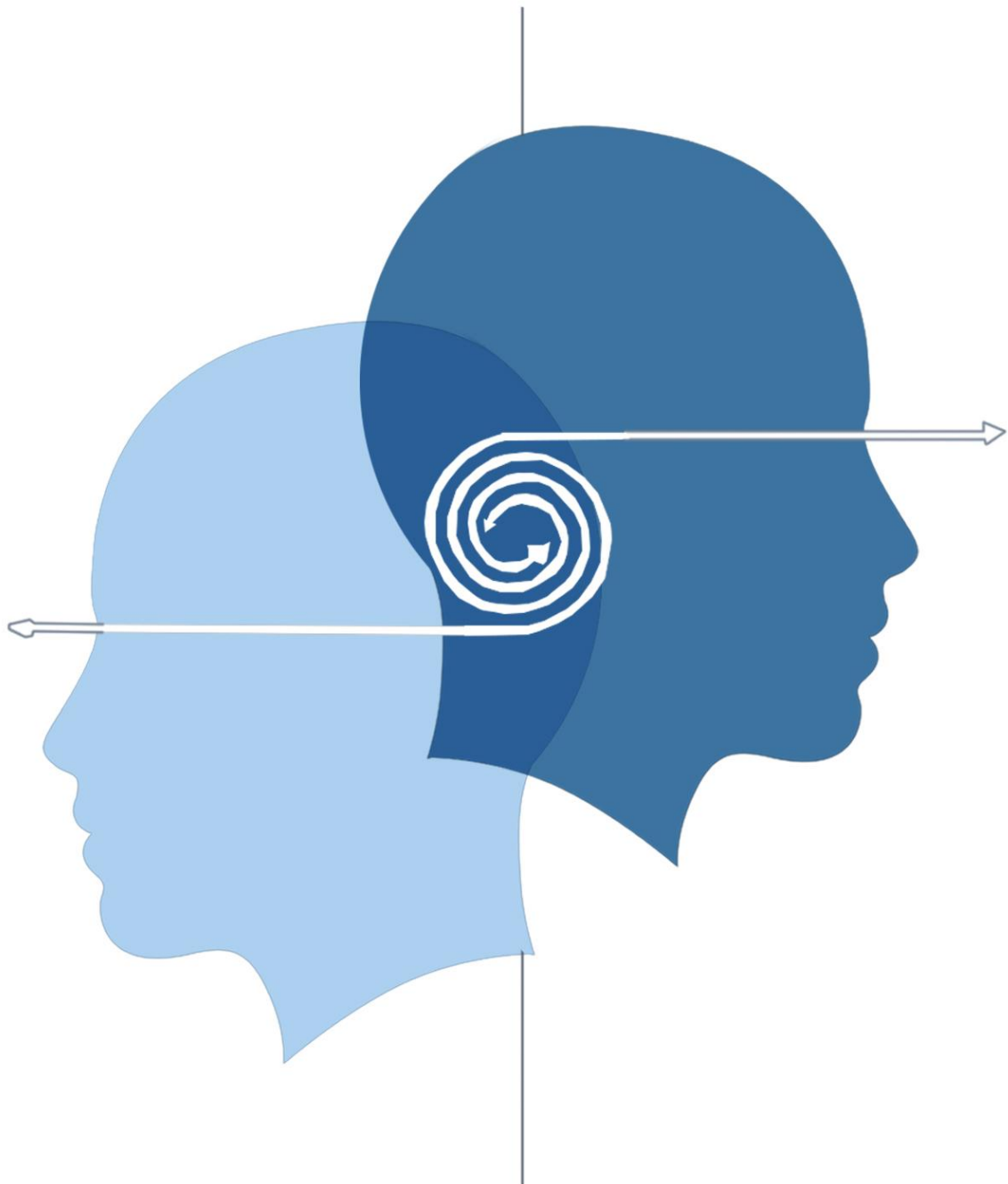


Think as Chinese:

***Improvement of Collaborative Team Performance
between Western and Chinese Partners
In the China's Building Industry***



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It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye."

————— *Antoin de St Exupery*

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Preface

As an international student, studying in the Dutch context, I got a hard time to efficiently study in the Netherlands due to cultural differences, different ways of working and language barrier. For example, when I talk with Dutch classmates, misunderstandings always happen, causing inefficient team performance. After studying for two years at Delft University of Technology, my English has improved and I got used to the Dutch culture. However, this experience leads me to wonder whether Western European people have the same cultural shocks as I had, when they would come to China. This is one of the reasons triggering me to search for more information about cultural differences and team performance. Culture primarily influences the international business and the strategies of an international firm. For instance, if an international organization regards the cross-cultural context as an opportunity and maximize exposure to such contexts to leverage the cultural differences, it will help an organization to learn from different cultures, enhancing its innovation and creativity. Effective cross-cultural management can make or break a building project overseas (Pheng & Leong, 2000). Mismanaging cultural differences may lead to an inefficient project and an ineffective organization. Cross-cultural management innovates business practices of international construction project teams towards being faster and supporting better learning within the organization (Hoecklin, 1996). Therefore cross-cultural management of international construction project teams plays an important role in innovation, providing sustainable sources of competitive advantages.

With the development of technology, the world becomes closer and more integrated with, business companies operating worldwide (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Globalization, as a trend, brings more opportunities in terms of market share, resources, information-technology for different countries. At the same time, globalization also causes a country to lose its identity and causing business conflicts because of cultural differences (Barber, 2010). Currently there are many internationally architectural projects happening in China, though many international projects do not satisfy designers' desires or public expectations. There are many reasons to explain this phenomenon, however, one of the most important reasons may be the existence of cultural differences due to language barriers, different tacit norms and lack of cultural intelligence. This causes conflicts leading to frustration in culturally diverse teams. Furthermore, tacit norms influence psychological safety and trust in a cross-cultural team. For instance, face saving and guan-xi are two tacit norms in some Asian countries, including China. For this reason, most employees do not change their creative information in the meeting, in order to keep away from potential conflicts, such as losing an opportunity for promotion or disturbing relationships with other employees. As a result, tacit norms impact on team performance through the expression of emotions and their influence on the development of trust, and psychological safety. When team members feel frustrated and untrusted, they may be inclined not to put effort in collaboration, thus the project may easier fail. Chinese ways of working are totally different from Western European ways. For instance, by law architects do not have the right to choose a supplier of materials because of the risk of corruption. This makes it difficult for foreign architects to get used to the Chinese context. This is but one example of potential conflicts. On the other hand, there are many foreign architectural firms starting local branches in the Chinese competitive market. Yet, it seems hard for them to continue their work

or develop long-term liaisons with local firms and it seems to be tough to get profits. Poor management control not only extends project schedules, causing budget overruns and adds to low quality, but it also impacts on the safety of the working environment and surroundings of local residents (Winch, 2010). Thus improving cross-cultural team performance is an important problem to be addressed.

Moreover, I am personally, interested in the field of psychology. My experience and gained knowledge over the past two years, lead me thinking whether or not cultural intelligence would impact on team performance. I also lacked relevant knowledge of cross-cultural management and involved psychological processes. This research helped me bridging my knowledge gap. This is particularly relevant as these potential cultural differences might not only apply to China and Western Europe, but may apply in general to the difference between Asian and Western European cultures. Being a student in the real estate and housing department, connecting project teams with cross-cultural management is then not difficult.

I would like to thank my first mentor Dr. Clarine van Oel for her support and supervision during the process and all her construction and English knowledge input; second mentor, Dr.ir.Yawei Chen by her encouragement, support and dedication in the entire process. As well as Ir. Jelle Koolwijk for facilitating and discussion of this study with his knowledge and support. Also Dr. Ir Matthijs Prins for his intensive supervision at the beginning of the process.

Also, I would like to thank for all participated interviewers and architectural companies. Your words helped me to continue and finish this study. I could not get enough and abundant data without you help.

In the end, I want to thank for my dear parents who support and help me to realize this dream. Thanks for their encouragements, patience and motivations. As well as thanks for all friends to be and experience all this amazing journey with me.

Wenhan Hu

Summary

With the development of globalization, investors increasingly look for new opportunities of investment in developing countries. Han and Diekmann (2001) pointed out that rapid developments in telecommunications, travel and other related industries have opened new opportunities to the international construction market. Increasingly international collaborative teams are made up in emerging countries such as China. Indeed, since China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) by the end of 2001, it has stimulated numerous opportunities for Western European investors and architectural firms to participate to China's building industry. After 2 decades of development, most foreign architectural firms have become localized. They allocate Chinese employees who were either born in a Western culture or studied abroad to China's building industry, because they gained a deeper understanding of both the Western and the Chinese culture. However, Western European architectural firms still have advantages in competing with local competitors and collaborate with Chinese developers because of their creativity, innovation and advance design values. Furthermore, in China, most local developers prefer to meet and discuss with foreign architects, as this underscores their importance and increases their intangible value in collaborations with foreign architectural firms to others. Chinese developers like to call global collaboration as "international projects" and have such projects as prominent part of their market strategy.

It is complicated to improve team performance in a multi-cultural team. Psychological safety and trust impact on team performance, such as the quality of the construction, customer satisfaction, the potential and development of the capability of the whole team. Psychological safety relates to information sharing and team learning, whereas, trust building can reduce risks and uncertainties, both improving team efforts. It is essential to consider psychological safety and trust at team-level, as psychological safety and trust are related to individual behaviors and influences organizational performance. Thus, this study mainly focuses on improvement of collaborative team performance at team level between Chinese developers and Western European architects by targeting development of psychological safety and trust in the Chinese context.

Numerous barriers trigger to research this topic. To begin with, language always is the problem in collaborative teams. As Chinese developers cannot or do not know how to speak fluent English and native languages of most Western European architects are not English, translation always takes time and slows down the process. Moreover, since many Chinese developers are businessmen or governors, lacking related architectural knowledge, it is hard for them to know what they want. Therefore architects have to spend much time to understand what their clients need in conversations, and by showing options and reference images. Meanwhile, a project can be changed several times or even totally changed, because of the hierarchy and the less transparent planning system in China. Furthermore, Chinese developers do not research the market, thus architects have to do a part of market research. However, local developers require a fast process of projects, causing an extreme workload for architects. Altogether, architects cannot focus on design, causing decreased design quality and eventually poor project performance.

Cultural differences impact on development of psychological safety and trust as well as they increase the complexity of effective team performance. Western European architects may be not familiar with tacit Chinese norms, such as guan-xi or face keeping, leading to unpleasant experiences according to their own values. Indeed, this may cause frustration in the team, affecting design quality and team performance in the end.

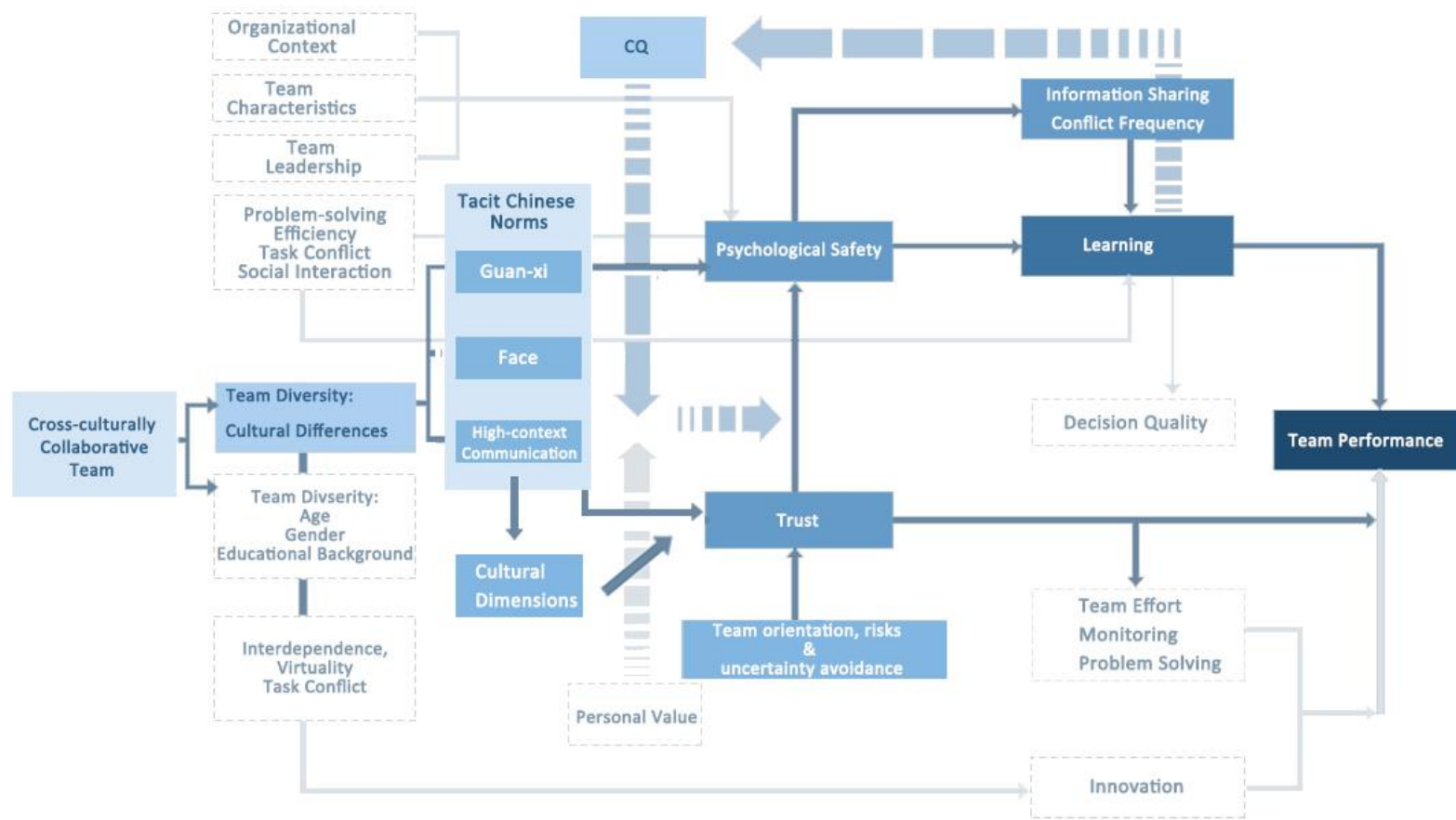
Last but not least, there is hardly any study addressing the importance of psychological safety and trust in improving collaborative team performance between Chinese developers and Western European architects in China. Existing studies typically target hard values like budget, schedules and software, whereas studies addressing the importance of soft values like psychological safety and trust for team performance are not targeting team collaboration between Western Europeans and local Chinese, at least, not in the building industry. Therefore, this study intends to fill in this gap.

In this study, the aim is to investigate whether cultural tacit norms impact on team performance in internationally collaborative teams in China due to its influence on trust and psychological safety. Existing researches shows that psychological safety and trust affect team performance (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Especially, the presence of trust among collaborative partners is an important factor in project performance (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Since there were no previous studies identified in a search of the literature, an explorative study, was conducted mainly focusing on psychological safety and trust. The main research question was:

How does cultural diversity in collaborative design teams, consisting of Western European and Chinese, influence the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance in Chinese context?

The vision of this research is to figure out what the main problems are in collaborative teams that are working in the Chinese context and help them to boost team performance by generating a new team performance model suitable to the Chinese context and provide some recommendations. The final results can help to Western European architectural firms to understand the Chinese context which may assist them in establishing long-term relationships with Chinese parties.

To meet the aim of the study, an extensive literature study was conducted to get an understanding of cultural differences that affect psychological safety, trust and team performance. This literature study has been used to connect the relationship among cultural factors, psychological safety and trust in collaborative teams. The conceptual model in figure 1 was built on an existed theoretical model by Edmondson and Lei (2014).



The study is designed as a qualitative research and applies case study methods, because qualitative research helps to understand organizational outcomes and present phenomenon within a certain situation. Case studies can add to the development of a robust theory by linking problems, interventions and outcomes, to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in the real life (Barber, 2010). Here 4 cases, including a reference case of the local Chinese situation, and 3 foreign offices (France, German and Dutch) in China, were studied with 9 interviewees participating in this research.

hierarchy also influences tacit norms like face keeping, underlines the importance of high context communication in China, and the development of guan-xi ties. The case studies showed that adherence to these Chinese tacit norms is important and impacts the collaboration in a team as it for instance defines who is classified to speak out in a meeting with clients.

Figure 2 is a new collaborative team performance model in the Chinese context, which can measure and improve collaborative team performance between Western European architects and Chinese developers. It is tempting to think that it might not be only the case for the Chinese culture, but that it also applies to the larger East Asian culture.

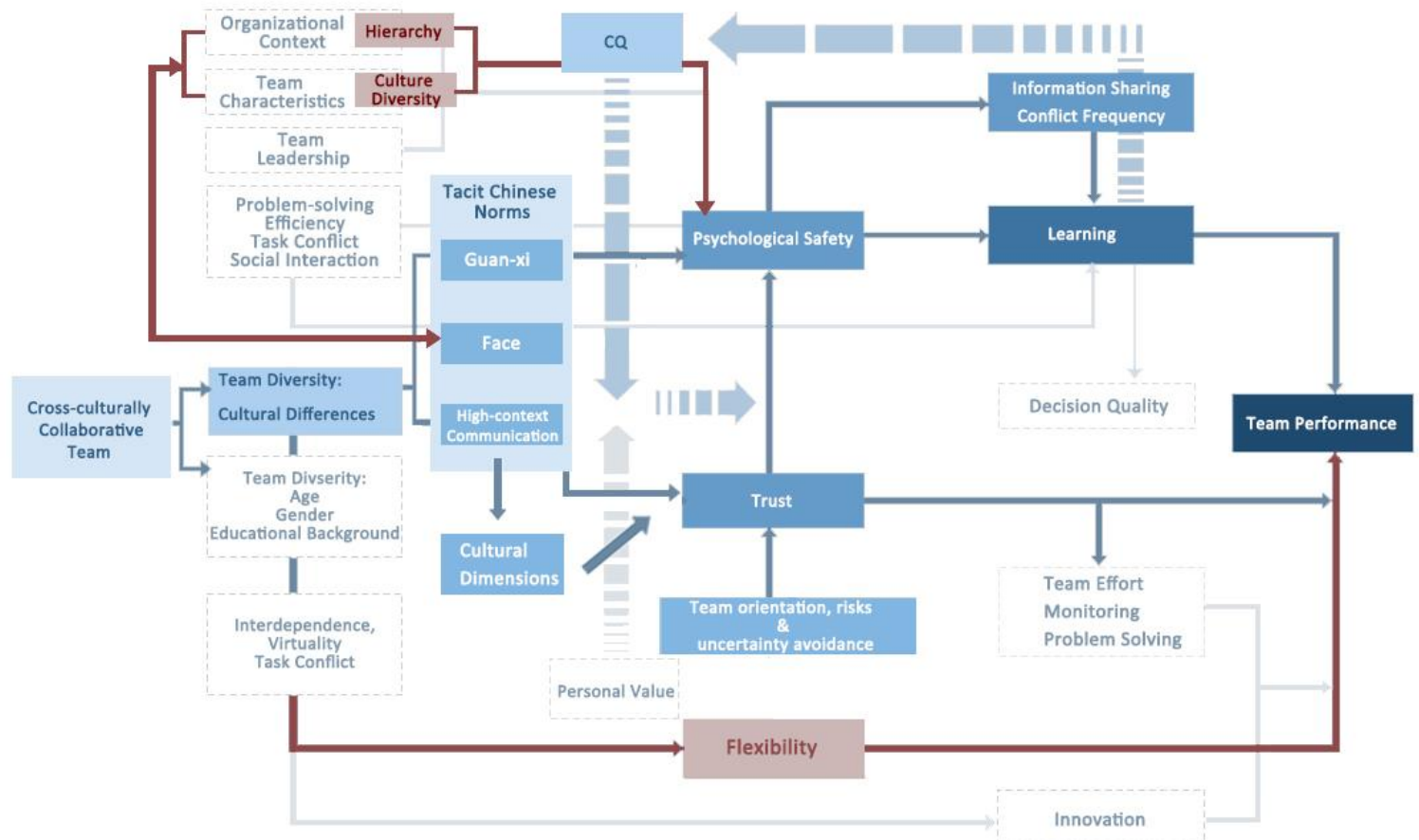


Figure 2 Chinese Collaborative Team Performance Model Based on Conceptual Model (Own ill.)

However, guan-xi is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, people can use guan-xi to get benefits. On the other hand, it is possible for foreign architectural firms to lose benefits by guan-xi as well. In addition, for both junior Western European architects and directors need to be flexible, to improve collaborative team performance. However, because lack of strong data to support this result, flexibility is still need to be proved in the future.

Though collaboration with Chinese developers are not easy, there are some recommendations that foreign architectural firm can follow:

- Trust building
 1. draft a clear and unambiguous contract with possible demands

2. seek a reliable partner
 3. adhere to mutual goals and cultivate learning climate
 4. maintain efficient communication
- Boost cultural intelligence
 1. Copy actions as local people by observation and listening
 2. Make local or foreign friends who live in the same cross-cultural context for several years
 3. Learning Chinese language to understand Chinese culture
 4. Use metaphors or story-telling
 - Accept to typical Chinese characteristics
 1. Being flexible
 2. Show and the value of the company

1. Introduction

1.1 Study Description

Cultural differences increase the complexity as it is thought to impact the development of psychological safety and trust among team members. When two parties collaborate with each other, trust-building is crucial in reducing risks and improving team performance (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). For instance, most expatriate managers have a very limited knowledge of local Chinese cultural and business practices, and seldom master Chinese language skills to deal with Chinese companies on a day-to-day basis (Hedley, 2015). Edmondson and Lei (2014) pointed out that team leadership and cultural diversity impact both experiencing psychological safety and team members' learning processes. Therefore, poor team performance may result from low psychological safety and poor trust, since psychological safety is essentially a team-level phenomenon and it correlates with performance (Edmondson, 1999, 2002, 2003). These studies revealed that psychological safety impacts on information sharing and team learning. In turn, team performance impacts at team-level on organizational performance and relates to individual behaviors.

