conflicts coincides with Longenecker, Neubert & Fink (2007)'s empirical study. The empirical results show that the top two reasons of failed managers are insufficient communication and bad workplace relationship (Longenecker, Neubert, & Fink, 2007). Communication can be the causes of workplace conflicts, which consequentially exacerbates the workplace relationship. Without proper conflict management, insufficient communication, conflicts and bad workplace relationship are tangled in a vicious cycle, which reinforces each

other in a detrimental way. Failed managers would be the result of such vicious cycle that starts with inadequate communication.

To be more specific, the communication approach and language skills can be the primary reason of poor communication in a cross-cultural workplace. Interviewee 3 and 5 point out the communication approach as the main cause of conflicts, especially the level of directness. Interviewee 4, 5, and 6 illustrate the importance of language skills in the cross-cultural communication.

5.1.2 Conflict Management Style

On the basis of previous studies, Raim (2002) summarizes a model to yield five categorizations about different conflict management styles. The two main indicators that decide individual conflicts management styles are: (1) the attention extent to one's own results and (2) the attention extent to others' results. With these two considerations, there are in total five conflict management styles, which are: *integrating*, *dominating*, *compromising*, *obliging* and *compromising*. For managers, the most efficient and effective approach appears to be the integrating style, which can be explained from two perspectives: the characteristic of integrating style and the responsibility of managers. Barker, Tjosvold & Andrews (1988) suggests that a cooperative manner to manage conflict is likely to produce productive outcomes. Their argument is reinforced by Galbraith (2000), who states that a manager in cross-cultural workplace should be able to establish communication and cooperation in workplace. Both arguments highlight the importance of cooperation, which is exactly the advantage and characteristic of integrating style. The data from empirical results shows the accordance with the academic view; all cross-culturally experienced managers appear to have integrating conflict management style.

The dominating style, as the name suggests, refers to a conflict management manner where the concern for self-interest is in a domineering position. The other party's opinions are usually neglected in this situation (Rahim, 2002). The obliging style is the exact opposite of the dominating style, and it is characterized by a full attention to the interest of others. Individuals with such style often give up their own interest in order to maintain the harmony or to build a good relationship (Saeed et al., 2014).

The compromising style signifies a moderate concern for interest of both oneself and others'. Usually, the settlement is achieved through concession and neither parties that are involved in the conflict is completely satisfied (Gonçalves et al, 2016). The avoiding style can be found in individuals that mind neither self-interest nor the interest of others. Individuals with the avoiding style will choose to dodge the conflict when it arises, which is considered inappropriate and potentially troublesome in the workplace (Saeed et al., 2014).

The prominent feature about integrating style is the emphasis on cooperative approach. Individuals that equipped with an integrating conflict management tend to adopt a collaboration way to settle frictions or disagreement because they bear the interests of both themselves and the other party in mind (Elkhouly & Gamaleldin 2012). The integrating style is considered as an optimal way, and a win-win outcome can be achieved through this style.

All interviewees show an integrating style of conflict management. An outstanding propensity towards cooperation can be noticed from the illustration of interviewees. Through the comparison of five conflict management styles, it can be seen that the superiority of integrating conflict management style among participated managers.

Interviewee 3 acknowledges that she will actively seek consensus when facing conflicts through direct communication based on the appreciation of difference and good-will towards others. Interviewee 5 gives a concrete example to demonstrate his conflict management style. As can be seen from the example, interviewee 5 adopt a cooperative way that bears interest of both parties in mind. In this particular example, the interest of both parties is aligned, which refers to be able to provide qualified products to customers. The communication is the main cause of conflicts. Interviewee 5 adopts a cooperative approach to reach the mutual understanding of both parties, hence solving the conflicts.

Interviewee 7 states that, as a manager, he thinks it is important to know and to like his fellow employees. Conflicts can be circumvented or managed provided sufficient knowledge and

good-will. The willingness to know about colleagues from other cultures and to think from others' perspective demonstrates the care for others, hence showing a strong integrating style to manage conflicts.