In China, the real estate industry is growing dramatically fast. China is a member of The World Trade Organization (WTO) since the end of 2001. This encouraged many foreign investors and firms to start working in China, not only in projects but also in using Chinese services. Numerous Chinese investors are looking for international cooperation, since they like to utilize "an international project" to strengthen their selling proposition. Foreign architectural firms have many opportunities to get involved in a collaborative project for their creativity, professionalism, the feasibility and their marketing potential. This requires collaboration among employees from different cultures, including the local Chinese culture. Although cultural diversity boosts innovation in project teams with foreign team members (Ngowl, 1997), Western European firms experience difficulties in understanding the Chinese context with its different values, attitudes and perceptions (Xiao & Boyd, 2010).

Before Western European architectural firms entered the Chinese market, the expectation of most foreign architectural firms were quite ambitious and confident, however only few companies seemed to remain for several years. Many projects were discontinued like for instance Atelier Dutch, or had a just one-time entry, such as Claus en Jaan, and Bert Roos (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014). Furthermore, foreign architectural firms face difficulties in making profits, as foreign architectural firms always need to cooperate with a Local Design Institute (LDI), as the latter holds the required licenses and permits (de Muynck, 2015), whereas, foreign firms bear additional costs, for expatriate management within and outside of China, costs for visas and approvals, et cetera (Utterback & Li, 2007).

After almost 2 decades of development, most foreign firms established local branches in China to better adhere to the Chinese economic and cultural environment. One might think that locally employing Chinese who were either born in a Western culture or studied abroad and thus gained

extensive knowledge and a deeper understanding of both the Western and the Chinese cultures, and are acquainted with doing business in China would solve problems in collaboration with strategic partners. This certainly applies, however, the presence of foreigners with white skins are advantageous in certain Chinese situations. For Chinese developers, the presence of foreigners shows their engagement in “international projects” and they consider such as part of their marketing strategy. This explains the many collaborations between Chinese developers and foreign architects even though Chinese employees who were born or studied abroad could do the job as well. Since architects play a dispensable and critical role and they need to follow a project from initiative stage to the completion of a project, their work decisively influences project results and is an important determinant of whether a project is successful or not. Another factor complicating collaboration is the different power position architects have in China. Local developers have a major influence in a project and rank higher in power position than do architects. This is different from the power position of architects in Western European countries and this may give them a hard time when working with Chinese clients and may impede collaboration.

To obtain a better and in-depth understanding of how to improve team collaboration, this study therefore mainly focuses on the improvement of collaborative team performance between Chinese developers and Western European architects during the design stage. It will do so by investigating, at the team level, whether by development of psychological safety and trust underlies successful collaborative cross-cultural team work in the Chinese context.

1.2 Problem Statement

Language is one of the main problems for the most Western architects, since few Chinese developers speak English. Most Chinese developers talk Chinese with architects during meetings. To bridge the language barrier, professional interpreters are brought in and to translate everything during the meeting. Yet, even when team members from different cultures speak a shared language, they may still think in their native tongue. This slows down the thought processes because it requires translation into their native idioms (Ling, Ang, & Lim, 2007). As a result, the process takes longer.

Besides language problems, local developers lack architectural knowledge and this also hinders effective team performance. Since Chinese developers do not master sufficient knowledge and vocabulary to talk about project with architects, architects need to spend much time to understand their clients' need and wishes. This generally requires several meetings and extensive use of alternatives and reference images. Furthermore, numerous Chinese developers being businessmen and government officials lack the capacity to understand the abstract presentation drawings architects produce, and this gives rise to excessive demands and changes during the design phase of Chinese construction projects (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005). Also, architects need to spend much more time than they are used to in their homeland to make drawings understandable by providing detailed master plans, architectural design and landscape design from the start (Mayer, 2012). However, because of a less transparent planning system in China, sometimes developers, who also rank higher in the hierarchy than do architects, decide

the modify, adjust or even completely change the design many times to cut down the budget or decisions of planning bureaucracy. They will do such without a clear explanation (Mayer, 2012). This leads architects to waste much time on changing designs and making detailed drawings. In addition, as Chinese developers do not research market before bidding, architects are required to do part of the market research, branding, and positioning the project instead of focusing at the design at such early stage (Mayer, 2012). Because Chinese developers meanwhile pursue a fast process of a project, the workload becomes extremely high for many foreign architectural firms, much higher were used to. Altogether these problems will reduce, in the end, the design quality and project outcomes.

What's more, difficulties also stem from cultural differences and unsynchronized pace of cooperation (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014). From the cultural point of view, the Western European culture is quite different from the Chinese culture. Although cultural differences may boost creativity and innovation in teams, it is also thought to be one of the most influential factors explaining failure in collaborative teams. For instance, since foreign architects may not be familiar with the Chinese culture, conflicts often happen amongst team members, leading project managers to fail in properly controlling the project's process (Chua, Wang, & Tan, 2003). If foreign architects lack a sufficient working knowledge of the basic cultural traits, it might increase unpleasant surprises, limit advanced insights, and halt companies to be successfully interact with other nationalities (LUMESSE Blog, 2015).

Additionally, there is anecdotal evidence suggesting that conflicts in international construction teams stem from unfamiliarity with the Chinese culture, particularly as reflected in tacit Chinese norms like “guan xi” (building relationship) and the importance of protecting a clients' face. For instance, developers may ask foreign architectural firms to make an outstanding design to obtain an advantage in a land bid. However, they may not get the bid, and the developer may pay less or pay no design fees at all. When an architectural firm has a close guan-xi with a developer, the payment problems are less present and there might be even more collaboration between them. Another example is that due to the influence of collectivism, guan-xi, harmonious surroundings and a high hierarchy, contracts are not addressed in the same way, and thus as effective and valuable as in West European countries. One cannot use a contract to guarantee collaboration and to protect benefits. When cooperation is pleasant between two parties, trust is built and psychological safety is promoted, and this will in the end, improve team performance.

Bids and competitions are common ways for a foreign firm to get projects in China. Firstly, the developing organization will publish the information about the competition online. As mentioned before, foreign firms cannot join competitions, unless in alliance with a qualified LDI. Secondly, the cooperating team will fill out registration packages including forms, agreements, and information about previous project experience that will be discussed by the Jury. Finally, the cooperating team submits the competition packages before the deadline and the Jury will evaluate the Technical Bid (Design, Function), whereas the developer will assess the Business Bid (overall cost and design fee proposal) (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014). However, given the importance of guan-xi, most LDIs will know the results of the bidding before the

announcement of the winner. As a respondent mentioned,

“No bid is fair. We always knew the result of bidding we did in front of the meeting. It is always about guan-xi. Guan-xi is extremely powerful. You need to accept unfair situation, you can’t change it.”

This causes inequalities to foreign architectural firms, because they spend time and capital to win projects. One might expect that things might even become more difficult the coming years. Euromonitor International (2016) pointed out that due to the economic downturn, the growth of China’s real estate market is slowing down compared with previous years. To ensure continuity, it may be even more important to foreign architectural firms to gain a better understanding of the Chinese culture. This study aims to contribute to this. In doing so, it particularly targets the importance of soft values like psychological safety and trust. In construction industry, research has been particularly targeted the influence of hard values such as budgets, schedules, tools and software on project outcomes (e.g. (Chen, 2013)). Yet, researches in manufacturing, transport and healthcare industry showed that psychological safety and trust have a major influence on team performance (Moreno, 2015). Indeed, there are many studies addressing the importance of cross-cultural management in international business projects to increase project team performance, whereas cross-cultural research into collaboration between Chinese and Western Europeans construction teams is scarce (Ling et al., 2007; Liu, Shen, Li, & Shen, 2004; Pheng & Leong, 2000; Xiao & Boyd, 2010; Zwikael, Shimizu, & Globerson, 2005). Hence researching the influence of culture and its accompanying tacit norms on improvement of team performance in collaborative teams through the development of psychological safety and trust is important. This study, therefore, aims to fill these gaps in knowledge.

1.3 Research Question

When Western European people work in China, they have to communicate with local stakeholders. In these cross-cultural contexts, understanding the local culture with its accompanying tacit norms is important. Therefore cross-cultural management plays a critical role in international construction project teams in preventing and reducing (potential) conflicts. Strong cross-cultural management may boost a team’s efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, and adds to the development of psychological safety and trust in a cultural diverse team.

The main objective of this research is to investigate how tacit norms and cultural intelligence in collaborative teams in China influence the development of trust and psychological safety and subsequent team performance. This gave rise to the following main research question:

How does cultural diversity in collaborative design teams, consisting of Western European and Chinese, influence the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance in Chinese context?

More specifically the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What is the influence of cultural diversity on the development of trust in collaborative teams in construction industry?
2. What is the influence of cultural diversity on psychological safety?
3. To what extent does the degree of cultural intelligence influence the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance?

1.4 Relevance of the Study

The aim of this research is to understand how cultural factors and tacit norms impact of the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance in collaborative teams, between Western European architects and Chinese developers, during the design phase. By answering the aforementioned research questions, the final result of this research would be to gain knowledge as of how to improve cross-cultural team performance in the Chinese context. On the one hand, a better understanding of cultural differences within a collaborative team will boost trusting relations with the involved Chinese developers. Meanwhile such a better understanding will improve team members' psychological safety by raising awareness about the meaning of cultural differences, especially tacit norms. The scientific relevance of this study is to fill in the knowledge gap and enhance the current status of research on cross-cultural team performance in the local Chinese context.

The result of the study could be a guidance for Western European architectural firms who are going to or are struggling with poor cross-cultural team performance in China and want to improve team performance by better understanding Chinese culture. Recommendations of this study will give insights into the presence and importance of Chinese tacit norms and provide valuable information about how to improve trust and psychological safety to enhance team performance in the end. The study could be useful for Western architects willing to work or currently working in China and willing to strengthen their cultural intelligence and achieving a better integration within the local Chinese context. In addition, the research could also be regarded as a source of information contributing to the evolving body of knowledge regarding the improvement of cross-cultural collaborative team performance in China.

This study applies a conceptual model that has been developed using Western studies to measure team performance in the Chinese context. Therefore it can give an answer whether such a conceptual model also applies to the Chinese culture or not. If not, the Western model will be adapted to allow for collaborative cross-cultural team performance in the Chinese culture as well.

1.5 Reading Guide

The remaining of this report has 3 main parts, being the theoretical part that ends with the conceptual model. The second part consists the research methods and an overview of the case included in the study. The third part consists of the findings and draws conclusions.

The first part is from Chapter 2 to Chapter 3. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 review the literature. The

introduction of culture includes cultural differences, team diversity and cultural intelligence. Thereafter, team performance in collaborative team and two main concepts that are related to team performance, psychological safety and trust, are discussed. The cultural dimension and tacit Chinese norms are here introduced as well as these are two other important variables in this study. The conceptual model in Chapter 3 is based on the theoretical model by Edmondson and Lei (2014) and adapted for the Chinese culture.

The second part of this report, Chapter 4, describes the methodology. The main approach here is case studies and this chapter also includes an overview of the cases in the study. Three architectural firms from Western European and one local design institute were selected. These are ECADI (a Chinese design institute), three European architectural companies, FRI (France), **gmp** (Germany) and MVRDV (the Netherlands).

In the 3rd and last part of this report describes the findings and ends with the drawn conclusions. To ensure a proper understanding of the local situation in China, chapter 5 introduces the practices in China's building industry. Chapter 6 to chapter 9 then are the descriptions of the 4 cases. Subsequently the company background, the organizational structure, the degree of team integration and how meetings with developers are arranged, are described. In chapter 10 then the synthesis of the findings across the 4 cases is described and an adapted version of the conceptual model is presented.

Chapter 11 summarizes for Western European architectural firms the local Chinese practices in construction industry and provides additional recommendations for Western European architectural firms. Chapter 12 holds the reflection in which I look back to the process I went through.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In a narrow way culture can be understood as “civilization” or “refinement of the mind” and the results of refinement, such as education, art, and literature. Boarder defined, as in social anthropology, culture is described as patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting, such as greeting, eating, showing or not showing feelings, keeping certain physical distance from others, making love and maintaining body hygiene (Hofstede et al., 2010). When a new team project is built, members bring their personality, cultural backgrounds and pervious experiences in a team. Their tendency of actions are impacted by another one’s interactions in different ways and at different moments (Mach & Baruch, 2015). Furthermore, diversity in a team contributes to team dynamics and performance. According to Chua, Morris, and Mor (2012) building trust improve cross-culturally collaborative teamwork. Also, interpersonal trust is the basis for cooperation and social exchange in organizations(McAllister, 1995).

In this chapter, cultural differences, team diversity and cultural intelligence (CQ) are presented as well as the relationship of team performance, psychological safety and trust is explored, to understand how cross-cultural team work together toward common goals.

2.2 Cross-culture in Collaborative Teams

2.2.1 Cultural Differences

The globalization of the world trade has led to an increasing incident of cross-cultural encounters. This incidence has brought about a new realization that cultural difference can impact on the conduct of business (Shaughnessy, 1995). International projects in construction industry dramatically grow in developing countries like China. Such international projects teams consist of architects, contractors, lead consultants, and engineers from different countries. Cultural differences are expected to contribute to conflicts among project team members involved in the design and the construction phase of a project and increase difficulties in project management (Ling et al., 2007). For successful outcomes of international construction projects, foreign practitioners should understand the culture of the host country. Even if they do not know what exactly the similarities between cultures of home and host countries are, at least they should have some awareness of some important differences (Low & Shi, 2002). This creates a demand for project managers who can effectively work in multinational teams (Shaughnessy, 1995).

Managing a team in a cross-cultural environment is a complicated and subtle issue, requiring a lot more than a list of “do’s and don’ts” (Shaughnessy, 1995). For instance, since Chinese values elements stem from the ancient philosopher Confucius, Chinese people are educated to strive for persistence and thrift. They also order relationships by status and observe this order in daily life. Furthermore Chinese have a strong sense of shame, respect tradition, and protect each other’s face. In the Chinese culture, personal steadiness and stability is emphasized, and this is

achieved for by building relationship (guan-xi), trust and friendship (Ang & Ofori, 2001; Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

According to the literature, traditional cross-cultural differences are represented by manners, language, history, institutions, climate and social customs. These characteristics are important and can quickly help team members to develop local contacts as well as to prevent elementary social errors. However, they are more superficial manifestations of a nation's culture (Shaughnessy, 1995). Cultural differences are also associated with individual characteristics such as gender, age, job experience and race (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004b). Other differences include educational background, beliefs, art, morals, customs and laws (Ling et al., 2007).

Swierczek (1994) pointed out that cultural difference in language, interaction, perception and mentalities leads to problems in team performance due to problems in communication, working together, problem solving, and team sense. Cultural differences may cause difficulties and therefore may increase the risk of a project failure. It also influences interpersonal relationships within one's physical environment, and affects the development of interpersonal trust and people's attitude toward power and authority. Since trust evolves from fundamentally different philosophies, the importance of trust is particularly relevant to the collaboration between diverse international team members in China (Chua et al., 2003). For example, China, as a less trusting culture, has its own way to boost trust, which is called "guan-xi" (building relationship). This explains why for collaboration Chinese people would like to look for someone amongst their friends or relatives to become their partners. In addition, local architectural firms protect their clients' face to support a long-term cooperating relationship. Though not truly a cultural characteristic, the bureaucratic sluggishness and corruption may also cause considerable inefficiency in the market (Chua et al., 2003).

2.2.2 Team Diversity

Team diversity means that a team comprises of people of different ages, gender, ethnicities and educational backgrounds, et cetera. This study mainly focuses on members of varying cultural backgrounds. Popescu, Borca, Fistis, and Draghici (2014) stated that cultural differences influenced team members' behavior in cross-cultural projects, thus it is necessary to understand the impact of cultural differences in diverse teams. Cox (1994) defined cultural diversity as the "representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance."

A cross-functional team is formed by individuals from all levels within an organization, with different job functions and all trying to achieve a common goal. Managing cross-functional teams requires generating a friendly and creative environment for all members (Popescu et al., 2014). Culture as a different option, may be beneficial to team performance, such as generating plans or creative ideas, problems-solving, or decision-making (Bantel & Jackson, 1989; Murray, 1989). For instance, Draghici and Draghici (2008) demonstrated that cultural differences enhance creativity and, new ideas in project collaboration. It may also introduce new approaches to solve problems, and boosts team actions. However, cultural differences may also diminish team performance. Thus Borca, Popescu, and Baesu (2014) pointed out that it is

essential for an organization to provide a favorable environment for the development and management of cultural diversity. An advantage of multi-cultural groups is that it offers a rich opportunity for team members to gain cultural intelligence without necessarily leaving their country by observing the behavior of individuals from different cultures responding to the same situations, such as the assignment of group roles, the establishment of a leader, the imposition of deadlines, and all the other activities and processes of working in a team (Thomas, 2010).

Van Der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) suggested that when an organization works in another cultural, it is important to be able to change strategies because customary and trusted ways of doing things do not always work in a new cultural environment. Figure 2.2 shows the impact of diversity on an organization. This model from by Cox (1994) proposes that the impact of diversity on an organization is an interaction between the environment and individuals. It suggests that the individual and organizational outcomes can impact affective and achievement outcomes. Affective outcomes mean that an individual feels valued by the organization, which motivates him to effectively catch up the goals of the organization. Achievement outcomes can be defined as indexes of the employee's contribution to the organization including performance

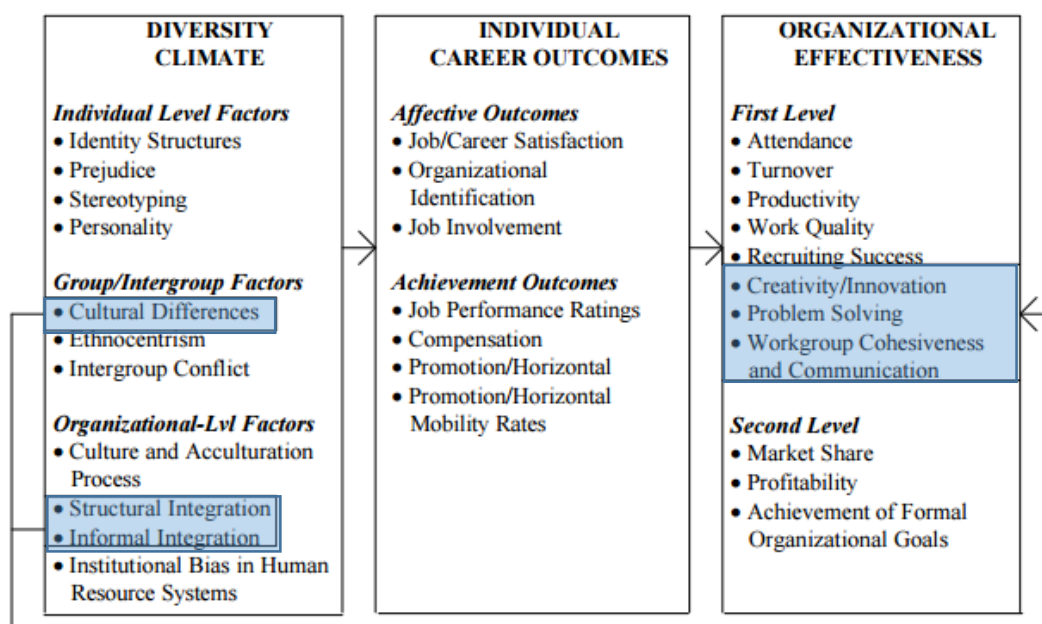


Figure 2.2: Interactional Model Of The Impact Of Diversity On Individual Career Outcomes And Organization Effectiveness (Source: Marilyn and Rosener, 1991).

ratings and promotion rates (Cox, 1994). Figure 2.2 shows the direct effects of diversity on organizations. Processes such as problem solving, creativity and communications may be directly affected by diversity and are critical to any organization. Diversity can either impede team learning due to poor communication, misunderstanding and stereotype thinking, or enhance team learning by encouraging communication, creativity, innovation and problem solving, and through its influence on team cohesiveness. Team work may also benefit from other type of diversity, such as diversity in ages, gender, religions and a diverse team might be helpful to understand cultural differences in a cross-cultural project.

Indeed, effective teamwork is the key to success in a culturally diverse project team (Knutson, 2001). Following team characteristics in effective projects (Teamwork Guidelines, 2015):

- *Membership*
- *Common goal*
- *Social organization*
- *Interdependence between members*
- *Productive involvement*
- *Effective communication and interaction*
- *Mutual interest*
- *Collective consciousness*
- *Mutual trust*
- *Cohesion*

All of these elements may be important for effective teamwork. Based on Cox (1994) and Knutson (2001), the following elements are considered the most influential elements to boost project effectiveness in cross-cultural project team.

Creative and Innovative Decision Making

When members decide about common goals, social organization and designs, they need to share aims and goals, as well as develop functional norms, roles and relationships by negotiation. In addition, creativity and innovation can be enhanced by working with diverse teams. Yet because of power distance and collectivism, not all of team members may be willing to share their creative ideas with the group, such depending on their culture (Hofstede et al., 2010; Moon, 1997). Therefore understanding cultural differences inspires creativity or innovation, and helps project managers to make better decisions.