Interviewee 8 describes how he manage conflicts that are due to different expectations towards management because of cultural differences. As he illustrates, whether employees prefer “team-decision” or manager’s “one-man call” is determined partly by cultural backgrounds. Conflicts can arise if the expectations of employees and the management approach adopted by managers are mismatched. The proper way to settle such conflicts is communication in an open, honest and cooperative manner. By stating the reasoning and procedures behind the decision, the manager shows the consideration and care for his/her employees, which leads to the satisfaction of both managers’ and employees’ interest. The collaborative approach shows the integrating style. Additionally, interviewee 8 emphasizes the importance of openness, curiosity and respect in conflict management in cross-cultural situation.

5.2 Cultural Intelligence

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) model is composed of four elements, which can be individually reflected in the illustration of conflict management from interviewees.

Cognitive CQ signifies a level of general understanding about various cultures, which including the knowledge about local language, economic system and social norms in a specific region. Individuals with a high level of cognitive CQ know an adequate amount of information regarding a specific culture, which is usually gathered through previous experience or education (Earley & Ang, 2003). Language appears to be the most important part of cognitive CQ in terms of conflict management styles.

The importance of language in conflict management style is highlighted in the process of communication, which will be elaborated in later section. All the interviewees know at least one foreign language, which is typically English. The extent of other cultural knowledge besides language, however, varies with individual. The reason could be that the necessity to

learn cultural knowledge depends on the organizational types and job responsibilities. For example, interview 1, which works in a Sweden-based multinational manufacturing company says: "Generally, foreign employees will come to realize that it needs more than a decent English to be competitive in the workplace." In contrast, interviewee 4, who comes from an international working environment, states less emphasis on the specific knowledge towards other cultures. Additionally, interviewee 4 works in the organization with an internal-orientation, meaning that she needs to provide business support for other departments. Interviewee 1 works externally as a sales manager, meaning that he needs to communicate with customers from all over the world. The difference in job responsibilities may also explain the different emphasis on the in-depth cultural knowledge. Nevertheless, most interviewees (such as interviewee 6 and 8) consider language skill is of importance.

Motivational CQ refers to the individual interest in interacting with others from different cultural backgrounds. People with high motivational CQ are distinguished by the internal willingness and enthusiasm to understand other cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003). Interviewee 4 specifically states that he will expect his international colleagues to be curious and open to cultural difference, namely, individuals with high motivational CQ because the international working environment might be an attraction for people that are interested in exploring other cultures. As interviewees (such as interviewee 2, 3 and 8) report, curiosity, willingness, and openness to cultural difference is of significance in conflict situations of cross-cultural workplace. For example, interviewee 8 says, "*Either you appreciate the difference or you don't. It is most important for being open, curious, and respect everyone.*"

Behavioral CQ means an individual's ability to act properly when encountering culturally unfamiliar circumstances. The proper behaviors refer to both verbal and non-verbal actions, such as using suitable words, speaking tone, body language and communication approach (Li, Mobley & Kelly, 2012). As interviewee 7 demonstrates, the experience is gained as the time in cross-cultural environment accumulated, which would benefit the preparation and adjustment for future cross-cultural interaction. Experienced managers tend to be more adept in terms of properly respond to colleagues with different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, many interviewees (such as, interviewee 2, 3, and 8) acknowledge that body language plays an important role in conflict management in a cross-cultural place. Body language serves as

the behavioral language which may possible generate misinterpretation and misunderstanding if two parties do not come from the same cultural background. The effect of body language appears to be influential and most interviewees would choose to talk through the problems.