Collective Problem Solving

In teams with members from different backgrounds, and holding diverse values, norms and cultures, it is easier to provide different perspectives, and generate more critical analyses of alternatives. In this way, cultural diverse teams have a “lower probability of group thinking” than less diverse teams (Loden & Rosener, 1991). This however implies a good understanding of the differences of amongst members of the group to avoid conflicts in problem-solving (Moon, 1997).

Effective Communication and Interaction

Effective communication can reduce misunderstandings and ultimately increase workgroup effectiveness (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Therefore language is a main obstacle for a diverse team to overcome.

Cohesive Workgroup

Webber and Donahue (2001) found that team cohesiveness is mainly impacted by cultural

diversity and rarely affected by other types of diversity. However, others found that information sharing which indirectly links to cultural tacit rules also and significantly impacts the relationship between psychological safety and team performance (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

Mutual Trust

Team members are willing to openly communicate and cooperate with each other in a trusting atmosphere. The stronger the trust, the less conflicts and, the better the team will navigate without the captain on board (Skuza, 2013). So for effective team performance, a team oriented atmosphere based on trust and respect is important. Project managers need the trust of their team, because people follow persons they trust in and whom they consider integer. Uncertainty can be balanced by trust which gives the team the ability to work together no matter what the future brings (Skuza, 2013).

In culturally diverse teams, understanding cultural differences is necessary but it also depends on how much motivation cross-culture team members have to learn about new cultures. It also depends on how easy team members acquire this kind of information and skills, which is called cultural intelligence (CQ). In next section, this new concept is further introduced.

2.2.3 Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

When two foreigners communicate, they rarely talk about precisely the same subject, for effective meaning is flavored by each person's own cognitive world and cultural conditioning (Hendon, Hendon, & Herbig, 1996). Therefore, for international project teams to become collaborative teams, it is important that such project teams are clearly open-minded, patient and self-controlling. Team members recognize and sensibly manipulate cultural differences, which helps them to effectively work in cross-cultural settings to be productive (Community Tool Box, 2015) and this is important for the profitability of international projects. According to Earley and Mosakowski (2004a), a successful project manager needs to have cultural intelligence (CQ) to cope with different national, corporate and vocational cultures in an international project.

CQ, a new concept in cross-cultural studies, involves the set of interrelated skills of people that allow them to effectively function within culturally diverse situations (Earley, 2002). It has been shown helpful in achieving various cross-cultural outcomes. For instance, it enhances the effectiveness of expatriates to adapt to overseas work assignments (Zhang, 2012), cross-cultural negotiation processes (Imai & Gelfand, 2010), effectiveness in culturally diverse teams (Adair, Hideg, & Spence, 2013) and cross-cultural trust building (Rockstuhl & Ng, 2008), as well as that it helps leaders to effectively perform and boost leadership (Groves & Feyerherm, 2011)

An individual with cultural intelligence possesses the necessary background knowledge of a particular culture, as well as the motivation to further learn about new cultures. Such an individual creates new mental frameworks in order to expand the behavioral repertoire (Groves, Feyerherm, & Gu, 2014). Moreover, CQ allows people not only to effectively learn about

foreign cultures but also to use their cultural knowledge to adapt their behaviors to produce appropriate responses to foreigners (Lee & Sukoco, 2010).

2.3 Collaborative Work

2.3.1 Team Performance

In teamwork, each member of a team is allocated specific tasks and to achieve their shared goal, team members are depending on each other (Humphrey, 2000). However, interdependently working with each other in achieving a shared outcome is not easy (Edmondson, Kramer, & Cook, 2004). According to Hackman (1990) effective team performance depends on 3 criteria:

1. The outcome of the team such as the quality of task, the quantity or amount of works and customer satisfaction;
2. The implications a team has for its people in terms of specific team members' satisfaction in belonging to the group; and
3. The potential and development of the capability of team members to work with each other in upcoming projects.

Team effectiveness directly reflects organizational performance. If team members have more responsibility, decision-making rights, autonomy, knowledge and involvement, the purpose of a project is easier to achieve (Ilgen, 1999). Therefore, managers better focus on teams as a whole and their attitude as a team than at individuals. Effective team management and developmental practices are powerful tools to attain effective team performance (Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & Spangler, 2004).

However, it is not easy to determine the precise characteristics of effective team performance since different attributes of teams may be considered effective in different situations. Meanwhile differences arising from diversity amongst companies and organizations also need to be considered. In literature, many researchers have defined effective teamwork. For instance, Russ (2015) stated that effective team performance should have clear, cooperative goals to which each member is committed; it further involves accurate and effective communication of ideas and feelings; distributed participation and leadership; appropriate and effective decision-making procedures; productive controversies; a high level of trust; constructive management power and conflict; and adequate problem-solving procedures. Furthermore, characteristics such as initiative, openness, helpfulness, flexibility, and supportiveness are also important for team performance (Russ, 2015). Others also emphasized that acceptance of team members with different personalities, high level of self-awareness, psychological safety, a strong and shared understanding of team goals cohesiveness play an influential role in effective team performance (Culp & Smith, 2001; Moriarty & Buckley, 2003).

Later, Edmondson and Lei (2014) pointed out that a climate of trust is underlying the influences of psychological safety on team learning. Figure 2.3 shows a model at the group-level of how team learning, innovation, and performance are related (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Edmondson

and Lei (2014) also showed that when trust increased in a team, it positively influenced team effort and team monitoring, and enhancing team effectiveness.

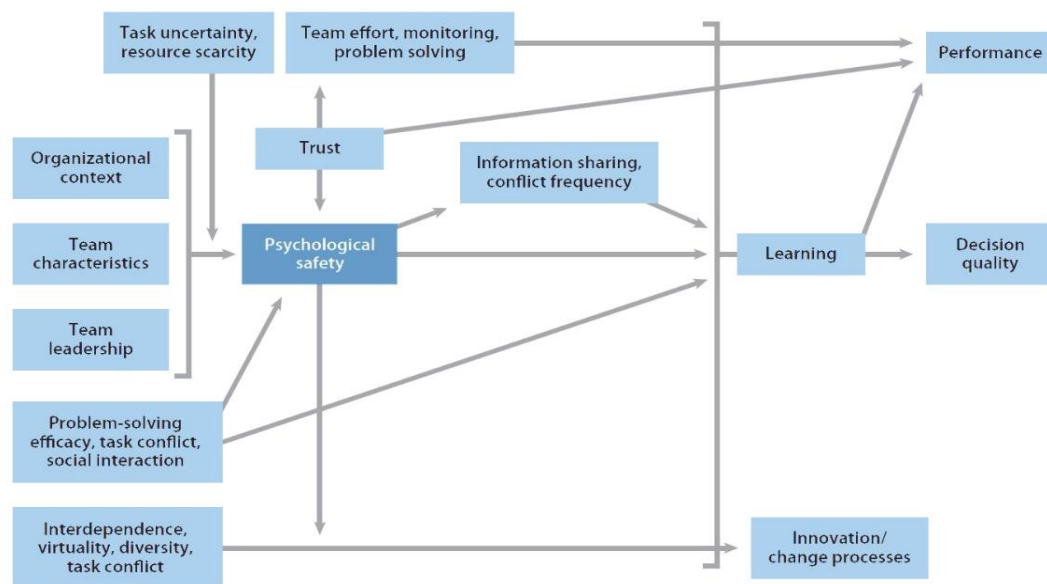


Figure 2.3: The Model Of Examination Psychological Safety At Team-Level (Source: A. Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

Their model shows that psychological safety and trust influences team performance, therefore a better understanding psychological safety and trust is necessary. The following sections offers more knowledge about psychological safety and trust.

2.3.2 Psychological Safety

Psychological safety describes an individuals' perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment. It refers to a climate in which the focus can be on a productive discussion that enables early prevention of problems and the accomplishment of shared goals (Edmondson, 2002). Psychological safety considers the short-term interpersonal consequences one foresees from applying a specific action, and can be distinguished from trust, in which case the anticipated consequences are more far reaching (Edmondson et al., 2004). There are, at the organizational level, relationships between psychological safety, commitment-based human resources (HR) practices, social capital, high-quality relationships, climate for initiative, and firm performance. Psychological safety, as a mediator, impacts organizational performance and learning (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Team psychological safety is distinct from group cohesiveness, since cohesiveness can reduce the willingness to disagree and challenge others' views, such as in group thinking (Janis, 1982).

Although culturally diverse project teams may enhance innovation and a flow of ideas, there are potential risks in more sophisticated situations. Because of struggles of misunderstanding, poor trust and low psychological safety among multi-cultural team members, it is tougher for multi-cultural teams to work efficiently. According to Edmondson et al. (2004) psychological safety can be related to 5 types of team learning behaviors, including seeking feedback, seeking help, speaking up about concerns or mistakes, being innovative and spanning boundaries.

However improvement of learning behaviors is not enough. Psychological safety may be also lower because of incongruence in cultural tacit norms in an inter-cultural team. When individuals engage in a kind of tacit calculus at micro-behavioral decision points, they assess the interpersonal risk associated with a given behavior (Edmondson, 1999). In this tacit process, people weigh the potential action against the particular interpersonal climate and in doing so take cultural tacit norms into account. When people consider situations as being less harmful, embarrassing or not being criticized, they proceed to openly communicate with other team members. Huang, Chu, and Jiang (2008) showed that the ability to openly communicate through experimentation, discussion, and decision making is a determinant of successful team performance. Thus creating a psychologically safe environment for individuals which make them feel secure is the first step to initiate an open and supportive communication (Klein, 2014; Schein & Bennis, 1965).

Psychological safety promotes team performance and work engagement, with team learning mediating the relationship (Edmondson, 1999). There are numerous researches about the relationship with psychological safety and team performance. Huang et al. (2008) for instance found that psychological safety leads to team performance through team learning. Besides, psychological safety enables teams for learning, experimenting and new practice production (Tucker, Nemhard, & Edmondson, 2007). Moreover, a psychologically safe environment boosts divergent thinking, creativity, and risk taking. It motivates engagement in exploratory and exploitative learning, which in the end, promoting team performance (Choo, Linderman, & Schroeder, 2004).

Apart from cultural diversity, promoting creativity and innovation, a psychologically safe environment also enables divergent thinking, creativity, and risk taking. It also motivates engagement in exploratory and exploitative learning and thereby promotes team performance (Choo et al., 2004). Indeed, the higher the levels of psychological safety team members experience, the more efficient team performance will be, because psychological safety mitigates the negative effects of conflict on performance (Mu & Gnyawali, 2003).

Finally, Gong, Cheung, Wang, and Huang (2012) reported that information exchange fostered trusting relationships, offering psychological safety for employees' creative endeavors. Yet, it is noticed that trust is distinguished to psychological safety. In next section, trust will be discussed in more detail.

2.3.3 Trust

Trust, defined as the expectation that others' future actions will be favorable to one's interests, makes one willing to be vulnerable to those actions (Edmondson et al., 2004). It also leads to a set of behavioral expectations among people, allowing them to manage the uncertainty or risk associated with their interactions so that they can jointly optimize the gains that may result from cooperative behavior (Jones & George, 1998). Trust positively influences team effort and team monitoring, leading to higher team effectiveness (De Jong & Elfring, 2010). However Mach and Baruch (2015) reported that members' heterogeneities causes complex social exchanges, which may weaken the development of trust in a team.

Trust is related to the concept of choice in terms of a trustee's decision making progress. In case of psychological safety, team members analyze what would be the consequences of their actions for themselves if they are in doubt, whereas if it comes to trust one evaluates the consequences of someone else's potential actions, thus one evaluates their trustworthiness. There are two types of models that explain how trust evolves, rational and relational models. In the relational model, individuals are presumed to make efficient choices based on conscious calculation of advantages and disadvantages. In such a model, psychological safety is considered a tacit choice, based on conscious calculation of advantage and people then choose to trust based on an explicit and internally consistent value (Edmondson et al., 2004). In contrast, the relational model takes into account social aspects such as calculation of risks, a social orientation toward other people and society as a whole (Kramer, 1999). Here, choices are more affective and intuitive than calculative in the rational model.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the definition of team diversity. Literature about cross-cultural teams, shows that team diversity enhances team performance in terms of individual and collective working. Team members acquire experience and develop their cultural intelligence in multi-cultural teams, and this facilitates communication, and collaboration amongst foreigners. Improvement of mutual understanding in turn contributes to effective team performance. Cultural intelligence (CQ), as an indirect factor, affects team performance in terms of psychological safety.

Besides, a detailed description of important psychological factors influencing efficient team performance is given in this chapter as well. Following Edmondson and Lei (2014) their model, at group-level, psychological safety and trust are introduced. Clearly, psychological safety is different from trust, though these concepts have much in common. Three elements can distinguish psychological safety from trust according to Edmondson et al. (2004). In case of psychological safety, team members analyze what would be the consequences of their actions for themselves if they are in doubt, instead of evaluating the consequences of others' potential actions or their trustworthiness. Furthermore, psychological safety anticipates consequences in a temporary range. The last difference is that psychological safety is stemming from process at the team-level, whereas trust involves the individual level as well. In establishing trust, one can make either rational choices or relational choices. Rational choices are based on risk-evaluation, whereas relational choices are more affective in nature.

This chapter reviews some researches on the cultural field and team performance, it provides a clear idea about the relationship between collaborative multi-cultural teams and efficient team performance. These insights gave rise to the conceptual model which is presented in the next chapter.

3. Conceptual Model Development

3.1 Introduction

A basic idea about relationship with cross-cultural management, efficient and effective team performance, psychological safety and trust has been given before. However, not all mentioned factors are yet connected with each other, thus in this chapter, a new conceptual model, connecting all concepts, is introduced below.

3.2 Theoretical Model

According to Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, and Gilson (2008) psychological safety influences team performance at three levels, namely at the organizational, team and individual level. At the team level, it is related to in-role behavior, the involvement in creative work for members, such as individual creativity, employee proactivity, and information exchange. Extra-role behaviors are also relevant to psychological safety. Voice, as a type of extra-role behaviors, greatly helps organization learn by challenging the status quo and offering ideas to improve processes (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Edmondson and Lei (2014) suggested that studying psychological safety at the team level is important, because a local manager' or supervisor's behaviors may convey messages about the results of taking interpersonal risks associated with behaviors like admitting an error, asking for help or speaking up with ideas. Depending on the consequences of such, a team member may or may not decide for instance to speak up or not and this impacts team learning, innovation and performance.

Edmondson and McManus (2007) suggested that it is better to build a research based on mature theory. A mature theory has precise models, supported by a research and expresses a set of related questions to diverse settings. Maturity promotes a research that leads to further refinements with a growing body of interrelated theories. Therefore, the current study uses the theoretical framework of Edmondson and Lei (2014) and aims to contribute to theory development by further refining the theory. Edmondson and Lei (2014) developed their model as a model describing, at the group-level, the relationship between psychological safety and

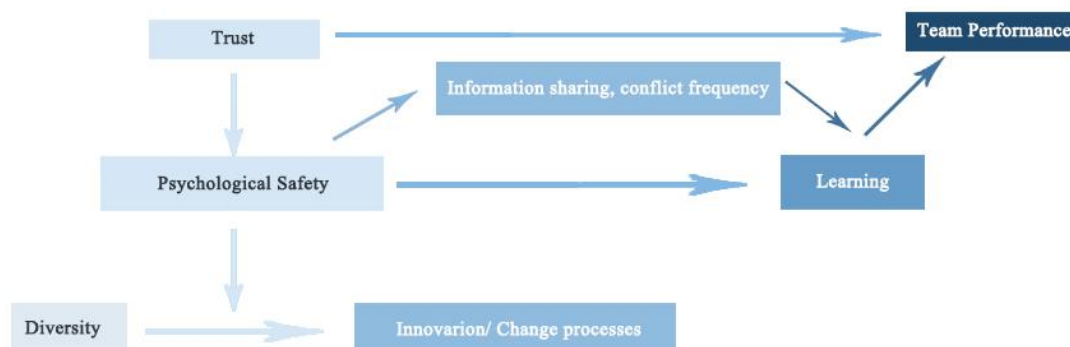


Figure 3.2: The Relationship Among Diversity, Psychological Safety, Trust, And Team Performance (Source: A. Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

team performance (see figure 2.3). Their full model is shown in figure 2.3. In this thesis, the focus is at a particular part of this model and this part is illustrated in figure 3.2. The literature review in chapter 2 showed the importance of cultural dimensions to team performance and the cultural dimension therefore has been added to the theoretical model of Edmondson and Lei (2014) and serves as the conceptual model of this study.

3.3 Cultural Dimensions

Cultural dimensions stem from the approach to understand cultural differences through dimensions of national cultural. Most cultural tacit norms are related to cultural dimensions. Therefore, before understanding tacit Chinese norms, Hofstede et al. (2010) determined 5 cultural dimensions below.

- *Individualism versus Collectivism*
- *Power Distance*
- *Uncertainty Avoidance*
- *Long- versus Short-term orientation*
- *Masculinity versus Femininity*
- *Indulgence vs. Restraint*

Individualism versus Collectivism

Individualism versus collectivism (IDV) characterizes the interrelatedness of individuals (Maleki & de Jong, 2013). In individualist societies, an individual is expected to look after himself and direct family, while in collectivist societies, an individual has a strong tie with groups. They are required to protect each other in exchange for obedient loyalty (Hofstede et al., 2010). From Hofstede et al. (2010) their results, it appears that the most wealthy countries have high score on IDV and nearly all poor countries score low.

Power Distance (Hierarchy)

Power distance (PDI) or hierarchy reflects the extent to which hierarchical relations and position-related roles are accepted (Maleki & de Jong, 2013). Hofstede et al. (2010) points out that PDI and IDV have significant and strong correlation. High PDI countries have centralized power for decision making in organizations with large differences in positions, rankings and wages while in low PDI countries, it is more decentralized and less differences in positions, rankings and wages (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) indicates to what extent people feel uncomfortable with uncertain, unknown or unstructured situations. This feeling is expressed by nervous stress when there are no explicit written rules. Anxiety is related to uncertainty avoidance. However, anxiety should be distinguish from fear and risks. Fear and risk are both focused on a specific object or an event that one might be afraid of, while anxiety is not. Uncertainty refers to a situation in which something might happen but people have no idea what exactly will happen. In weak

uncertainty-avoidance countries, anxiety levels are low. In high uncertainty-avoidance cultures, people look for a clear structure or draft other rules and regulations, in order to reduce the uncertainty and increase predictability (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Long-term versus Short-term orientation

It is a combination of different cultural traits including traditionalism. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), long-term orientation (LTO) is related to “thrift”, “national pride” and “service to others”. However, Maleki and de Jong (2013) argued that “thrift” is a questionable indicator for future orientation since this trait can be partially explained by living circumstances. Therefore, this cluster of dimensions can be explained as the cultural traits of religiosity, self-stability, feelings of pride and consistency between emotion felt and their expression versus secular orientation and flexibility (Maleki & de Jong, 2013). Short-term orientation is more typical of most European countries, while long-term orientation characterizes China and most East Asia.

Masculinity versus Femininity

In this cluster, Hofstede et al. (2010) argued that men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life in the muscular society. In the feminine society, both men and women are expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

Indulgence versus Restraint

This dimension reflects the extent to which gratification of desires and feelings is free or restrained (Maleki & de Jong, 2013). People in indulgent societies are happier and positive while in restrained society, citizens are less happy and more pessimism (Hofstede et al., 2010). It indicates the choices between gratification and evaluation, permissiveness and discipline, and also whether people express emotions openly or control the expression of emotions (Maleki & de Jong, 2013).

Above illustrates 6 cultural dimensions, each dimension has its features. Compared with Western European culture, Chinese culture is considerably different. It is assumed that cultural dimensions may influence European firms working in the Chinese context. For instance, China is a high power-distance society, having a strong hierarchy, therefore, it is possible that junior architects cannot speak out during the meeting. This may cause potential conflicts. Therefore, it is interesting to see whether cultural dimensions impact on team performance or not.

3.4 Tacit Chinese Norms

Chinese culture has developed since 5,000 years. There are three main forces that profoundly influenced its culture: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism (Ang & Ofori, 2001). They have acted together to form Chinese culture, Chinese way of life and Chinese philosophy. There are many tacit Chinese norms, however guan-xi, face and high-context communication are the most well-known tacit Chinese norms. Here, these three tacit norms are introduced.

Guan-xi

In the Chinese business context, keeping and building relationships is very important. In a *collectivism* society, such as China, having personal network of acquaintances is essential for success (Hofstede et al., 2010). The key concept of guan-xi has been accepted as a valid socio-cultural construct in business by building a reliable network in Asia. Because of the influence of traditional Chinese moral values, “仁” (benevolence), “义” (righteousness), “礼” (protocol), “智” (wisdom) and “信” (trustworthiness), people build good guan-xi ties by helping when someone asks for a favor. Guan-xi ties are an individual’s own network, means that there are dynamic reciprocity between two or more parties (X.-P. Chen & Chen, 2004).

Additionally, guan-xi demands a *long-term orientation*. Yum (1988) points out that in Western society, people emphasize short-term and equal reciprocity in relationship exchanges, while Chinese tend to maintain personal guan-xi throughout their whole life. Guan-xi suffers, if it is not relevant to profitability or equal exchanges. In other words, guan-xi is a friendship with exchange of favors. However, it is a bit different from the definition of friend, since guan-xi is more utilitarian than emotional.