Metacognitive CQ refers to the level of cultural awareness towards others' cultural propensity. It also reflects a strategic aspect where individuals attempt to deal with cross-cultural situations by collecting information beforehand. Individuals with high metacognitive CQ will actively prepare before the cross-cultural encounter to help them perform better. Based on the interviews, Metacognitive CQ tend to be obvious in experienced managers. Interviewee 5, which has 20 years cross-cultural working experience shows a strong characteristic of high metacognitive CQ. He says, *“Try to learn, at least the basics. You can ask colleagues who have lived in that country before. You can at least try to find out are there any specifics about this country that I should be aware of”*, and *“If I am going to a new country, I will try to find out as much information as I can. I can google or call someone who has been there before. At least you are prepared and get a general idea about what could be expected and what could you possibly face while you were there”*. Additionally, interviewee 3 provides another strategy that will benefit cross-cultural interaction: constant check and adjust the cultural knowledge depending on the individual and situations.

5.3 Conflict Management Styles and Cultural Intelligence

All the managers that participate in the interviews report an integrating style to settle conflicts. An analysis that connects the data and theories regarding conflict management styles and cultural intelligence will be provided in the following section. It will be elaborated based on the three key words (*openness, communication and development*) which frequently arose during interviews.

5.3.1 Openness

Openness can be referred to as a state of mind or a personal characteristic. As one of the five major personality traits, openness has long been associated with high level of cultural intelligence and the efficient conflict management style (Park & Antonioni, 2007; Ang, Van Dyne & Koh., 2006).

Openness is closely connected to all four dimensions of CQ (Ang, Van Dyne & Koh., 2006). The inner drive of exploring an exotic culture, which is signified by motivational CQ, can be directly determined by the openness of mind. Without a culturally open mind, the enthusiasm of further understanding a different culture can hardly be abundant. When the inner motivation is deficient, subsequently, the individual is likely to perform poorly in terms of other three dimensions. For example, he/she could lack the necessary basic knowledge about another culture (cognitive CQ), strategic cultural awareness (metacognitive CQ), and also behave inappropriately or awkwardly in a cross-cultural interaction. Interview 3, as an HR, specifically highlights the significance of openness when she is asked what the most important thing is for employees in a cross-workplace in terms of conflict management, *“To be interested in people, I think this is important. You have to have the curiosity about why people act in this way, to listen, and to be open with this.”*

The integrating conflict management style is regarded as the optimal one among all five styles. Two parties involved in the conflict are both satisfied with the result. The win-win outcome requires that two parties, who got involved in a conflict, have approximately equal positions and are willing to help each other out. Openness comes into sight in a sense that it enables the ‘difference’ to be acknowledged rather than being perceived as ‘wrong’. The equality and helpfulness distinguishes the integrating conflict management style from other styles. In terms of extreme situations, such as dominating and obliging styles, where one party is completely overwhelmed by the other party mainly because the difference is not properly appreciated. Closed-mind individuals might regard a dissimilarity as a mistake and try to correct it by imposing self-value to the other party, hence deviating from the integrating style. As shown by the illustration of interviewees (such as interviewee 3, 5, 7 and 8), a cooperative approach is sought on the basis of openness to cultural differences.

In a cross-cultural workplace, the openness could include the openness to information and cultural difference. Considering through the model of CQ, it can be seen that openness influences conflict management style in four dimensions as discussed above. When opening themselves from other cultures, individuals can further develop their cross-cultural competence, which are indicated by the four CQ dimension (cognitive, motivational, metacognitive and behavioral). When one has a high CQ, it can be predicted that he/she will

have a satisfying performance in cross-cultural workplace. A good cross-cultural performance includes but not limits to the adequacy to adopt an efficient conflict management style, the integrating style, which also has the openness as a perquisite.

5.3.2 Communication

Whereas the openness represents an implicit mind-set, the communication represents explicit behaviors which are influenced by the former. Communication is of significance regarding cross-cultural workplace conflicts. The conflicts could emerge from the inappropriate or inadequate communication. However, a good communication can be utilized as a practical way of managing conflicts.

All interviewees state that they will use communication as the approach to settle conflicts. The conventional communicative styles can vary with different cultural backgrounds. As Interviewee 7 disclosed, "*It could be about communication, not what we communicate, but how we communicate*". The choice of communicative approach can be mostly explained by behavior CQ; it is about behaving properly in both verbal and non-verbal ways. It is also notable that other three aspects also have a close linkage to communication. In order to behave properly (behavior CQ), one should be equipped with sufficient knowledge (cognitive CQ) to know what to behave. Besides, one also needs to be willing to behave properly (motivational CQ). Planning before the cross-cultural encounter (metacognitive CQ) can also help one to respond suitably.

Based on the description of interviewees, the most obvious difference about communication approach, according to our interviewees (interviewee 2, 3, 5 and 7), appears to be how directly one should talk. The use of body language could also be an influential factor. As cultures differs in terms of the 'usual' level of directness and the 'normal' amount of body language usage. Different interpretation, even misunderstanding, can raise up if one is judging the situation with a complete reliance on her/his own cultural background. For example, as disclosed by interviewee 3, 7 and 8, the misperception and misunderstanding exist in cross-cultural workplace communication. The high voice, outspokenness and a heavy usage of body language, which might be considered as normal in one culture, can be perceived as the sign of angry and hostility in another culture. Such misunderstanding due to

lack of cultural intelligence might ultimately hinder the adoption of an integrating conflict style. Examples:

“If I speak to my colleagues in a way that is common in other countries rather than Sweden, I could possibly be perceived as being strange or angry.

---Interviewee 7”

“Well. I used to be nervous when I thought they were angry.

---Interviewee 3”

The foreign language skill is accounted by cognitive CQ, however, the ability to utilize language in order to achieve efficient communication, is associated with other 3 aspects of CQ. To be specific, in order to achieve an effective communication, one has to be willing to take the other party’s language skill in to consideration, and to be patient when the other party’s language skill appears to be inferior (motivational CQ). Additionally, one needs to come up strategic plan that help foster the mutual understanding (metacognitive CQ), which should be followed by proper implementation (behavioral CQ). As interviewee 6 disclosed, she will assess the other party’s language skill in the beginning of interaction, then adjust her speaking speed and vocabulary accordingly in daily work and conflict management. The mutual understanding and cooperation is the core of such communication approach, which signifies the integrating conflict management style.

5.3.3 Development

The development of Cultural Intelligence and conflict management style can be seen from the illustration of interviews. Experiential learning theory (ELT) has been regarded as the most productive approach in terms of CQ development (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004; Li, Mobley & Kelly, 2012). Empirical study conducted by Li, Mobley & Kelly (2012) shows that individual who spends a sufficient amount of time engaging in interaction within a different cultural environment is more likely to develop his/her CQ level in terms of four CQ dimensions.

In addition to the literature review and empirical studies on the influence of ELT in CQ, the underlying reasoning is fairly intuitive. Once an individual spends a sufficient amount of time experiencing an exotic culture, it is likely that he/she will be more adept within the specific cultural background. The knowledge is obtained, and the behavior may be customized to suit

the common expectations in that cultural environment. The interest and motivation is also likely to be sparked during the process and the individual becomes more likely to adopt a strategic way to facilitate the cross-cultural interactions. Overall, the cross-cultural performance, which includes effective conflict management style adoption, is improved as the experience is accumulated. The whole improving process can be summarized by a proverb, “*learning by doing*”, which is also vividly depicted by some interviewees. A general improvement in terms of cross-cultural competence can be noticed as one experiences more in a cross-cultural environment. An example could be:

“As the time goes on, you experience more, and accordingly, you will have a good knowledge base and a rich experience of how to properly deal with conflicts and other issues in a cross-cultural workplace. Yeah, it definitely has something to do with experience. I also believe conflicts could appear anywhere in the world.

-Interviewee7”

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In the following section, a summary of the results and analysis will be provided. Additionally, the research question will be answered.