Face

Chinese people prefer to seek compromise when they seek a solution to bridge differences (Hsu, 1981). The Chinese written character “面子” (face) represents social concept of one’s respectability, reputation, dignity and pride as a consequence of one’s social achievement (Tu, 1984). Basically, giving face and gaining face are the combination of tactful action of guan-xi. It is the way to pay and receive respect from certain people and maintaining a presentable image in front of others (Fang, 2014). Sometimes, face surpassed personal wealth, which is less important in China (Hofstede et al., 2010).

China is a typical *collectivist* and *long-term oriented* country, preferring to avoid potential conflicts. Although Hofstede et al. (2010) pointed out that in traditional society, people concerns with face, Chinese people impact on local philosophy a lot. For example, philosophers from Confucianism and Mencius, advocated that “A man must not be without shame, for the shame of being without shame is shamelessness (Lau, 2003). Thus Chinese people invest extensive effort to maintain their face because of a strong consciousness towards face (King, 1988). In addition, middle ground is another golden rules of Confucius moral ethnics. It aims to gain a harmonious society and a peaceful world by opposing extreme behaviors (Xu & Cheung, 2015).

Face-giving or face-saving, as a typical Chinese behaviors, includes respect, reputation and pride. The action of face-giving behaviors is a way to preserve harmony (Ang & Ofori, 2001). Basically, face will be lost when a person fails his tasks, placed upon him by virtue of his social position (Ho, 1976). Ho (1976) also mentioned that Chinese people will protect their face from being damaged when they could not gain face during interactions. In business, Chinese firms spend considerable time on socializing and exchanging pleasantries in order to give face to their clients (Tan, 1990) since socialization is the way to promote harmony and build trust. Thus, face-saving and face-gaining are important social skills in China.

High-context Communication

Because of face, high-context communication is common in *long-term oriented and collective* society. In high-context communication, the message cannot be understood without a great deal of background information. Most Westerners are used to low-context communication, such as the Netherlands. In parts of the world such as China, which has high-context communication the hosts normally send someone to meet the negotiators in the platform, partly as a gesture of hospitality, but also because they are accustomed to providing information through a social context rather than through impersonal signs (Hooker, 2008). When working with Chinese people in high-context communication, it is not easy to get feedback or responses (Ling et al., 2007). For instance, Chinese staff have high technical competency, but they maybe calculative and uncooperative, which causes low team spirit of collaborative team. To high-context cultures, the human side of the negotiation process is more important than the technical aspects. In contrary, the low-context communication spells out more the information explicitly present in the message.

3.5 Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Culture evolves the psyches of humans in a group. Cultural intelligence was introduced by Han and Diekmann (2001), as a concept, assisting people in a cross-cultural context to understand and develop their cultural knowledge about the host country. This is important for a collaborative team, as cultural intelligence smooths and fastens project progress.

Cultural intelligence, as personal variable, influence personal experience. Reber (1989) suggests that individuals vary in their level of cultural knowledge that implicitly developed by working and living experience in foreign culture or explicitly through cross-cultural training. These experiences are positively associated with cultural adjustment (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Basically, the norms of behavior in a situation in the cultural environment is different from the same situation in one's native culture. Thus when members possess knowledge of norms, their behaviors become easily appropriate to the new culture (Molinsky, 2007).

As mentioned before, a diverse group composition impacts on team dynamics and performance. In such a situation, interpersonal trust is the basis for cooperation and social exchange. Van Knippenberg et al. (2004) pointed out that members from different cultural back-grounds and with different values and opinions that respect team norms, consider themselves as a part of team and help the whole group in achieving the shared goal. This thus implies that building trust is impacted by diversity in a team. Moreover, as mentioned in chapter 2.2, effective communication and interaction which is related to Edmondson et al. (2004) team learning behavior in psychological safety (see chapter 2.3) boost team performance in cross-cultural teams. This suggests there is relationship between cultural diversity and psychological safety.

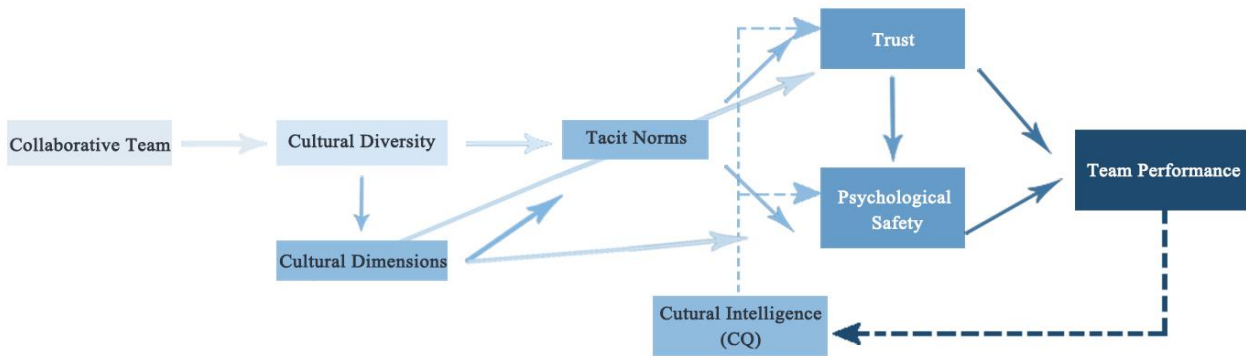


Figure 3.5: The Relationship Among Cultural Diversity, Dimensions, Tacit Norms, Trust And Psychological Safety (Own ill.)

Apart from that, the importance of some local tacit norms which may not be noticed in a group stemming from one and the same foreign culture, will be more easily understood by an international team consisting of both locals and foreigners. A shared understanding of the tacit cultural norms that apply will boost psychological safety and trust in such a culturally diverse team. As a result, team performance is thought to improve. Tacit Chinese norms are distinct from the European tacit norms and this is thought to give rise to working differences during team meetings. It would be interesting to investigate how Western European people act and understand Chinese people in meetings. This line of reasoning has been first “piloted” in an interview with a test respondent (TR) and indeed provided sufficient support to develop the remaining of this thesis project, as this respondent stated:

“The dinner and every social activities are so important. I have to get to know personally what he means. But you can speak out in the meeting. Because the developer does not make you to lose face. Also since you invite him to the dinner and you give them goods. In the meeting, maybe we had the conflicts but he does not fight against you. I think it’s just gaining confidence or friendship.”

As mentioned in chapter 2.3, trust can be split into rational choice and relational choice. Rational choice is described as professional capability and rational aspect of trust has been translated into developing and maintaining good relationships or good guan-xi ties in the Chinese context. In the Dutch culture, for instance, maintaining face is not a big issue. Indeed, friendly insult is common way of joking. While, in China, insults may mean loss of face. Consequently, guan-xi breaks. Hence, it seems that guan-xi and face are related to trust, but this is still need to be further confirmed, as also applies to. The idea that tacit Chinese norms and cultural development may (indirectly) impact on the development of trust and psychological safety in culturally diverse, collaborative teams. Figure 3.5 describes the possible relationships with the concepts described in the last three sections.

3.6 Trust Building

In a collaborative team, a different cultural value orientation may reduce communication and intensify interpersonal conflicts, jeopardizing team effectiveness. Trust building amongst team members make team members to share knowledge and ideas with members of different cultural

background (Cheng, 2012). Bell (2007) shows that the importance of members' values can foster effective teamwork, including collective team orientation (Zhou & Shi, 2011). Ang and Ofori (2001) also mentioned that in China, the basis of a cordial relationship in the organization is the upholding of interpersonal harmony and group orientation. Collective team orientation has been studied at the cultural level (Hofstede, 2001), but it also influences individual differences within teams (Alavi & McCormick, 2007). Also, members' preference to function as part of a team is a culture-based value (Triandis, 1995). According to Hofstede (2001), in a collective society like China, members would like to put asides their self-interest in deference to the interest of their group. While in individual society, people are more inclined to put forth and promote their own welfare over the interests of the group. In the presence of cultural differences, team members easily have heterogeneous values and are more prone to experience difficulties in communication. This will negatively influence team performance (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010). To clarify team-goals, members will utilize group interactions and pursue the group's interest, and so contribute and promote team cooperation and performance (Alavi & McCormick, 2007; Eby & Dobbins, 1997). Indeed, collectively oriented members are loyal to the group and pursue the group's aims instead of theirs (Triandis, 1995). This improves cooperation (Eby & Dobbins, 1997) as well as adds to the development of trust between members. Thus, team orientation needs to be included in the conceptual model.

Clearly, in the absence of business relations between parties, no risks exists. Trust would not be built because there is complete certainty with no risk (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). However, when parties start to interaction and develop their relationships, risks appear. The more risks exist, the more trust needs to be built. Jin and Yng Ling (2005) pointed out that controlling risks fosters sufficient trust, contributing to smoothly develop successful relationships.

However, Cheng (2012) found that uncertainty avoidance is related to trust in the early stage of cross-cultural team formation. The more members there are from cultures with a low uncertainty avoidance orientation, the more a team will show low levels of uncertainty avoidance. Since individuals from high uncertainty avoidance cultures try to reduce unstructured situation by creating strict laws and rules, and safety and security measures (Hofstede et al., 2010). Therefore, trust is easier to build in a team with members from cultures with low uncertainty avoidance (figure 3.6), facilitating communication, collaboration, as well as moderate cultural differences and conflicts. Whereas, in the later stage of team formation, cultural differences may less impact team performance, as members of such a multicultural team are better acquainted to each other through social and work-related interactions. Figure

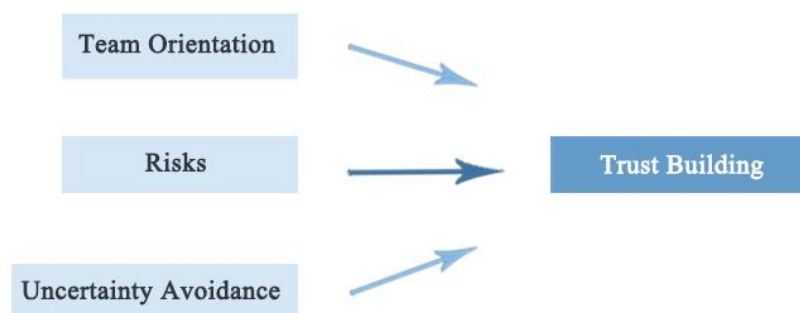


Figure 3.6: Trust building impact on team orientation, risks and uncertainty avoidance (Own ill.)

3.6 describes three concepts which may thus influence on building trust in this study.

3.7 Conceptual Model

Based on theoretical model and literature review, the conceptual model is summarized in figure 3.7. Edmondson and Lei (2014) only related team diversity to team performance, and did not detail the cultural concepts in their model. Thus the cultural factors, being cultural intelligence (CQ), tacit Chinese norms and cultural dimensions are added to their theoretical model. Besides, trust is impact on team orientation, risks and uncertainty avoidance. All colored parts are argued in the previous sections and are studied in this research.

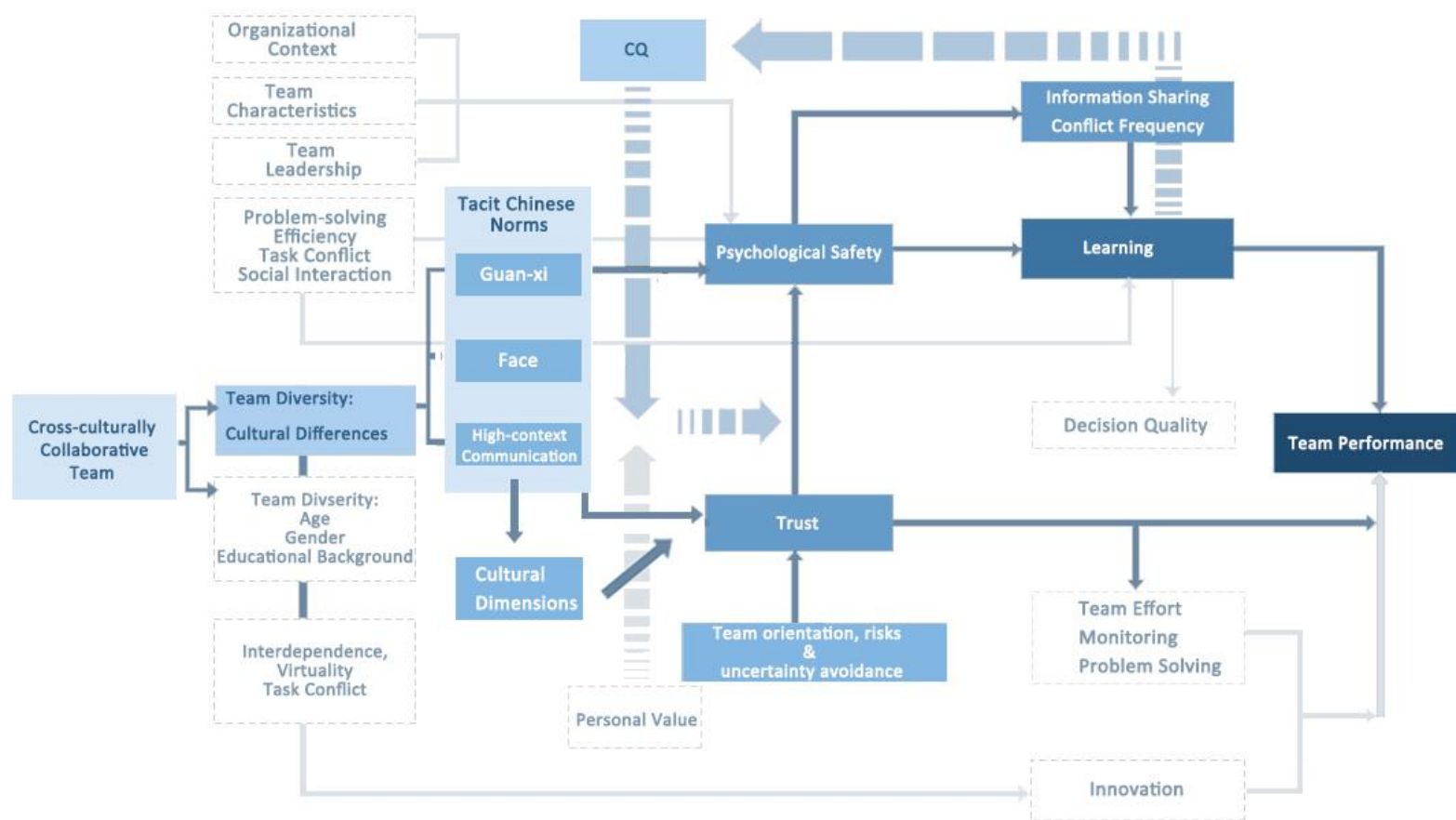


Figure 3.7: Conceptual Model (Own ill.)

3.8 Conclusion

Cultural diversity impact on team performance. The main propose of this chapter is to generate the conceptual model of this study by connecting related concepts to strengthen the cultural dimension. The conceptual model is developed on the theoretical model by Edmondson and Lei (2014). The cultural dimensions are related to tacit Chinese norms, such as guan-xi, face and high-context communication. Moreover, cultural intelligence facilitates individual to better handle cross-cultural situations. Building trust promotes to effective team performance. It is related to risks, team orientation and uncertainty avoidance.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The choice of correct methodology affect the result of a study and how to conclude findings. Research methods can be classified into quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research gathers numerical data or information that can be measured by numbers. Whereas, the qualitative research focuses on generating verbal data. Gathered data is analyzed by interpretative and subjective way (Bryman, 2012). The following sections gives the methodology of this study.

4.2 Research Method

This study is to investigation of team performance, relating with organizational outcomes. Collection of qualitative data from various sources to explore one or more organizations or parts of organizations is involved in case study research (Baker, 2011). Moreover, due to promotion of understanding a contemporary phenomenon within a certain situation, diverse facets of the phenomenon can be revealed and understood (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Although the sample size of case study is small and the data analysis is subjective, case studies provide an opportunity to learn about the relationship of organizational processes, and effective and efficient team performance in cross-cultural context by analyzing specific experiences from respondents (Baker, 2011).

De Massis and Kotlar (2014) pointed out that knowledge is constructed by existing theories, therefore researchers continually interpreted and modified knowledge by the creation of concept, models and schemes to clarify human experience. Case studies are utilized by ground theory, which is an inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows researchers to build a theory of general features on a topic and ground details in empirical data (Ling et al., 2007). This method was chosen because this study is built on a theoretical model form Edmondson and Lei (2014). Moreover, case studies determine the relationship between cultural difference and team performance inductively by combination of data collection and analysis.

Case studies can develop a robust theory linking problems, intervention and outcome, in order to help researchers to understand how things work in a real life (Baker, 2011). De Massis and Kotlar (2014) offered that case studies included three types, a descriptive case study, an exploratory case study and an explanatory case study. A descriptive case study is to convince a phenomenon is relevant with the aim of study. Exploratory case studies are adopted to figure out how a phenomenon takes place. The last type, explanatory case studies are used to understand why a phenomenon takes place. Exploratory case studies employs in this study, as this study addresses how cultural diversity influences the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance in the Chinese context.

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

4.3.1 Data Collection

Interviews, and analyzing archival information is the way for qualitative research to collect data (Bryman, 2012). Interviews are often the prime data in case study, because they can get rich and empirical data, especially when the phenomenon of interest is not common (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Therefore, this study conducted face-to-face interviews and involved probing questions. In-depth answers and particular aspects of the responses were addressed in detail. The interviews were conducted in English and Chinese. The Chinese interviews were summarized into proficient English. Emails have been sent to all potential companies to ask for their willingness to participate in the study agreement.

With the case study method, selection of cases is very important. Though single case studies provide more detail and give precise stories to describe phenomena, multiple case studies offer a stronger base for theory building. Since diverse cases can understand different aspects of a phenomenon, facilitating researcher to build a completed theory (Baker, 2011). Based on that, this study executed a multiple case study in which 4 cases were studied.

4.3.2 Cases Selection

Architectural Level

The Netherlands is situated in northwestern Europe and borders on Germany to the east, Belgium to the south, and the North Sea to the west and north. Its culture is influenced by its neighboring countries and the history. Moreover, it has a highly-advanced free market economy and started international trading quite early. The data in the international construction market shows that Dutch companies are one of the pioneers in doing business internationally (pwc, 2015). The Minister of State for Economic Affairs of the Netherlands (2005) declared that architecture, along with milk, clogs and tulips is a major export article. Interestingly, although Dutch architectural firms were relatively late in entering the Chinese market (Buurman & Kloos, 2005), in the past few years, many of Dutch architectural firms have been stably growing in the Chinese market, amongst these are Kuiper Compagnons, KCAP, OMA, UNStudio and NEXT architects.

Germany is one of neighboring countries of the Netherlands. In China, German designs have a high recommendations that Chinese people regard German designs as high-quality, firm and reliable. Moreover, The architectural of Germany has a rich and diverse history, and the Bauhaus style which is the initially impetus in Germany became one of the most influential trends in Modernist architecture and architectural education. Indeed, the influence of modern architectures can be seen everywhere in China's major cities. Meanwhile, China Academy of Art (CAA) has established a Bauhaus Institute to improve China's design culture (Movius, 2015). Apart from that many German Architectural firms, such as **gmp**, **KSP**, **logon** and **schneider+schumacher**, has successfully entered in the Chinese market.

Speaking of Architectural design, French architecture, especially its Renaissance architecture and Baroque architecture, always is considered to have a high accomplishment among countries. Actually, French architectural styles have strong related to Chinese architectural modern styles. For example, between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, French people established French concession in Shanghai. This area was offered residents and retails to French people. During that time, *Shikumen* which is a residence combining Chinese residential styles with French styles was created. French architectural firms, such as Valode & Pistre, Wilmotte & Associates and AS architecture studio, are still keeping active in the Chinese market.

Cultural level

In the perspective of cultural study, it is easier to investigate conflicts and problems among countries with largely cultural differences. Hofstede et al. (2010) classified national cultures alongside six dimensions, being power distance; individualism versus collectivism; masculinity versus femininity; uncertainty avoidance; long- versus short-term orientation; and indulgence versus restraint. Table 4.3a shows that cultural dimensions of China are different from the Netherlands, Germany and France. Compared with the Netherlands, Chinese cultural dimensions

National cultures/ Countries	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity (versus Femininity)	Individualism (versus Collectivism)	Long- versus Short Term Orientation	Indulgence (versus Restraint)
China	80	30	55	15	87	68
The Netherlands	38	53	14	80	44	24
Germany	35	67	66	69	83	40
France	68	86	43	72	63	48

Figure 4.3a: National Cultural Difference among China, the Netherlands, Germany and France (Source: Hofstede, 2010)

has huge differences from other three countries, with high power distance, low uncertainty-avoidance, collectivism, masculinity, long-term orientation and high restraint. Therefore, it is possible to compare with these two countries. Interestingly, although Germany and the Netherlands are geographically close, at cultural level, Germany has high score of long-term orientation as China. This may mean that to some extent, Chinese architectural firms may have a similar values as Germans'. Unlike other two Western European countries, France has high power-distance and uncertainty-avoidance. Especially, because of a large difference of uncertainty avoidance between China and France, the comparison of uncertainty avoidance at organizational level between two countries is essential.

Selected Cases

Four case studies have been done in this study. They are a Chinese company (ECADI), a French company (FRI), **gmp** (German company) and MVRDV (Dutch company). As foreign

architectural firms have to cooperate with local design institutes, the first case is a local design institute, named ECADI. Choosing LDIs as a sample is because they have a typical Chinese characteristic, despite their influential power for foreign architectural firms. For instance, the hierarchy is extremely high. Decisions are made by the highest level. Team members has not voice during the group meeting. Moreover, guan-xi between developers and the high level of LDIs is quite important, as LDIs attain projects from government, acquaint clients or bids. East China Architectural Design & Research Institute (ECADI) is one of China's most influential architectural design institutions, it has several branches for designing different type of buildings.

The French case, Frederic Rolland International (FRI) was selected. It entered into the Chinese company quite early in 1988, therefore they have rich experience in collaboration with Chinese developers. It is likely to get knowledge about how to improve team performance in collaborative team. Moreover, the longer it stays in China, the more it knows about Chinese culture. Thus it may change its working mode or the organizational structure, to fit into the Chinese context. Furthermore, at the cultural level, since Chinese hierarchy is high, meanwhile power distance in France is medium high from Hofstede et al. (2010) cultural dimensions. Comparison with the influence of power distance in two companies is possible.

The third case study is a German company called Architekten von Gerkan, Marg und Partner (**gmp**). Many reasons shows that **gmp** is a good sample for this study. Firstly, **gmp** has rich experience and famous on architectural designed in last 45 years. Many famous landmarks are designed by **gmp**, such as the Berlin Central Station and the Berlin Olympiastadion. Furthermore, since its branches are all over the world, it assumed that **gmp** has enough knowledge about cross-cultural management. In addition, the most important reasons is that **gmp** has closely collaborated with Chinese developers and the government in the past two decades. Half of **gmp**'s current clients are from China and more than 130 of **gmp**'s projects has been done in China (W. Liu, 2014). Apparently, China has become one of the important country for **gmp** to show its expertise and experience.

MVRDV, a Dutch architectural firm, is the last case study. Compared with FRI and **gmp**, MVRDV who established its representative office in Shanghai 4 years ago is quite young in the Chinese market. Its working mode may not matured and may only for few years. Actually, in the beginning of 2016, it announced that MVRDV was going to expand its office in Shanghai in following years, hence it is interesting to see its current working mode. Additionally, at the cultural level, Dutch organizational culture is quite direct influenced by individualism (Hofstede et al., 2010) and less hierarchy, which is different from Chinese's. Comparison of the organizational structure and team integration among other studied companies is necessary, in order to understand whether the cultural factor impact the operation of an organization or not.

4.3.3 Respondents' Selection

9 interviewees participated into the interview. Samplings are divided into two parts, architects and local developers. Architect segments categorized into West European architects and local architects. Chinese respondents who are with totally different cultural background and values

can bring a comparison of Western and Eastern opinions about working in the Chinese context. Two respondents had interviews in this case. Indeed, when talking to team integration and cultural diversity, Chinese architects' voices are also crucial in this study. Moreover, selecting most interviews from the Netherlands is because they have the similar educational background and similar values from Dutch background, in order to gain an accurate result about how they feel, how they react and what they think in the Chinese context.

Code	Country	Current Position	Working Experience	Company Name
TR	The Netherlands	Junior architect	3 months	-
R1	The Netherlands	Junior architect	3 years	ECADI
R2	China	Junior architect	10 months	ECADI
R3	The Netherlands	Junior architect	6 years	FRI
R4	The Netherlands	Junior architect	2.5 years	gmp
R5	Germany	Junior architect	3 years	gmp
R6	The Netherlands	Director	2 years	MVRDV
R7	China	Junior architect	1.5 years	MVRDV
R8	China	Developer	25 years	-

Table 4.3b Profiles of Interviewees

The Western European interviewees had worked between 3 months and 6 years in the Chinese construction industry. It assumes that the longer foreigners stay in China, the more cultural knowledge they learnt from experience, the more cultural intelligence they have. Therefore, cultural intelligence could be measured. Furthermore, the architects are from different positions in the firm, including junior architects and the director. From different perspective, to understand how an organization works and how a team integrates in the Chinese context. Table 4.3b generates their general information. Additionally, Chinese developers are necessary to be interviewed, because this study focuses on collaborative team between local developers and Western European architects. It is not enough only to see architects perspective, therefore the phenomenon is investigated more holistic by understanding developers' aspects. Following is the details about respondents.

ECADI

R1 who worked at ECADI for three years, has stayed in China for 3.5 years. Now he is a freelancing architect in Shanghai. 120 Chinese employees was working with R1 at ECADI. R2 is a junior architect, working at ECADI for 10 months. The branch mainly designs health facilities. And in this branch, it has an international department, therefore, respondent 2 experienced to work with the head of international department, Mr. Bake, for few months. Although two respondents work for different branches, it is interesting to see diverse opinions about working in Chinese context from Dutch and Chinese perspective.

FRI

R3 who has worked as a Dutch architect in an international team at Frederic Rolland International (FRI) for 3 years and has lived in Shanghai for 6 years. Since he stays the longest time in China amongst all respondents, he can be a sample test whether cultural intelligence impacts on team performance.

gmp

R4 is a Dutch, graduating from TU Delft. He lives in China for two and half years with his Chinese wife. He has both experience on working in Taiwanese and German company (**gmp**). Since Taiwanese cultural is similar as Chinese, it is comparable to see his feelings and experience in Taiwanese company. R5 who is from Germany has lived in Shanghai for 3 years and has worked for the current position for two and half years. Since both of them are junior architects, how design team work can be understood. Although R5 is from German, because cultural differences between the Netherlands and Germany are not great, this sample is still comparable with others.

MVRDV

R6 is the Asia director of MVRDV at Shanghai office. She has lived in Shanghai almost for 2 years. Her responsibility is to approach Chinese clients and build guan-xi with them, in order to get projects which fit to MVRDV design style. As well as she needs to communicate with clients, visit sites and establish projects. After experiencing frustration, R6 is getting used to working in Chinese environment. Due to she is the Asia director of MVRDV, it is clearer to understand the process of a project at MVRDV, from approaching the developer to quality control. In Shanghai office, except R6, R7 is another important role in the office. He studied master of Architecture at TU Delft for two years. His internship was at MVRDV Rotterdam office for half year and now, he is a junior architect at MVRDV Shanghai office. R7 is like a bridge to connect R6 and Rotterdam office with Chinese clients. Except architectural work, market researches, supervisions of drawings from LDIs and translation are his main tasks. R7 has studied in the Netherlands for 2 years, thus he understands Dutch culture better. He can be a sample to test whether local employees who studied abroad impact on team performance.

Developer

The last respondent, R8, is the professor in Shanghai University and he is also working in the development company. He has a rich experience in China's building industry and collaboration with foreign architectural firms. His statements help foreign architectural firms to understand how Chinese developers think and work, as well as help to answer questions how to improve collaborative team performance between foreign architectural firms and Chinese developers.

4.3.4 Data Analysis and Synthesis

Case study research collects large quantities of data, making analysis critical, but complex. Furthermore, the methods for aggregating data across projects are not well developed. However,

synthesis across studies can facilitate to build an understanding of organizational structures to support improvement (Baker, 2011). The qualitative data collected will be analyzed using content analysis, which is a research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their contexts (Krippendorff, 2012). Content analysis allows the qualitative data to be conducted for constant comparative analysis, in order to generate knowledge within interviewees' experience in cross-cultural team from the text (Ling et al., 2007).

During the data analysis, it is useful to generate an accurate data by using qualitative data analysis software. Researchers can systematize coding, organize voluminous amounts of data, trace linkages between concepts, and understand relationships among categories through analyzing software (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). The software of this qualitative study is ATLAS. ti for data analysis in this research. This software helps for coding the massive amounts of data. The possible data was exported after coding procedure by ATLAS. ti.

4.4 Timeframe

Figure 4.4 gives different stages designed to conduct the research. The university graduation processes (P1 to P5) are also integrated in this scheme to show the planning and the timeframe of this research project.

Phase 1

In the first stage, the idea of the research is created based on personal interests and literature review. According to literature study, the main topic of research is narrowed down as well as main problems are generated in the beginning. Besides, literature study also helps to develop the main and sub- research questions. Summaries of current and previous researches show that the study of improvement of team performance in cross-cultural context is limited and it is urgent problem. This base is created to support for further research. Three main variables, team diversity, cultural differences, cultural intelligence, are explored. Additionally, a rough conceptual model is made.

Phase 2

Accordance with the P1 study, literature review continuously develop the idea of the study. More variables, such as team performance, trust, psychological safety and tacit Chinese norms are defined. The conceptual model is made, based on theoretical model. Furthermore, according to literature review, indicators are defined and open questions are made to measure the research. Before going to have formal interview, some informal interviews, as tests, are made in the Netherlands. The assumptions are generated. Moreover, samples and cases are selected to clarify the research.

Phase 3

In Phase 3, the interviews with key persons involved in the Chinese context. The interview protocol is structured with the problem analysis from theoretical model. 4 cases are studied to compare with the differences between power from Chinese developers and Western European architects.

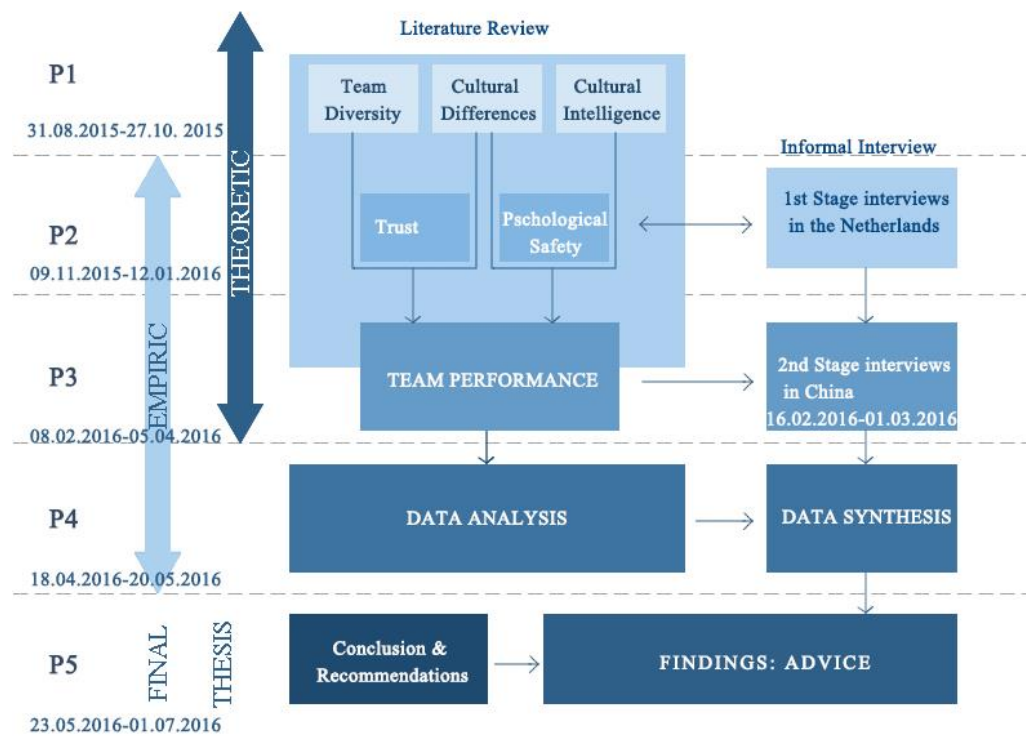


Figure 4.4: Working Timeframe (Own ill.)

Phase 4

Data analysis and data synthesis are conducted in this phase in order to understand the whole picture of the research.

Phase 5

The final phase is the formulation of all data and data analysis to give discussion of the study. Moreover, the advice or recommendation about improvement of team performance in Chinese context is generate to help Western architectural firms to boost collaborative team performance. The conclusions are made which are related to literature review, interviews and outcome.

4.5 Conclusion

This study is a qualitative research by applying to case study methods. Interviews are the main way to collect data. 4 cases were studied with Western European architects, Chinese architects and developers. Data analysis were used by coding software, ATLAS. ti. This research was divided into 5 phase, from the theoretical part to the empirical part. Next chapters show 4 studied cases in this research.

5. Setting the scene

5.1 Introduction

Cultural dimensions that are mentioned in Chapter 3 distinguish differences among countries, but they are not about differences between team members. Therefore, these valuables should be translated from countries level to team level, in order to be applied into 4 case studies. In the beginning of this chapter, the relationship among valuables is discussed. The second part of this chapter is to understand the China's building industry.

Understanding the China's building industry facilitates to study cases better. To better know about China's building industry, the first part of this chapter explains why China's real estate market is shrinking by connection with the Chinese history and culture. Main players, in the Chinese construction industry, besides local developers, the government and local design institutes are also involved into the early stage of projects. The difference between China and most Western European countries is that the position of architects in China is not as high as their peers in Western European. For instance, in the Netherlands, the contractor should follow the command of the architect, while Chinese laws clearly forbid the architect to get involved in selecting project materials supplier or other issues that may involve corruption (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014). Mostly, the developer or the government (when the government is the developing agency) takes the decisions, followed up by the architect. This differences may cause ineffective team performance in collaborative teams, thus understanding main stakeholders in the early stage is necessary.

Last but not least, when a foreign architectural firm enters into the China's market, it needs to decide its entry strategy and working modes. There are 6 main working modes to be introduced, which assists to analyze organizational structures of 4 cases.

5.2 Translation from Cultural Level to Team Level

Power Distance to Hierarchy

Power distance means what extent a society accepts inequality. According to Heidrick (2012) hierarchy could be a barrier for problem solving, learning and innovation in a team, thus power distance can be translated to hierarchy. Hierarchy is an indicator to measure team performance of 4 cases at the team level.

Uncertainty Avoidance to Psychological Safety

It is found that uncertainty avoidance has indirect relationship with psychological safety. In chapter 2.3.3, trust is described as rational and relational choice. Psychological safety regards as a tacit choice, based on rational choice. Cheng (2012) found that uncertainty avoidance is related to trust in the early stage of cross-cultural team formation. Team members from cultures with a low uncertainty avoidance orientation easily build trust with each other by similar values.

Therefore, uncertainty avoidance and psychological safety have a relation with each other.

Long-term Orientation & Collectivism to Trust

Long-term orientation and collectivism has a connection with trust. Long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards; collectivism explained as what extent people like to be in groups (Hofstede et al., 2010). As China is a long-term orientated and collective country, building long-term guan-xi in a group plays an important role in the business. People are able to invest their whole life to build guan-xi. For individuals who have guan-xi with expressive ties in a group, easily tend to be trusted (AMA Publishing, 2005). When the trust built among team members, it lasts a wide temporal range including the future (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

Other Cultural dimensions

The cultural dimensions, masculinity versus femininity, is also crucial in the building industry. Yet, this study mainly focus on improvement of collaborative team performance by development of psychological safety and trust in a limited time, the topic about “investigation of the different reactions between males and females in a cross-cultural team” can be the further study in the future.

The other dimension, indulgent versus restraint, is about what extent people are willing to enjoy their life. This dimension may have relevant with team performance. For example, in restrained societies, individuals are more hardworking than those who in indulgent societies. However it does not have strong connections with psychological safety and trust. Thus this study pays less attention on this aspect.

5.3 China's Building Industry

5.3.1 Shrinking China's Real Estate Market

Recent Shift from Planned to Market Economy in China

China is still a developing country. 24 years ago, the government decided to shift from planned to market economy. Since China had carried out planned economy for several decades, the China's economy has experienced a rapid economic development from a shortage economy to an economy of balanced supply and demand. Due to the development of market economy, increasingly investors have discovered opportunities in Chinese real estate market in last two decades. As described in previous chapters, wealth means “a good face” and real estate market is the fastest way to earn money. It is like a bandwagon effect, contributing numerous businessmen who are not familiar real estate industry to enter in the China's real estate market. However, the China's real estate market is not matured and completed as Western European countries, many rules and regulations need to be developed. Therefore, for developers, arguing square meters and design appearance are the most effective way to make amount of money.

Additionally, due to housing price have surged in major Chinese cities, the most restrict housing

policy, home purchase restrictions, has been released since 2010, leading most investors and developers turn to commercial and office market. As a result, an increasing vacancy rate in many cities, which is also another reason leading to the decrease of the China's real estate market.

5.3.2 Main Players

Architectural Firms

Large state-owned design institutes, small/medium-sized private design institutes and foreign design firms constitute the Chinese architectural market. In China, if a foreign architectural firm takes part in a design project, it must cooperate with local design institutes (LDI). Normally, the task of LDIs is drawing the construction plans and details (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014).

Government

The government plays an important role in China's building industry. The organizational structure of the Chinese government determines that the decisions for building projects are all made by the "top leader" (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014). If the design is satisfactory according to certain leaders, it is easier to get building permit; whereas, it is nearly impossible to obtain building permits if such is not the case.

Developer

Chinese developers are a major force for project development in China. In general, large developers always have highly professional project management team (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014), and they have more experience in cooperating with foreign firms. Although some small/medium-sized local developers have enough capital and can spend more-than-average efforts per project, their project management skills are rather immature. Therefore, there might be various obstacles when working with international teams (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014).

Powerful LDI

It is hard to be equal for foreign firms as LDIs. Except the design experience of the consortiums, LDIs have a dominating status in any large projects. Because LDIs are partly government control, they have guan-xi to get more projects. Moreover, according to Chinese policy requirements, foreign firms can only participate in design phase, unless they have joint venture with any LDIs. Hence, foreign architectural firms have unavoidable cooperation with local design institutes with construction project's permit to prepare construction drawings for any project. Each foreign firm is required to collaborate with LDI from the conceptual phase to ensure a consolidated groundwork (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014). A large amount of information is also offered by engineer, landscape and other department of LDIs, therefore collaborate with LDIs facilitates the design quality.

A powerful and professional LDIs influence on a quality, progress of a project and information sharing. Some LDIs want to protect their positions, so they don't share information or even don't cooperate with foreign architectural firms. For this reason, having a trustable local partner has

prime impact of a foreign firm's development in China. A professional developer has its long-term cooperated LDIs or finds a LDI by bids. In the most situations, the architectural firm is designated a LDI by the developer, therefore the firm should respect the client's decision and accept the arranged cooperation (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014). While architectural firms also have opportunities to recommend their LDI partners to the developer, when LDIs have not been appointed. Most foreign architectural firms select LDIs by their strengths. Powerful LDIs are familiar with Chinese codes and policies, as well as have fruitful experience in Chinese market. Furthermore, many large LDIs have a plenty of employees to follow up the process and solve technical problems. Meanwhile, since they have experience in international cooperation and by consulting other architects, it does not take much time for them to get used to work on different platforms (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014).

5.3.3 Main Working Modes for Foreign Firms

There are six possible modes allowing foreign firms to be active in the Chinese market (Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014); (Also see figure 5.2.3):

1. A small office in LDI;
2. A branch office in China;
3. Association with a local partner;
4. Working closely or purchasing a small local firm;
5. Association with LDI;
6. A class-A LDI with multinational design group.

A small office in LDI

In this mode, a few architects rent a small office in an LDI's building to work closely with LDI and to be able to be present at the site when a project is under construction. This modes is helpful for exportation into the Chinese market. A foreign architectural firm closely cooperates with a LDI. Headquarter can send director to the Chinese market and meanwhile, architects can recruit from the local market.

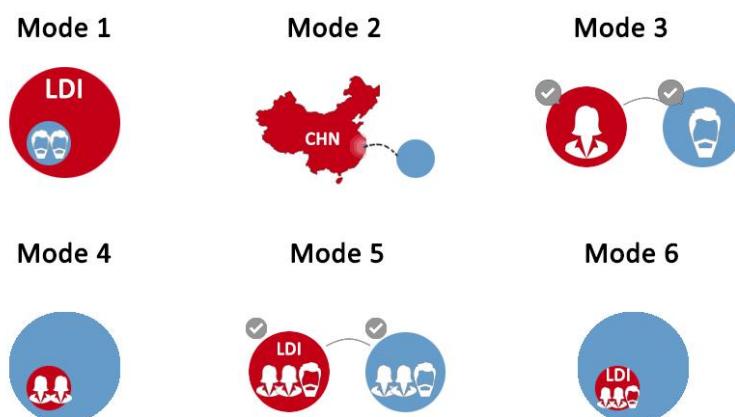


Figure 5.3.3: Six Main Working Modes For Foreign Architectural Firms In China (Source: Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014)

A branch office in China

Here, a foreign company starts a branch in China. This may or may not be a complete office in the sense that designs are completed by headquarter, therefore a high-quality design can be kept. An established branch is conveniently promote to explore and maintain to local developers. The main purpose is working on coordination and public relation.

Association with a local partner

In this mode, the firm should hire a Chinese person with an in-depth understanding of Chinese market using his connections. This mode facilitates interaction with the Chinese market and the local partner can open up the Chinese market by his guan-xi.

Working Closely or Purchasing a Small Local Firm

In order to cut down design costs and expand acceptable range of design fees, having or closely work with a local team enables a foreign architectural firms to work more effective and efficient. It is better to collaborate with a local team or a local firm with needed certification of drawings, a famous name, and with talented designers, in order to maintain the design quality and reduce the suspicions about the local team from developers.

Association with LDI

This mode is a strategic partnership. The LDI takes charge of the construction drawings and other technical tasks upon completion of the conceptual plan stage. However, it requires foreign firms to develop a good relationship with the LDI. Moreover, both parties have to negotiate on the allocation of design fee between creative design which is done by foreign firm and preparation of construction drawings. Furthermore, the foreign firm must put more effort to check the details of the construction drawings provided by the LDI, to keep from any deviations.