Revisiting the start of the thesis, the purpose is to investigate the conflict management styles and cultural intelligence by utilizing the conceptual CQ model to acquire a thorough understanding of how individuals perceive, experience and settle conflicts happened in the cross-cultural workplace. Guided by the purpose, following two research question are proposed.

1. What are the typical types of conflicts in cross-cultural workplaces?
2. How do managers construct their conflict management style, during which if and how can CQ facilitate the conflict management?

Using empirical data collected from interviews, the content analysis, as described by Bengtsson (2016), has been conducted in order to answer the two previously mentioned research questions.

Regarding the first question, types of conflicts that could possibly appear in a cross-cultural workplace have been categorized in correspondence to Jehn & Mannix's study (2016). The conflicts are found to be common and complex in a cross-cultural workplace, which can be reflected by a mixture of conflict types (see empirical results). According to the interviews with managers, the main cause is found to be the misunderstanding sprouted from perceived or actual cultural difference, and language barrier during the communication. Relationship conflicts, process conflicts and task conflicts can all be seen in a cross-cultural workplace, and relationship conflicts is reported to appear most frequently.

When it comes to the second question, it is clear to see that managers' CQ can influence the conflict management styles. Based on the empirical findings and throughout analysis, it can be noticed that integrating conflict management style is adopted by interviewees. From the

empirical data, the influence of managers' CQ can be noticed in the individual conflict management style through two keywords: openness and communication. Openness represents an implicit mind-set that is largely determined by individual motivational CQ. Being closed or open in a cross-cultural environment depends on individual innate attitude towards foreign cultures. Such openness to cultural difference may be the foundation of integrating conflict management style, as motivational CQ is the foundation of other three CQ elements. As long as one is inherently interested in a foreign country, his/her cross-cultural ability tends to increase as time and experience accumulates. In other words, managers' CQ can be developed from cross-cultural experience, which can be explained from four aspects of CQ: (1) Cognitive CQ: the cultural knowledge is gained through cross-cultural encounters (2) Behavioral CQ: with sufficient knowledge, the appropriate behavior and reaction can be performed during cross-cultural interactions, (3) Meta-cognitive CQ: the strategical ability to plan beforehand in order to facilitate cross-cultural interaction can be developed subsequently, and (4) Motivational CQ: as one becomes adept in cross-cultural encounters, one may become even more interested in foreign cultures. Managers' high CQ level can be reflected in smooth communication in a cross-cultural communication, which consecutively facilitates the integrating conflict management style.

Chapter 7. Discussion

As the finale of the thesis, this chapter discusses the contribution to the research fields, provides practical implication, examines the limitation and suggest possible directions of future study.

7.1 Contribution

The thesis contributes to the fields of conflict management styles and cultural intelligence from management's perspective. The thesis serves as an exploratory study from the Nordic area, which further validates the relationship between conflict management style (more specifically, integrating style) and cultural intelligence. Additionally, the in-depth understanding of how managers manage conflicts and how CQ facilitates conflict management is obtained through experience shared by interviewees and subsequent analysis.

7.2 Practical Implication

The practical suggestion that can be derived from the thesis are beneficial for both managers and companies, especially for the company which has a cross-cultural environment and managers who are relatively new in a cross-cultural workplace. The thesis demonstrates that conflicts are common; most interviewees experience conflicts in a cross-cultural workplace. Conflicts can happen, but conflicts are manageable. The key to managing conflicts in cross-cultural workplace can be provided by the conceptual model of CQ. CQ model specifies four distinct aspects that determine individual cross-cultural capability, which can provide managers valuable insight regarding both general performance and conflict management.

Although CQ is mostly up to individual efforts, the company could provide assistance to facilitate the improvement of individual CQ. The CQ-benefiting activities include offering workshops or social events. The core of these activities is to promote the mutual understanding and open communication among people, which enhances the improvement of CQ and facilitates integrating conflict management style. Meanwhile, when promoting managers or recurring new managers, the company could also pay attention to individuals' CQ levels in addition to professional proficiency and general management ability.