A class-A LDI with Multinational Design Group

This mode facilitates to be more localized. Compared with previous modes, this mode helps a foreign architectural firm to fully control the local company, to reduce design costs and improving the completion of projects. However, in order to conduct this strategy, a foreign architectural firm needs a large amount of investment with high operation costs. Meanwhile, it is hard to keep design quality at of each internal teams.

Other possible modes

There are some other working modes, such as a foreign designer or a team hired by Chinese LDI. However, most foreign architectural firms implement mentioned six working modes as their strategy in the Chinese market. Therefore this study mainly focuses on given working modes, so as to compare the differences in each company.

5.4 Conclusion

From cultural level to team level, 4 cultural dimensions, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation and collectivism, are translated into hierarchy, psychological safety and trust respectively. However, since this study mainly focus on improvement of team

performance by development of psychological safety and trust, other two cultural dimensions are not discussed.

Impacted by the shift from planned economy to market economy, most Chinese developers who are businessmen entered into the China's real estate market with fast development. Since most local developers lack real estate knowledge, less planning and market researches leads the China's real estate market to be shrinking.

Besides local developers and foreign architectural firms, government, sometimes as a developer, can impact on whole projects by its power. Moreover, it also has power to decide whether it delivers building permits to developers or not. In addition, foreign architectural firms have unavoidable cooperation with LDIs, thus looking for a trustable and reliable partner for foreign architectural firms is essential. 6 working modes are introduced. This helps to understand following organizational structures of 4 cases. The next chapter illustrates the first case, Chinese firm, ECADI.

6. Case Study 1

6.1 Introduction

Last Chapter introduces that some important valuables and china's building industry. This chapter is introduced the first case, the Chinese design institute, ECADI. Since foreign architectural companies unavoidably collaborate with LDIs, according to Chinese regulations, therefore understanding Chinese organizational structure helps to understand Chinese companies' way of work. Moreover, team integration is about how team members share their values in a team, influenced by organizational structure. This is related to psychological safety, trust and team performance in design teams. Furthermore, different approaches of meeting with local developers are applied by studied architectural firms. This description helps to understand how a LDI collaborates with developers, in order to find similarities and differences among studied cases. The first case is described as follows.

6.2 Company Background

Company Name: East China Industry Bureau Architectural Design Company (ECADI)

1952, East China Industry Bureau Architectural Design Company - Shanghai's first state-owned design institute and predecessor of East China Architectural Design & Research Institute (ECADI) - was established. In the following year, Shanghai Municipal Architectural Engineering Bureau Manufacture and Technology Office established its own Design Division – as Shanghai's first municipal design institute, it was the predecessor of Shanghai Institute of Architectural Design & Research (SIADR). In 1998, with approval of the Shanghai municipal government, ECADI and SIADR merged to form Shanghai Xian Dai Architectural Design (Group) Co., Ltd (Xian Dai Architectural Design, 2010).

With close attention on and in-depth understanding of the design industry, ECADI has integrated and enhanced high-end and core competitiveness of different specialties and special technologies. Its services are including Architecture, Structural analysis and design consulting, Electron-mechanical and intellectualization, Urban planning & design, BIM consulting, Underground structure, Sustainable design, Regional development and planning, and Project consulting and management. ECADI is dedicated to enhancing high-end market share and reputation, thus establishing a benchmark for China's proprietary brands (ECADI, 2012).

With the positioning of "International ideas, Chinese practice", as well as the philosophy and brand image of "ECADI design, International quality, Local service", ECADI strives to become an international design company taking a lead in China and boasting international competitiveness. Moreover, relying on its strong capacity of integrating resources both at home and abroad and in design EPC management, ECADI effectively carried out a lot of large-sized and complex projects and made outstanding achievements in fields of ultra-high rise building, hotel, transportation, office, exhibition & convention and theater, et cetera. (ECADI, 2012).

6.3 Organizational Structure

Headquarter of ECADI is in Shanghai. The other Branches are in Beijing, Chongqing, Chengdu, and Nanjing, et cetera. Each branch has its president to be in charge of. The departments are divided into Architecture, Urban planning, Structural design and Underground structure engineering et cetera. The organizational structure is with president of ECADI (院长), vice presidents (副院长), directors (所长), the project manager, the architectural project manager, the team leader and team members. Most of time, president and vice presidents are responsible for administration. The ECADI is divided into many institutes. Each institute with different design field has its director. The project manager is as a coordinator who need to take all aspects, like civil engineering, architecture and technical engineering, into consideration. The project manager can be the director, the president or the team leader. The scale and the importance of the project decide to whom takes charge of the project. For example, if the developer comes to the president or the project is very complicated, which needs other institutes to cooperate, the project belongs to ECADI. And the president is as a coordinator and the project manager in the project. If the project was came from the bids or guan-xi of director, it goes to institute project. Different level of the project is related to the division of the profits. The architectural project manager only takes responsibility for projects in architectural department. The ambiguous Chinese way of doing business is to have social activities, such as shared meals or Karaoke. R1 gave blow:

“I had an experience when I was on business in Chongqing. The director had drink and dinner. From the dinner, I can see the guan-xi of the developer and the director is very good. Thus they did named the project as ECADI which is not reported but the director can get his profit. So if you go closely, you can see these things. Many foreigners don't have Guan-xi. They can be used by other Chinese to show their Guan-xi that they are international and give them face. But during the dinner, the relationship with my superior was improved. But I still keep my emotion in neutral, since it was with the hierarchy and also you couldn't get any benefits. So I keep it like a business.”

Here shows that when a person has individual guan-xi, it is not hard to get project on the table. Meanwhile, the relationship is more boned and close in the collaborative team. Meanwhile, the relationship is more boned and close in the collaborative team. Given figure 6.3 illustrates organizational structure of ECADI.

The hierarchy in LDI is quite high, because the process of decision making is that the low level of responsible person should to show decisions to the high level person. In the end, the highest level gives the final decisions. For example, when working on the project of ECADI, the president is charge of the project. Firstly, every architect is asked to work on a concept individually and team members can discuss design with the team leader or the architectural project manager every couple of days or weeks. Architects get feedback from the team leaders or the architectural project manager. One week before meet the developer, team members need to meet with the director. 4 or 5 designs are presented by the project manager to the director.

Since the director has rich experience and know what clients' want, decisions from the director

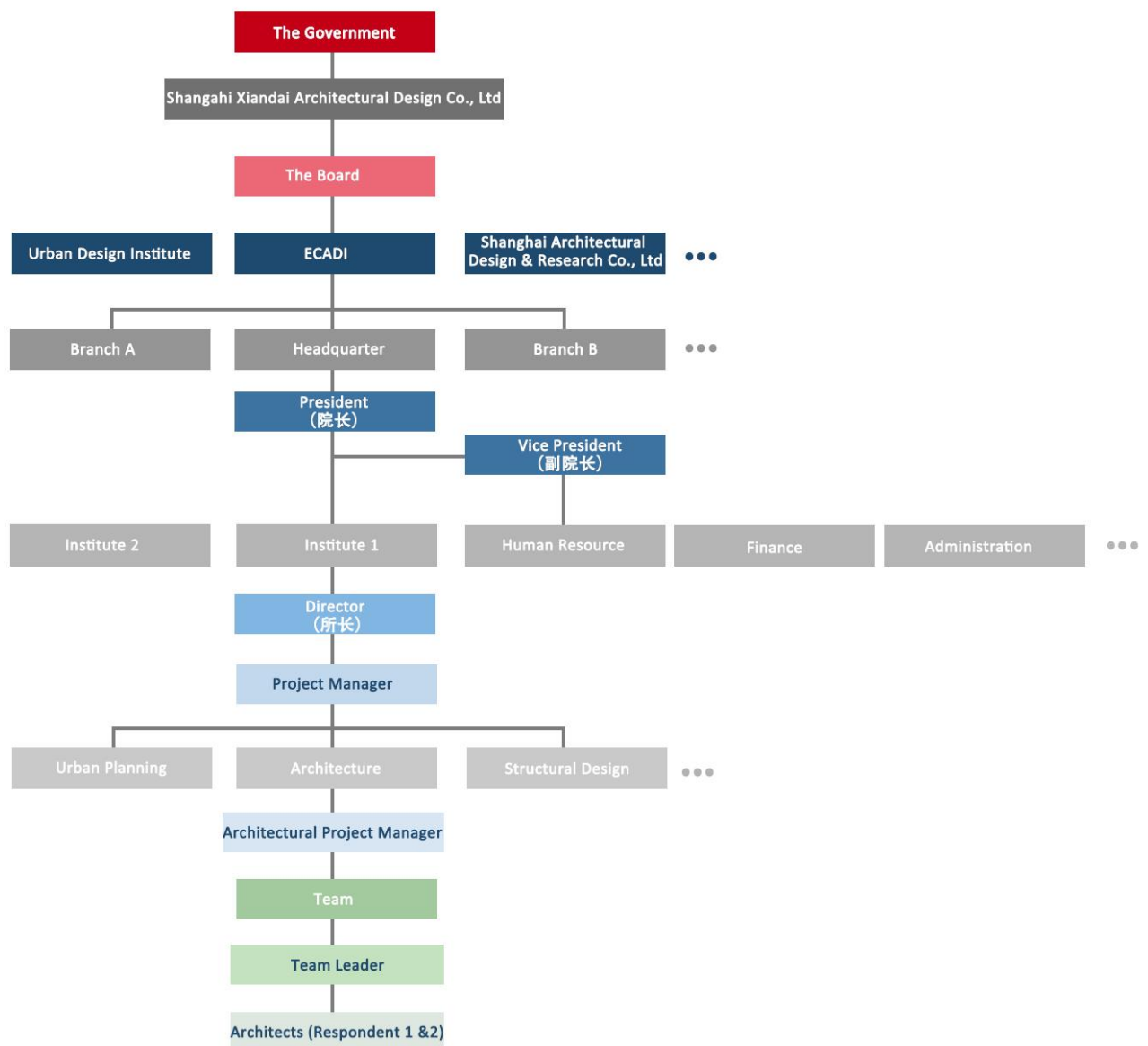


Figure 6.3a: The Organizational Structure of ECADI (Own ill.)

are about selection of 1 to 2 outstanding design(s) which are going to elaborate. Meanwhile, this decision is also informed to the president. The final decision is made by the president. All architects should follow what the director or the president said. The rest of unselected designs are also shown to clients in the presentation, in order to show the workload to developers.

6.4 Team Integration

Hierarchy certainly impacts on team integration and team performance at ECADI. Formal meetings and informal discussions are the main meeting forms for communication among different levels. Most informal meetings that are not mandatory are about discussion of the individual concepts' design with team members, team leader and the architectural project manager. Team members can speak out their opinions as suggestions, however the designer can decide whether take suggestions or not. Sometimes, architects have personal conversations with

the team leader or the architectural project manager. It is possible to argue about design with them in personal conversation, but the manner of argument is very important. Since the architectural project manager presents all designs in formal meetings with many employees and the director, sometimes the presenter may spend less time on introducing the design which is designed by an architect who had an argument with the presenter.

Hierarchy is one of the influential factor to reduce team performance. To begin with, due to the hierarchy, the architect cannot say anything, even with strong emotions. As R1 stated:

“You try to negotiate it as possible but sometimes you know that it won’t change anything. You tried to make everything best, but sometimes it is useless.”

Furthermore, sometimes employees need to please the director and design a project based on their superior’s preferences, in order to get an agreement with the design. Meanwhile, employees need to agree with everything that the director said, in order to keep his face. This reduces team creativity and information sharing, causing poor team performance, like R1 pointed out,

“Usually you just accept, and there is not many things that you can do when you know that it won’t go with the plan. Because of the hierarchy and their favorite. For example people know what the boss like and they try to start with his preferences and make him happy.”

Moreover, in order to keep harmonious environment and avoid frustration, most Chinese employees they are not willing to talk with high level people. Like R2 mentioned,

由于在工作上谈论专业比较多，所以也不存在文化上的问题，但还是会认为他是领导，不太愿意多去接触他。

(There is not a great cultural differences between me and Mr. Baker when we talk about architectural design. However, I am not willing to discuss other things with him, because he is my superior.)

However, if it is a complicated project, necessitating supports from other departments or

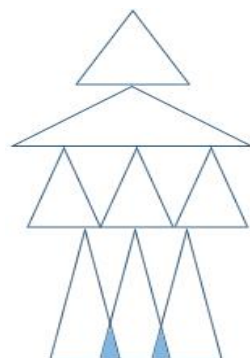


Figure 6.4: Team Integration at ECADI (Own ill.)

institutes, ECADI will try its best to solve the problem by coordinating with these supporting departments and adding more related people to get involved in the project. Figure 6.4 shows team integration at ECADI.

To sum up, due to hierarchy, team integration is quite low in the Chinese design team. Moreover hierarchy reduces team creativity and information sharing, decreasing team performance. However, since Chinese employees are flexible, and work efficient and hard, so that effective team performance is kept.

6.5 Work with developers

Team performance can be improved by building guan-xi. For example, there are many ways to get projects, such as clients directly approach, bids or competitions. However, normally, ECADI gets projects by directors' guan-xi. Influenced by long-term orientation, Chinese people prefer to keep cooperation for several times, if the first cooperation is satisfactory. Meanwhile, guan-xi is built. The more cooperation two parties have, the better architects understand what clients' want. Though sometimes information sharing depends on how much information the client have and how they are professional, clients are willing to give adequate information to acquaint parties, due to guan-xi and face. Guan-xi is very important for improvement trust and team performance at ECADI, since some conflicts, like payment, can be avoided by guan-xi, based on R1,

“Most developers don't pay for the architect, especially for small foreigner companies. Whenever, they changed something, they changed. If you have good Guan-xi, you can accept a lot.”

If the government get involved in the project, the information will be given by the government. Yet, since Chinese clients are less professional and hierarchy is still quite high. To get the project, architects should know what clients' preferences by reviewing the precious project that the client picked up, when ECADI participates into some competitions.

There are two types of meetings with developers, formal and informal meetings. Architects and other involved colleagues should attend the meeting, however none of them can speak out in the meeting because the face need to be given to the director. R1 gave,

“I don't say anything because it makes my boss bad. It gives his face. If he says something wrong, I can't say it directly, maybe I can say it after.”

It is unnecessary to dress suits in the meeting, making the meeting less pressure. Sometimes, there is a discussion during formal meetings. Depending on the atmosphere in the room, junior architects can decide to whether speak out or not. The formal meeting is presentation of the design, done by the project manager. Furthermore, decisions are made by the developer in formal meetings. If the client has any questions, the architect will give some suggestions as answers. However, the project is also related to the budget. If the suggestion causes to be over

budget, the client will ask second options. R1 pointed out that decision-makings may postpone, as the developer needs to talk with other stakeholders. Because of the impact of high-context communication and face keeping, clients give a negative feedback indirectly. According to R1,

“For example, for Changsha project with Coop Himmelb(l)au, that's also a famous architect, but they (clients) didn't not care about it so much. I think with a famous architect, even the negative feedback, they give less direct. They might send them email instead of telling them immediately.”

When the information or feedback is not given in meetings directly, effective team performance may be decreased. One of reason is that e-mails or calls is less inefficient and relies can be delayed. Additionally, it is easier to understand the negative feedback and faster find solutions by direct communication during meetings instead of e-mails or calls.

The informal meeting is discussion of the progress of a project. As an LDI, all drawings are made by ECADI. Therefore it is unavoidable to communicate with foreign architectural firms, if there is a cooperated project. Sometimes although a project is turned over to ECADI, the developer may keep the architect as a consultant for supervision. Respondent 1 who can speak Chinese and English assists for communication with foreign architect in informal meetings. It facilitates the communication among the Chinese developer, ECADI and foreign architectural firms, increasing team performance.

6.6 Conclusion

This Chapter gives a clear picture about a system of one of famous LDI, ECADI. Because of government control and more local people working there, the company strongly influenced by Chinese culture. Since the strong hierarchy, the decision is only made by the highest level of the company, as well as employees are not willing to talk with their superiors, decreasing to share information and team creativity.

Team performance is less effective, due to high-context communication and face. All employees follow and respect the director's desire. In company meetings, only the related level of people can speak up and the final decision is made by the director or the president. When meeting with the client, in order to keep face, architects hardly challenge clients, except in the informal situation with the correct atmosphere. High-context communication happens frequently in Chinese collaborative teams. Developers do not give direct messages to architects, whereas they send negative feedback by emails and calls to keep architects' face and harmonious environment instead. However, as information and feedback cannot be shared directly, architects have to spend much time to understand what developers' thoughts, decreasing team performance in the end.

However, guan-xi plays an extremely important role in ECADI, to improve collaborative team performance. It is not only the way to get the projects from the client and avoid conflicts, but it is trust between ECADI and clients. Although it is hard for a foreign architect working in the

typical Chinese working context, the foreign architect who works in LDIs still is bridge between foreign architectural firms and LDIs, as well as the international image of the company.

Next chapter gives the second case study, a French company, FRI.

7. Case Study 2

7.1 Introduction

In the former case study, the organizational structure and the team integration of ECADI are shown. Moreover, it is found that tacit Chinese norms impact on working in design and collaborative teams. This chapter describes the French case, FRI, to see whether national cultural factors impact on the organizational structure and the team integration or not. Meanwhile, since FRI entered in China's market quite early, it is interesting to see how their working modes changes in last decades.

7.2 Company Background

Company Name: Frederic Rolland International (FRI)

Frederic Rolland Architects was established in 1954. The company started to target large scale architectural competitions and public building design in China in 1988. After 5 years, the Shanghai office was established in 1993, as a branch office of the Design Department of Beijing Zhong Lian Huan Engineering Co., Ltd. This office is further referred to as the FRI Shanghai Branch. In 2006, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China, initiated United Architects & Engineers Co., Ltd (UA Design). Since 2013, the FRI Shanghai Branch has allied with the United Architects Shanghai Branch into a Cooperative Design Alliance. The projects of the company covers offices, commerce, hotels, schools, residential, apartments, villas and urban complexes with a variety of functions (Frederic Rolland International, 2016).

7.3 Organizational Structure

FRI went through three different stages during its development. From 1988 to 2006, the firm only has the small branch in Shanghai. Such a small branch office is considered as mode 2, a branch office in China (the completed working modes is presented in Chapter 5). Upon foundation of the UA Design, the firms' mode first downsized to mode 1: a small office in LDI.



Figure 7.3a: The Changes of FRI Working Mode (Own ill.)

FRI worked closely with UA Design, but soon thereafter gained substantial importance. During a 10-year expansion, the working mode of FRI changed from mode 1 to mode 5. Currently, FRI

has a partnership with UA Design. Figure 7.3a shows how its working mode changed in these 28 years. After FRI associates with UA Design, the strengths of both parties are maximized, contributing FRI to have qualification for completion of projects in the whole process.

FRI, now consists of its founder, Frederic Rolland, and other two partners. One of the partner, being half Canadian and half Chinese, is responsible for both the French and Shanghai offices. Because of the cooperation with UA Design, two other companies, FRUA and UASH, were established. FRUA is the company which represents the strategic partnership between FRI and UA design; UASH then belongs to UA design. Both FRI and UA Design are in charge of FRUA. Most of time, international teams in FRI and FRUA work together. There are 69 people from all over the world working at FRI. The FRI team consists of 3 senior partners, 38 architects and designers, 4 chief project engineers, 16 structural and mechanical engineers and 8 office managers (Frederic Rolland International, 2016). Sometimes, a design team in FRI is supervision by other departments in FRUA.

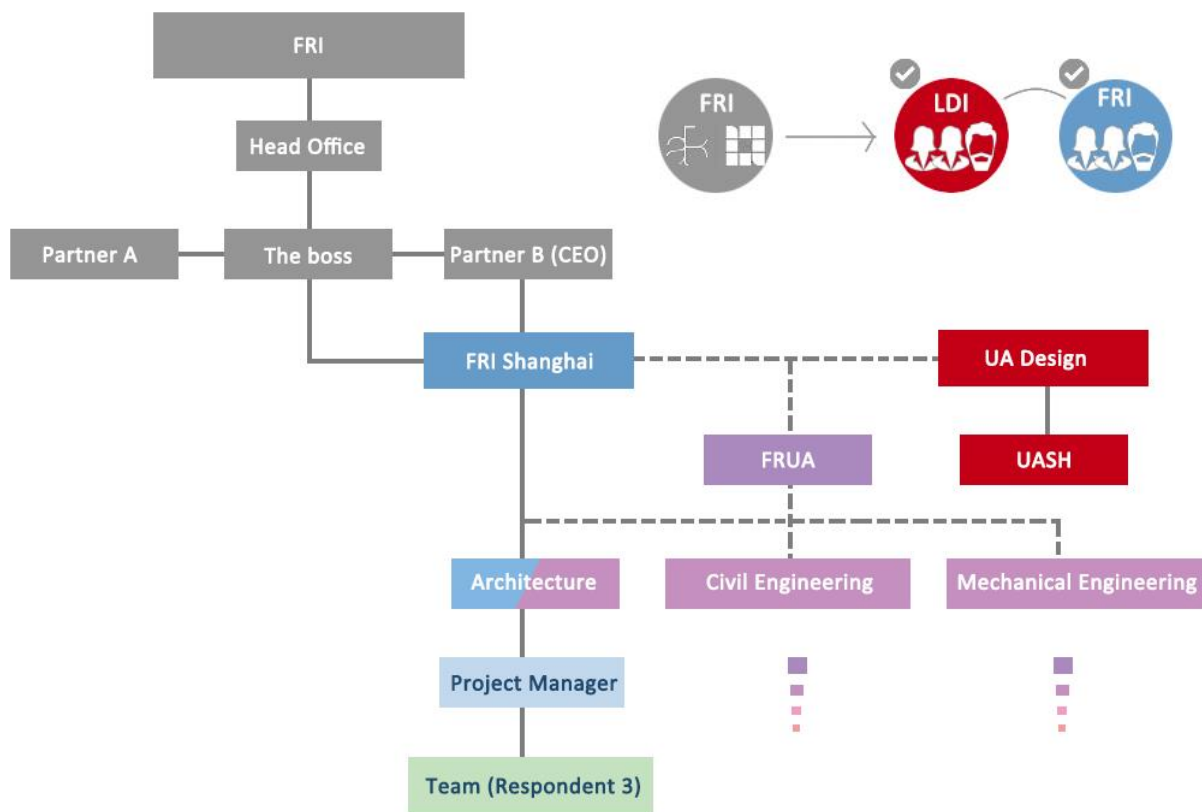


Figure 7.3b: The Current Working Mode of FRI and Its Organizational Structure (Own ill.)

The differences between FRI and FRUA is their management approach. FRI applies the more European style in management, whereas FRUA adheres to Chinese managerial approach. UA design who a national Class A qualification in architect and urban planning, a Class B qualification in landscape planning and holds an ISO9001 quality system certification. Therefore, UA Design meets the requirements and holds the licenses to perform all drawings in China. UASH, the strategic partnership company for FRI and FRUA, is assigned to deliver all drawings. UASH therefore allows, FRI and FRUA, to easily control the process and the quality

of the design. Figure 7.3b shows the current working mode of FRI and its organizational structure.

7.4 Team Integration

Compared to other West European countries, the hierarchy in France is quite high with a score of 68 out of 100 according to Hofstede et al. (2010). In addition, FRI also supervises FRUA which is the firm's strategic partnership between the French local architectural firm in China and the Chinese UA Design firm. Therefore the hierarchy might be even higher than in local French architectural firms. In the end, Chief Executive Operator (CEO), is only the decision maker at the FRI Shanghai Branch. Most of the time, the design team have meeting without CEO, therefore the project manager takes charge of the meeting. During the meeting, everyone proposes some interesting ideas or gives questions. If the project manager thinks that the idea could be accepted, the idea will be suggested as an option to the Chinese client. After the conceptualization of the idea, the CEO needs to make a decision whether it can be continued or not. When the CEO attends the meeting, the CEO's draft concept is displayed. Generally, the CEO is considered quite open-minded and she would like to get new ideas from everyone. Therefore, architects can provide their opinions about the design and have discussions with the CEO. Most foreign architects and experienced local architects will come up with many different ideas and raise many questions in the meeting.

However, team performance may less effective, as local young architects are expected to keep back and learn from the discussions and presented ideas. China is fast developing country, but its development of education is not as fast as its economy, causing many local young architects to be less competent than foreign architects at FRI. R3 mentioned:

“I think education is the most significant barrier in China. Chinese education is very different from western education. They are still educating people for the 90s. China is developing so fast, but the development of china is faster than the development of education. Usually the education educates people for society. But the ideas of Chinese education is still based on 80s or 90s. It is about professional conduction, because professional architecture in China is still young.”

Therefore, at FRI, the CEO gives more way to foreign architects to realize their ideas. Still, in the end, the ECO is the one who makes the decision and because of the hierarchy at FRI, architects have to demand permission from the CEO to make any changes to the design. However, this may slow down the process. Since the CEO needs to manage projects in China and France, she does not have time to make decisions in time, which may postponed decisions.

Another challenge may reduce team performance is that as the CEO makes decisions based on what they have done, there are more competitions in the design team, reducing individual psychological safety. R3 declared that

“As an architect, I am a little bit unsecure, if I need to please the client, make sure

they like what we do.”

This means that if architects cannot understand what clients want and their preferences, the CEO may reduce trust to her employees. Figure 7.4 illustrates team integration at FRI.

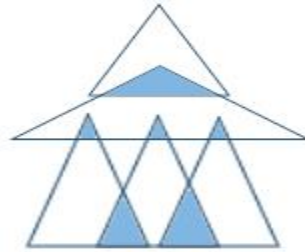


Figure 7.4: Team Integration at FRI (Own ill.)

However, since the atmosphere keeps open and free, the design team performance is still quite good. Furthermore, working with the strategic partner, UA Design, and creation of FRUA and UASH, promote team performance, as FRI has a completed team to complete projects and it has a reliable LDI to communicate and control high design quality with efficient communication.

7.5 Work with developers

Speaking of collaborative team performance at FRI, it may be less effective. Since Chinese people have a positive attitude towards foreigners (Hofstede et al., 2010), and also foreign faces show off the international image of the company as it adds to the firm’s reputation, foreign architects frequently attend meetings with the developer. However, they are not allowed to freely talk, due to present hierarchy. Only the CEO can discuss the design with the developer during these meetings. R3 confirmed this saying,

“It has very high hierarchy. So in the typical firm, the architect can’t be freedom to talk about the project.”

However, team performance is improved by engagement of informal discussions between architects and developers, and showing reference images. Since Chinese developers lack related architecture knowledge, indeed, the references images contribute to effective collaborative team performance. The CEO and the architect can persuade and help the client to choose one of prevailing options by references images. Based on R3,

“The references images are not really do anything, but it can persuade them whether we design like that.”

When the developer disagrees with the part of design, discussions with clients mainly address the way of the building looks like, and to this end some options are offered. There may be many

arguments made to convince the developers during meetings, but the final and therefore the key decisions are made in such a way that communication with developers allows to build consensus. In this process, the CEO of FRI and the client are the primary decision makers. Mostly, the CEO of FRI decides about the architectural idea.

During the presentation, prepared slides, including introduction, renders of design and master plan, booklet and some posters are showed. If the architect needs any further information, it is possible to ask questions to developers by emails or phone. The architect is informed whether the information is existing or not.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter describes the background of FRI, a French company that has a strategic partnership with UA Design being a Chinese local design institute (LDI). During the past 28 years, its approaches to remain a player in the Chinese market were changed several times, from a branch office in China to having a partnership with LDI. The strategic partnership between the LDI and FRI gave rise to 2 other companies, FRUA and UASH. FRUA is the architectural company which works with FRI but unlike FRI adhere to a Chinese managerial approach, whereas UASH is the drawing company. This two companies help FRI to compose a completed team, control the design quality during the whole design process, consequently improving the design team performance.

Because of the hierarchy at FRI, architects have to obtain permission from the CEO to make any changes to the design, influencing on team performance. However, team members are free to come up with ideas during meetings. However in the end the CEO makes the decision about which concept is presented to the client. Since team members from FRI and FRUA work together and members from other department also supervise the team at FRI, there are considerable integration among team members. Once the design proposal is under review by the CEO, employees are not allowed to make any more comments. According to the internal policies in FRI, in order to save time.

When working with the developer, only the CEO of FRI and the developer are the person who can make decisions. The foreign architects are people who contribute to the international image of FRI. Reference images facilitates FRI to convince to developers, in order to save time. Most of time, discussions about the architectural design such as the appearance of the building is happening frequently between the CEO and clients. The architect shows references ideas and several options to let the client choose. If the client is not satisfied with the design, there will be more communication to build a consensus agreement.

The following chapter gives the case 3: German architectural firm, **gmp**.

8. Case Study 3

8.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the German case, **gmp**. **gmp** has a rich experience with working in the Chinese context. According to Liu (2014), its founding partner von Gerkan mentioned:

“There is no doubt, China is now the most important client of **gmp**.”

However, he also mentioned that **gmp** has learnt a lot from its collaboration with Chinese developers in these years (Liu, 2014). Therefore the following paragraphs show what has learnt in the past decade.

8.2 Company Background

Company Name: Architekten von Gerkan, Marg und Partner (**gmp**)

gmp was established in 1965. Nowadays, **gmp** has two main founder, four additional partners and one partner in China. Its offices are in thirteen cities in Germany and abroad, such as China, India and Vietnam, et cetera. **gmp** takes responsibility for a project from the design idea and its realization right through to the interior design. More than 370 buildings have been constructed by **gmp** worldwide. Projects include small scale homes, hotels, museums, theaters and concert halls, office buildings, commercial centers and hospitals as well as research, educational and sports facilities, buildings for transportation, trade and industry buildings and master plans (**gmp**, 2016).

Since 2004, **gmp** has cooperated with its Chinese partner, Wei Wu. China offices are located in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. **gmp** has already realized over 100 projects in China, which makes it one of the most experienced European companies in China. Therefore, it has established a very good reputation in China.

8.3 Organizational Structure

The working mode of **gmp** can be described as Mode 3, association with a local partner, since the local partner has his guan-xi and understands the Chinese business context. The Chinese office of **gmp** consist of two separated departments, the business development and the architecture department. Wu, as a partner of **gmp**, is the managing director of China offices, and as such responsible for the Chinese business and management aspects of **gmp**, e.g. management of Chinese employees, approaching of potential clients and keeping the guan-xi ties with Chinese clients. However, Wu Wei is not involved in the decisions about architectural designs. In Shanghai, the architecture department falls under responsibility of one of the associate partners, Magdalene Weiss, who is the director, and leads all project teams in **gmp** Shanghai as well as supervising the quality of the architectural designs. The Shanghai office operates in collaboration with **gmp** Hamburg, where the final decisions are made. Figure 8.3

illustrates the working mode and organizational structure of **gmp**.

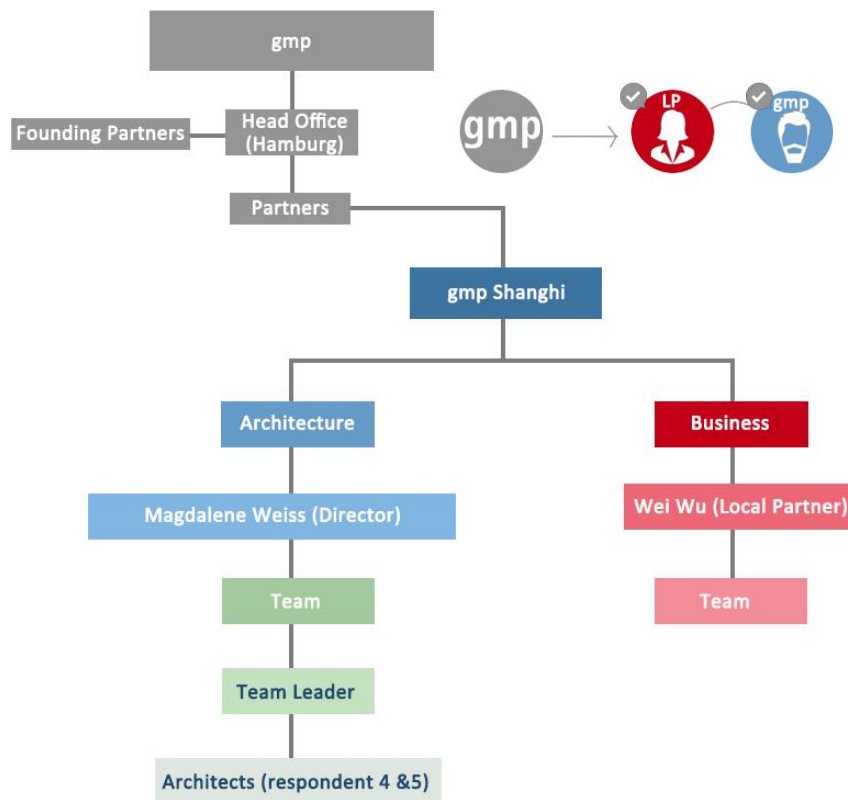


Figure 8.3: The Working Mode of **gmp** and Its Organizational

8.4 Team Integration

The director of Shanghai office is the associate partner, Magdalene Weiss who makes main decisions of the design. The project team is set up by pointing out exact roles to everyone from the director. It is important for team members to remember and understand what the director said, because projects should be done based on it. The hierarchy of **gmp** Shanghai is medium, and not as strong as in ECADI. However, only the director and the developer can make final decisions.

A cultural of freely speaking up increases team performance at **gmp**. Everybody, including interns, can speak out during meetings. Effective communication facilitates the processes in the projects. During meetings, architects have freedom to propose design options and the director gives comment on these options. Meanwhile, she points out directions in which way to continue. If the option that an architect makes is outstanding, then the director might agree and further continuing that concept. If the director doesn't agree with any of the options, she will outlines a new idea. With this idea, architects still have freedom, enabling a creative design team.

But sometimes, the director may be hard to convince, which may decline team performance. For instance, the director may ask the team to realize a concept which has not been matured in

the team members' opinion. Interestingly, none of Chinese architects will point out that the concept is not feasible and all of them follow as ordered. In contrast, foreign architects may try to convince the director. As R4 stated,

“Sometimes, I tried, but sometimes they let you know that they are not happy like this. But other people, the local colleagues, not even trying, they only say yes.”

The possibility of convincing depends on the extent the director trusts in the architects and what they have done before. R5 pointed that

“It really depends on whether your boss likes you or not, whether the boss is convinced by what you have done or not.”

When the director does not trust an architect enough, the architect will be told that the challenge is not acceptable. This may lead frustration in the team, declining team performance.

There is trust in the design team to improve team performance. The team is made up a team leader who is trusted for his ability of design and organizing, and several architects, being team members follow the allocation of tasks.

Furthermore, although it is a mixed team with Chinese and foreign architects who speak different languages, team members have about the same thoughts as of how to run projects. Since all of Chinese architects studied abroad, it is easier to understand each other in the discussion and work can be better managed, facilitating team performance.

However, it is a bit uncomfortable for Western European architects in the office, as they are treated as guests. This can be explained by Chinese culture, the influential Chinese philosopher, Confucian stated that it is always a pleasure to greet a friend from afar. As R4 mentioned,

“For me I don't feel comfortable in the company, since I am treated as a guest. They treat foreigners well but they treat Chinese badly.”

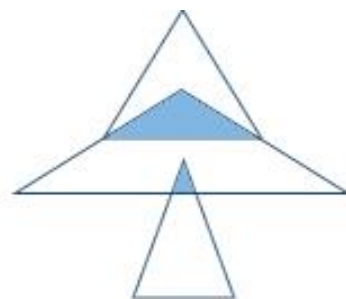


Figure 8.4: Team Integration at **gmp** (Own ill.)

It can be concluded that the team integration in **gmp** Shanghai is medium high, as Chinese architects have more opportunities to talk during the meeting at **gmp**, as figure 8.4 shown. Furthermore, effective information sharing and communication improve team performance at

gmp.

8.5 Work with developers

Effective team performance depends on the type of clients, because different clients influence discussions in a different way. At gmp, the clients can be divided into public and private. The private developers are those who are interested in building projects, such as offices or retails. Some private developers are more professional with more architecture knowledge and have more experience on international cooperation projects. Foreign architects can speak English to private clients. **gmp** has good relationship with these private clients and collaborated with them more than once. When meeting with private clients, architects can talk freely. For all of these, this increases team performance.

In the **gmp** case, hierarchy still is an influential factor between architects and public or clients with big power in the collaborative team. There are many formal and unrelaxed meetings. Normally, architects meet clients in a big conference room with a big table and a beamer with around 20 to 30 people being present. When the foreign architects attend in meetings, the interpreter translate everything for them. As the hierarchy is quite high in China, only people who are in the same level can talk with each other. As R4 stated,

“The hierarchy influence a lot. The certain people can only talk to certain people. During the meeting, only the director can speak because they are in the same level and the rest of the people are just sitting there and trying to make notes and listening the clients, trying to understand the clients, what they mean.”

Thus, only the director can speak and other people need to make notes, listen to the client and trying to understand what the client means. It shows that hierarchy declines the value of meetings, because it reduces psychological safety to communicate and share information.

Because of a lack of architecture knowledge, for most local developers slowing down team performance, story-telling and options-offering will facilitate clients in decision making. According to R4 and R5, when the architect asks some questions to clients, it is difficult for the client to give a clear answer. However, because clients trust **gmp**, sometimes the architect is asked to make decisions. Furthermore if clients criticize designs, a story-telling could change their minds. Clients are happy to hear a story about Chinese sayings or stories from Chinese history. Several options are offered to the client, therefore the design is mainly discussed throughout these options in the meeting, so that architects learn what options the client likes.

Offering supervision guarantees the design quality of **gmp**. The supervision is both offered to local design institutes (LDIs) and to construction site work. When working with LDIs, **gmp** selects LDIs that they have previously worked with, thus it has built some relations with the major LDI's and consultants in China. Normally, the architects will check all drawings 3 or 4 times without any payment. If a LDI does not follow up its supervision advices, **gmp** tries to contact the developer, in order to put more pressure to the LDI. During construction, **gmp** has

many partners to work with, such as German Landscape Architects WES, Construction Engineer SBP and some more specialists. To ensure that things get build according to the drawings, **gmp** does offer to take on the construction site supervision as well. Yet, sadly it often happens that the contractor is not following the drawings at the construction site in China.

8.6 Conclusion

gmp, as a German company, has done many projects in China. It has a rich experience to handle different situations with developers. In order to have good interactions with Chinese parties and to easily participate in the Chinese market, **gmp** cooperates with a Chinese partner who has a strong competence in getting projects for **gmp**. Most decisions are made by the director or headquarter in Germany.

Although foreign architects are dealt with like guests in the office, the environment of architecture department is quite harmonious. Everyone can speak out during the meeting, boosting information sharing and creativity. Because all Chinese architects have studied abroad, communication and discussion are quite fluent and effective in these international teams. Compared with the French integration model, the Chinese architects have more chance to discuss in the meeting and also foreign architects may find more opportunities in convincing director to change her mind, and thus follow their advices.

Effective team performance depends on the type of clients, because the meetings with private clients are different from those with public or big clients. With private clients, architects can speak freely in the meeting while when meeting with public clients, many people will attend the meeting which will be situated in a big room. Here, only the director and the client can talk in the meeting. There are not many discussions, as developers have less professional knowledge. In order to control the quality of projects, **gmp** offers its clients to supervise all drawings and do site supervision to clients as well. Though some LDIs or construction teams may not cooperate friendly, **gmp** tries to make the project as good as possible.

9. Case Study 4

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a Dutch architectural firm, MVRDV, is presented. Because MVRDV has only accessed the China's market since 4 years, its working mode is different from the other cases. Typically, in this case, many decisions and design concepts are provided by the headquarter. MVRDV still keeps its strong Dutch way of working, being open and free. In Shanghai office, team members have more opportunities to talk with their superior. R6 is the Asia director of MVRDV, and helped this study to clearly understand the process of a project at MVRDV, from approaching the developer to controlling quality.

9.2 Company Background

Company Name: MVRDV

MVRDV is a globally operating firm dedicated to innovative architecture and urban design founded in 1993, with its headquarter in Rotterdam and Shanghai offices has been established in 2012. The products of MVRDV's unique approach to design vary, ranging from buildings of all types and sizes, to urban plans and visions, numerous publications, installations and exhibitions (MVRDV, 2016).

Although, MVRDV has the Shanghai office, the project is still designed by the headquarter in Rotterdam. The Shanghai office is more like a bridge for communication with local clients. Only one Chinese architect is working with the director and there is one office manager. Other architects are freelancers. However, recently, MVRDV announced that subsidiaries in Shanghai and Paris would be subdivided into 8 departments, and at the same time 5 new partners will assist the company expansion.

9.3 Organizational Structure

The working mode of MVRDV is mode 2, a branch office in China. In this mode, it is contributive to build up projects and explore the market in China. Meanwhile, it facilitates to guarantee the design quality and keep the company style, therefore the design is still done by the headquarter in the Netherlands. After 4-year exploration and preparation, MVRDV has already built its fame and guan-xi in China.

Figure 9.3 shows the current MVRDV organizational structure and its working mode. It is clear that headquarter is mainly responsible for the design. The director can talk with Rotterdam office to exchange information. There is a Chinese project manager who has a rich knowledge to address different situations, therefore the Chinese project manager can join the project anytime or answer any questions from R6. Besides, R6 pointed out that business development in the Netherlands acts as a backup for the Shanghai office. Since the director is a foreigner, sometimes it is hard for R6 to understand the whole picture of a situation. Hence it is always

possible to call to the Netherlands and ask questions to senior colleagues in business development department. Besides, in the first few months after R6 arrived in Shanghai, a senior colleague from the business development department was with R6 during meetings. With the assistance of business development department, R6 got more knowledge about Chinese culture, like how to communicate with clients and meanwhile according to what she said,

“I think I observe a lot and I try to have Chinese friends, so they can teach me how things work.”

Making observations and her Chinese friends help her to appropriately behave in Chinese situations.