7.3 Limitations

The general applicability of the findings can be restrained because the authors have eight experienced people from a few industries. The common conclusion might be valid in these included industries. However, the particularities of industries that have not been examined in the thesis could lead to deviation from the general conclusion provided by this thesis. In other words, people in other industries could apply totally different styles to manage conflicts in a given level of cultural intelligence. Furthermore, the study only focuses on interpersonal conflict. As noticed in Chapter 2, the conflicts could be occurring between departments or even between organizations.

The thesis adopts purposive sampling in order to select interviewees that could provide valuable comments and insights about the research subject. The purposive sampling is utilized in order to acquire a thorough understanding into conflict management styles and CQ. As shown in the empirical results, all interviewees appear to adopt an integrating conflict management style and to have a good CQ level. The monotone could be the result of sample bias from purposive sampling method, which is not intended, but can be seen from the results. Selected interviewees are experienced managers that are currently in managerial positions, implying that they are somewhat successful managers. High CQ levels and integrating styles are argued to be effective in cross-cultural workplaces, which may account for the noted homogeneity of interviewees. The thesis sheds light on the topic with an emphasis on the high CQ managers and integrating due to the limitation illustrated above. However, an enlarged amount of sample with a more diversified data base can further refine the research by providing a comprehensive view.

7.4 Future research

As a suggestion for future study, a systemized study could be important regarding the conflict management and cultural intelligence. A single case study that focuses on one organization that ranges from individual employees, to team/department, and to organizational level could provide a holistic picture of conflict management beyond the individual level. Future study could also attempt to include more industries to give an examination on the general conclusion. This thesis only focuses on the conflict management styles. The cause and result of conflicts is mentioned to provide necessary context. Future study can provide a more

comprehensive view on the topic by investigating the entire process of conflicts, from the beginning to the end.

Additionally, some elements that could possibly affect the relationship between conflict management style and cultural intelligence emerge during the process, which can be found in new insights in empirical findings. For example, a strong organizational culture, as described by interviewees, serves as a principle and moderator in conflict management of cross-cultural workplace. Cultural intelligence indicates the individual capability in cross-cultural working environment. When the working environment is predominated by a unanimous organizational culture despite of diverse cultural backgrounds, the general conclusion regarding CQ and conflict management could be affected.

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Appendix 1 Topic Guide

Topic Guide -How you with CQ to manage conflicts in culture diversity workplace?

(The questions with *, it is the key point of the interview.)

Part 1: General self-introduction

Short self-introduction, especially, the experience related to multi cultures, such as studying abroad, the length of work time in cross-culture environment, your work task, etc.

Part 2: Types of conflicts

- Could you define conflicts in culture diversity workplace, in other words, in what situations you think it is a conflict while you work with others from different cultures?
- In your opinion, what causes the conflicts you mentioned before?
- What is your attitude towards conflict? (Such as conflict is normal at work, I can manage it.)

*Part 3: Application of conflict management strategies

- How to manage the conflict when it occurs at work? (Any examples, own strategies, etc)

Part 4: Cultural Intelligence

- Do you think if it is necessary to check the cultural knowledge you have gained and adjust that when cross-cultural communication requires?)
- For cross-cultural workplace, in your opinion, what knowledge you already knew (such us using pause, body languages, speaking speed) you think is helpful for you to understand others and then manage the conflicts?
- In your opinion, in what way (activity, training,..) could help and make you much easier to understand other people who have different cultural background and thus manage conflicts?

Appendix 2 Example of coding procedure: Category: Types of conflicts

Interviewee	Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code
1	I don't think I experienced direct and intense conflicts while working. Earlier, we have an American product manager. He is all American style in the office. For example, a manager from Sweden will not give you an assignment when the day is almost over and tell you that he would like to see this assignment finished in tomorrow. But this American manager sometimes will hand out an assignment around the ending period of the day. He does not really care if you have to work extra time or something. However, in Sweden, managers seldom do so. It feels more equal between employees and managers. When giving assignments, Swedish managers tend to respect individual spare time of employees, and not to put pressure of 'deadline in tomorrow' on them.	The managers from different countries have different ways in managing things. And the way how they see individuals workload and spare time.	Relationship conflicts
2	For example, the German and Austria guys like to plan everything in details. Everything is just so well planned. And Italians don't. So German guys were worried about Italian guys, like 'oh they don't plan, they have no control and they just let everything go blablabla'. So we had that conflict.	People may feel worried when some people from other countries do not behave as they do in planning something.	Relationship conflicts & task conflicts

3	<p>We have a lot of dissimilarities and similarities, but there is always a individual aspect. Of course, I think some of the conflicts and disagreements are increased by cultural differences because we communicate in a different way. After all, we come from different nations. For example, in Sweden, we have a very flat hierarchy, which affects communication. Yeah, definitely, I have faced complicated communication because of culture.</p>	<p>It is about individual. And the extent of hierarchy influences the way to communicate.</p>	<p>Relationship conflicts & process conflicts</p>
4	<p>I do believe everyone I work with travel along and speak different languages, and etc. That means when every one of us goes out of the workplace, there will be a lot of cultural shocks and cultural diversity, not only among each other. When I go home to meet my parents, they sometimes will probably fail to understand me because we come from different generations. I'd rather say I have conflicts with people in the workplace that come from different backgrounds. What that means includes educational backgrounds, if you have a university degree, if you are working in a completely different scene than I am, if they are working with different types of matrix... Our company has a office in Malaysia, where everything is quite different from Sweden. We have a founder in Malaysia, and he invites somebody to come and meet me. It is weird to come to a meeting with the founder.</p>	<p>People are with different backgrounds, such as education level and totally different working environment.</p>	<p>Task & Relationship</p>
5	<p>.Even if you think you are aligned or have agreed on something, it is not true because of</p>	<p>The communication if adequate</p>	<p>Relationship</p>

	<p>misunderstandings....We already shook hands. Then he or she needed to go back and get it confirmed. In the end, the buyer might come back and tell me, ‘You know what, we didn’t agree because I need to ask my boss’. That is the area I learned that I need to make sure the person has the authority to make decisions.</p>	<p>enough and not lead to misunderstand between each other.</p>	<p>conflicts & Process conflicts</p>
6	<p>I have experience from different countries. For example, German, they are so strict and obsessed with details. You can get irritated a little. When you give instructions, they call you five minutes later and have a whole group of people analyzing what you just wrote so you know everything is right down to very slight details. I mean, how hard could it be? Just do it. If you have questions, ask it. But they really want to make sure that every details are correct. They could have focused on how to make a better profit than all these trivial details. But if they set things straight from the beginning, you can trust them to perform perfectly in every periods afterwards. In other countries, for example, China, they are less active in asking questions; they just try to solve it by their own. Then they approach me and say that they don’t understand something.</p>	<p>Different people from different countries emphasize on different aspects, and take action to ask questions.</p>	<p>Task conflicts & process conflicts</p>
7	<p>From our countries, it is not a big deal. We talk a lot, and we also talk with our body. Maybe our voices are not always plain. Talking in a loud voice is okay for us. But in Sweden, if you talk in a high voice, you are sending a signal of something goes really wrong. In some countries, it is normal to express emotion while speaking, some countries not. We had such situation in here as well. We have a guy from middle Italy. He uses high voices and extensive body languages. I know him so it is not a problem. However, if he is working with a customer or a colleague who</p>	<p>Different express meaning towards different people in one way to say something.</p>	<p>Relationship conflicts</p>

	does not know him so well, it might be troubles.		
8	Early on, when I moved to Sweden. I had a project manager role. I find it difficult because it took longer to make a decision, because you have a dynamic way of approaching a problem. It is a tremendous strength also slows things down.	A dynamic way of approaching a problem	Process conflict