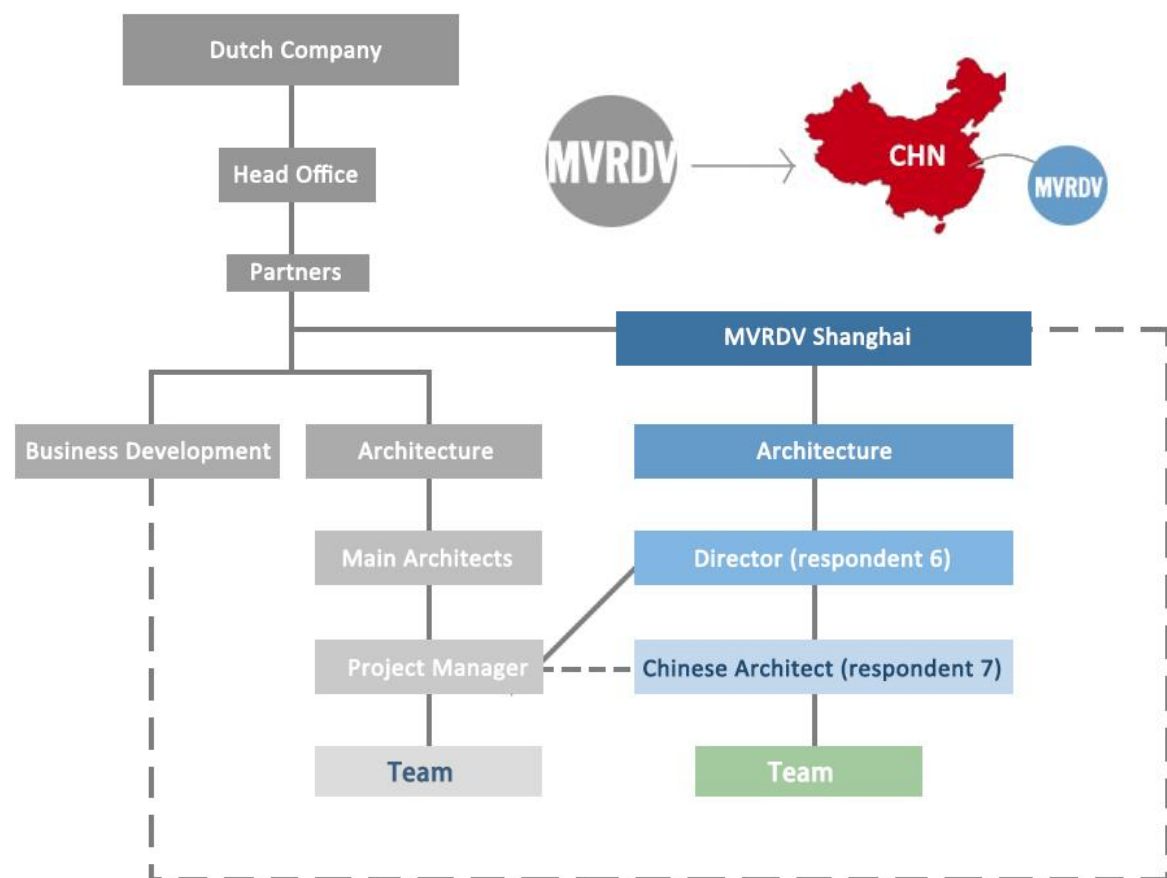


Figure 9.3: The Working Mode of MVRDV and Its Organizational Structure (Own ill.)

9.4 Team Integration

Team performance in MVRDV Shanghai is quite effective, since the Shanghai office is more like a representative office to connect clients with the Rotterdam office, with only 3 employees working in the office. Compared with French and German case, junior architects have more opportunities to talk with a senior or higher level managers, shown as figure 9.4. Since R6 has only worked in China for one and half year, much cultural knowledge is still to be learnt. In the

Shanghai office, the Dutch way of working, being freer, more open and more equal talks among colleagues, is kept, contributing to effective communication in the design team. This is thought to improve team performance. When R7 meets problems that are tough to be solved in a project, he can ask his director, R6, or the project manager in Rotterdam to help in solving problems. There is always a good communication between R7 and R6 when, discussing project concepts. When starting new projects, MVRDV hires some freelancers to make drawings and models. Also, there are discussions about Chinese culture between R6 and R7 during breaks. Statement from R7,

“如果她 (R6) 有什么想知道的, 我会和她解释。然后平时聊天的时候, 我会觉得在文化上的不同和有趣的事情。聊天的时间会说起”

(“If she (R6) asks me anything about Chinese culture, I will tell her. Also, sometimes, when we are chatting, I also tell her something interesting about cultural differences.”)

Moreover, because the director cannot understand Chinese, R7 needs to be with her in all social activities for translation, including communication with clients, guest lectures and architectural sessions. Besides, when potential clients were met in architectural sessions, R7 needs to find background of companies, and tell his director whether the company fits the MVRDV design style or not, in order to cooperate.

In order to keep high quality design, Rotterdam office also requires to supervise the design. Since trust is built between the director and the Chinese architect, as well as because of the Dutch way of working, R7 speaks out any opinions to the project in the team. It facilitates team performance at MVRDV Shanghai.



Figure 9.4: Team Integration at MVRDV (Own ill.)

9.5 Work with Developers

Since MVRDV expand their business by itself, guan-xi helps MVRDV to get more clients by recommendations of friends or by meeting more clients in architectural sessions. However, it is not easy to build relationship with Chinese developers. For example, when R6 knows a client in a lecture, it needs time to get to know a person. Because trust cannot be built only by an

introduction in a presentation. R6 has to keep contact with a client several times, so that the client gets to know MVRDV and learns to personally know R6. This requires many causal meetings like having coffee or dinners, As R6 referred

Then it's also the way to build trust. Like guan-xi is also a new culture that I searched on internet.

When the clients are sure that MVRDV can take responsibility of their projects, it is easy to get projects. Since different clients have different opinions, different treatments to different clients in different situations are necessary. Before meeting with clients, Since R6 has already learn to known the client, and had reviewed previous projects of that clients as of to become acquainted with clients' expectation. Normally, there are always big and formal meetings with the government or clients in Chinese since few developers can speak English, according to R7.

There are two types of meeting for making presentations to developers. One is that MVRDV needs to show its previous projects and its rough concepts before signing contracts, to see whether clients are interested in cooperation with MVRDV or not. The other one is to present the progress of the design to clients in different phase.

Still, hierarchy decreases team performance in collaborative team, since only the highest level of clients talk in meetings. During meetings, R7 translates the conversation to R6. Also R7 needs to accurately illustrates the concept of the design for the Dutch design team as well as give suggestions in the discussion. The suggestions are based on the concept of the Dutch design team. Most of time, developers accept suggestions, because of professionalism of MVRDV, according to R7,

“我会提一些意见给甲方或者施工团队。但是这些意见是根据荷兰团队的设计理解的解读，我会试图坚持一些东西。大多数情况下，他们会采纳或者会后讨论，因为他们知道我们是代表公司给出意见。”

(“I will give some suggestions to developers and contract teams based on the concepts from Dutch design team and stick to them. In most of the situations, they (developers) accept or discuss my suggestions after the meetings, since they know that our suggestions are from MVRDV.)

The more dialogues two parties have, the more the architect learn what clients want considering the reactions of clients to the proposed design options, according to R6,

“More dialogue. You have to know what clients want with options. These options make you to understand what clients want because clients don't know what they want. And you have to tell them what they need. You see their reactions and what they talk, you know what they like.”

Moreover, MVRDV also offers different options to understand clients better, improving team

performance. Sometimes, the concept of MVRDV is quite modern, so the clients cannot accept it, said by R7. When the architect and the client has different opinions on the project, the architect tries to persuade the client by acceptable reasons, such as why the design is made in a certain shape in negotiation. If developers' opinions do not change the concept of the design, the negotiation can go to the middle point. But when the decisions are bad, MVRDV would talk to clients and change unreasonable part by giving reasons.

Like **gmp**, MVRDV also provides supervision to control the quality. Mostly, MVRDV chooses to cooperate with experienced LDIs to keep the good quality. Rotterdam office checks drawings and gives the suggestions, then LDIs change it.

9.6 Conclusion

Compared with the French and German cases, MVRDV keeps Dutch style of working way instead of adopting a more localized style. Though it takes time for the foreign director to get used to a new culture, Shanghai office assists MVRDV in approaching clients and smoothing the project. Meanwhile, the design quality is guaranteed. Moreover, because of the typical Dutch style, team members can work in a comfortable environment, facilitating team performance.

It is challenging for a foreign company to survive in Chinese market, but MVRDV has developed fast in the last 4 years. According to MVRDV NEWS (2016), the organization will be further structured in 8 departments: five geographic areas, urbanism, marketing and finance, to create smaller, flexible units, maintain and further develop the company's spirit, its adventurous innovation, social agenda and its family character. MVRDV will become larger, more professional and more active than before. It seems likely that the working mode may shift to Mode 3 (association with a local partner) and that the organizational structure will change, as happens in the other 2 cases at this stage. However, the news was released two months before the completion of the research and this strategy is not yet fully implemented, therefore it is hard to know what MVRDV's decisions will be. However, it is interesting to wait and see what will happen in years to come.

10. Findings

10.1 Introduction

To answer the research question,

How does cultural diversity in collaborative design teams, consisting of Western European and Chinese, influence the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance in Chinese context?

The part of this chapter synthesizes the findings of the 4 cases, and addresses the main concepts that are addressed in the conceptual model, being tacit Chinese norms, guan-xi, face and high-context communication, psychological safety, trust and team performance at team level. Based on the preceding and to address the following sub questions

1. What is the influence of cultural diversity on the development of trust in collaborative teams in construction industry?
2. What is the influence of cultural diversity on psychological safety?
3. To what extent does the degree of cultural intelligence influence the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance?

Table 10.1 gives a basic information for each company. In this chapter, it generates similarities and differences of each companies, to find the connection with psychological safety, trust team performance at the organizational level. It gives how cultural intelligence impacts psychological safety, trust and team performance, as well as the relationship between flexibility and team performance. Eventually, the conceptual model can be confirmed.

Company Name	Established Year	Entry Year	Years in China	Size (People)	Other Information
ECADI	1952	-	64	1,000+	Controlled by the Chines government
FRI	1954	1988	28	100+	French; having a strategic partnership with a LDI
gmp	1965	2004	15	500+	German; half of gmp 's current clients are from China
MVRDV	1993	2012	4	130+	Dutch; going to expand the Shanghai office in following years

Table 10.1 Basic Information of Each Company

10.2 Comparison in Design Teams

10.2.1 Organizational Development

Model of Organizational Development

The 3 foreign cases all show that these foreign architectural firms have adjusted their working modes to adhere to the Chinese context as table 10.2.1a shows. Here, working modes are reflecting the organizational structures that help Western European firms to enter the Chinese market. The other 3 Western European companies applied 3 working modes in the Chinese market for expansion of their business. It seems that the longer a company stays in China, the more it seems to integrate with Chinese business partners.

The organizational structure reflects the companies' working modes, but the organograms per organization might also differ according to differences in organizational and national cultures. Table 10.2.1b shows the organograms of the 4 cases. Because of government control, ECADI is strongly influenced by Chinese culture with high power distance. Maybe as a result of being a recent starter in the Chinese market, MVRDV has less hierarchy than other cases and this may become different once they have expanded.

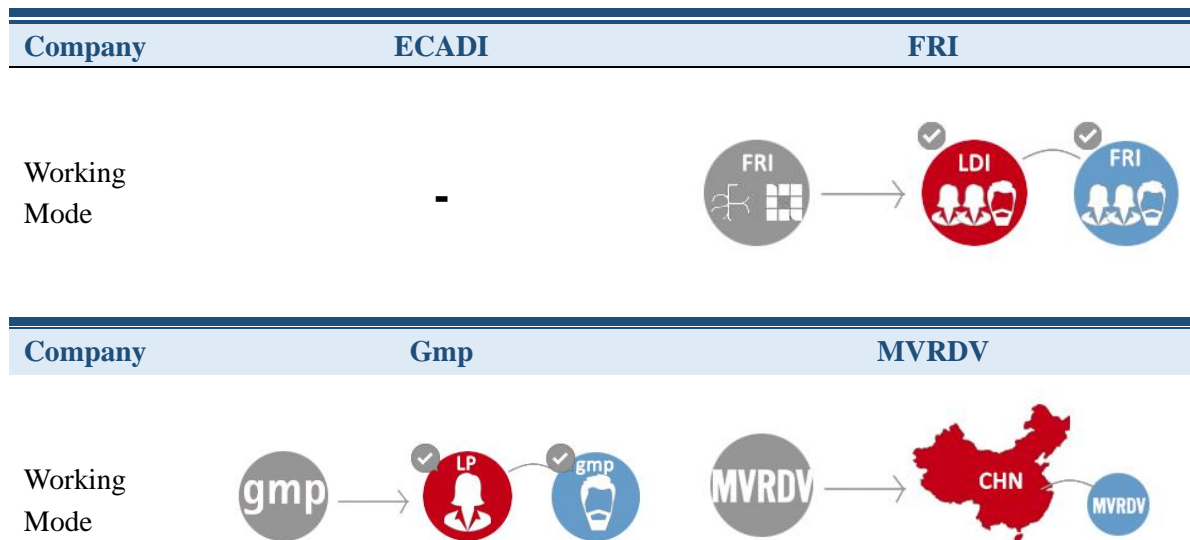


Table 10.2.1a: Comparison of different working modes at 4 cases

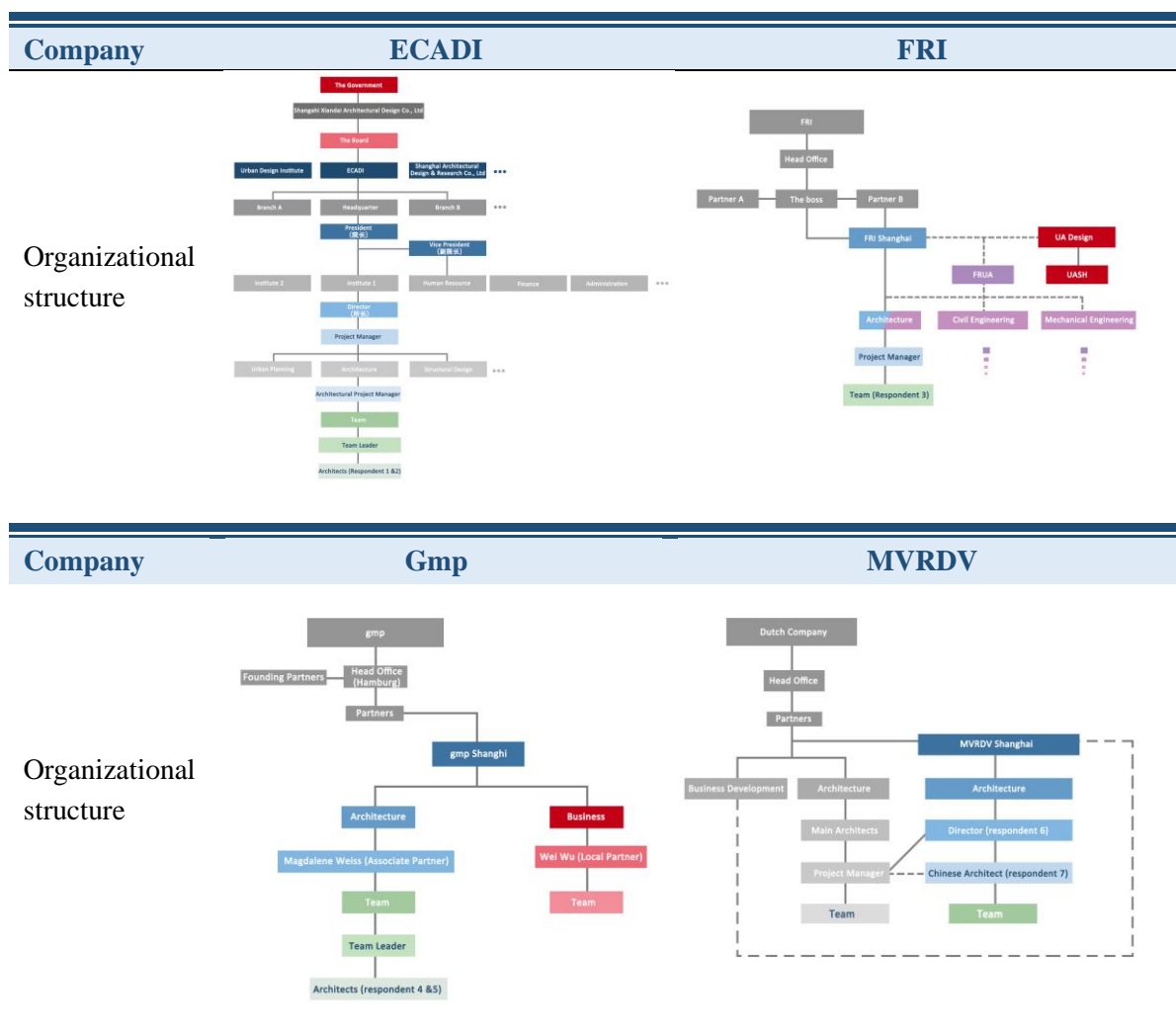


Table 10.2.1b: Comparison of Different Organizational Structure at 4 cases

FRI was the earliest company to enter into the Chinese market and has built what seems to be a matured organizational structure. The FRI case shows such was the result of a step-by-step process of the company. In first stage, it got projects in China, but these projects were finished in France, just like it is currently the case for the Dutch MRDV. Later, when it became more used to the China's market and culture, it created a representative office in China. After years of working in China, FRI has built its *guan-xi* and knows some LDIs now much better. It found a reliable partner, UA design, a local design institute (LDI), so that it can get more projects from it by its *guan-xi*. Now FRI even has a strategic partnership with UA Design and has created two cooperative companies, helping FRI to completely control its project team and this makes it possible to FRI to keep in control of the whole process of projects, in order to keep up its design quality.

Thus, the FRI can be considered a good example to foreign architectural firms of what might be a good organizational process model over time. Following the French case, a possible organizational model might can achieved over time in 4 steps, *Preparation, Adaptability, Adjustment and Localization*, see also figure 10.2.1c. Step 1 'preparation' shows the phase in which a firm plans to come to the China's market and accept Chinese projects, but the completion of the designs occurs in the country of origin, at the base office. This step helps a firm to understand the Chinese culture and get familiar with the China's market. The second step is adaptability. During this step, the company develops a representative office in China, but the design is still completed in the country of origin. The representative office boost communication between clients and architects. Meanwhile, with a better understanding of the China's market and further development of *guan-xi* ties, a company may find reliable and trustable clients, LDIs or other specialist companies. These parties facilitate a foreign architectural firm to further adapt to the Chinese practices and increase the opportunities for a firm to develop into step 3. After developing relationship with many parties, a firm might eventually develop a partnership. This step is called adjustment. The partnership allows the firm to gradually get in control of the design and construction process. In the last step, the company completes its development, being more localized and is in charge of the whole process of a project, as the partnership with the LDI would provide the organizations with the required permits..



Figure 10.2c: Foreign Architectural Organizational Development Model (Own ill.)

gmp is a famous global architectural firm, and following the organizational development model, seems to be in the third step of the model, *adjustment*: cooperation of a local partner. Like FRI, **gmp** initially got many Chinese projects and finished them in Germany. Later, it entered in to the China's market together with a Chinese partner. Because the local partner has *guan-xi* ties, **gmp** obtains projects through its partner's *guan-xi*. However, unlike FRI that has partnerships

with a drawing company, it cannot directly stay in control during the whole process of projects. Therefore, in order to control and keep its design quality, it offers free drawing and construction supervision to its clients.

Compared to FRI and **gmp**, MVRDV entrance to the China's market was quite recently. They seem to be in the second step of the organizational development model. Since they do not have local partners, they have to build its own guan-xi ties through introduction by friends or by meeting potential clients in architectural sessions.

Guan-xi Boosts Organizational development

Guan-xi allows foreign architectural firms to get projects in China and eventually develop partnerships to stay active in the Chinese market. Changes in organizational structure reflect changes in working modes. For example, FRI has changed its working mode 3 times, from a branch office in China to working closely with UA design. Currently the cooperation with UA Design developed into a strategic partnership, allowing FRI to gain control over the complete design and engineering teams, and to stay in charge during the whole process of a project. Every time, when it changed its working mode, its organizational structure changed. With the increase in size of the company, and with help of its strategic partner, it got the more and more projects, now almost covering all fields of architecture design, such as education, office, sports, residential, health care, commercial, and culture. Unlike FRI, **gmp** has a local design and business department. Thanks to the help of the local partner in the business department, **gmp** got many famous projects in China, like National Museum of China, Shanghai Oriental Sports Center and Tianjin Grand Theater. The advantage of a separate local business and design department is that at the same time, the **gmp** design team can focus on project design. From its portfolio, **gmp** has collaborated several times with SOHO. This suggests that over time, guan-xi and trust developed, enhancing collaboration with the same client. This allowed **gmp** to develop a successful business in China. In contrast, since MVRDV only recently entered into the China's market, and currently they only have a representative office in Shanghai. It does not seem to have (already) close relationship with local partners or LDIs. Therefore, it needs to develop guan-xi ties by themselves. According to R6 and R7, MVRDV gets projects from formal clients, by recommendations of friends, and by design competitions. Since the director in Shanghai office needs to build guan-xi ties and at the same time needs to take care of the project design, this may result in less effective team performance.

10.2.2 Psychological Safety & Trust

Team integration means that team members combine their expertise and work into a unified whole (Balakrishnan, Kiesler, Cummings, & Zadeh, 2011). Since team members need to stay in touch, in order to realize common goals (Balakrishnan et al., 2011), psychological safety and trust can facilitate team members to closely cooperate to improve team performance. Psychological safety can be understood as whether team members are willing to speak up about concerns or mistakes, innovation and boundary spans, and seek feedback and help. Trust can

Company Name	Trust	Psychological Safety
ECADI	Low	Low
FRI	Medium	Medium
gmp	High	High
MVRDV	High	High

Table 10.2.2a Generation of Trust and Psychological Safety at 4 Firms

be described as a relational or a rational choice in decision making. For each of the cases, the degree of psychological safety and trust as described in the preceding chapters is summarized in Table 10.2.2a.

Psychological Safety

Hierarchy clearly impacts on psychological safety, as illustrated in figure 10.2.2b. There can be hierarchy in power, class and sex, but power is the main topic in this research. It is found that the less hierarchy there is in an organization, the

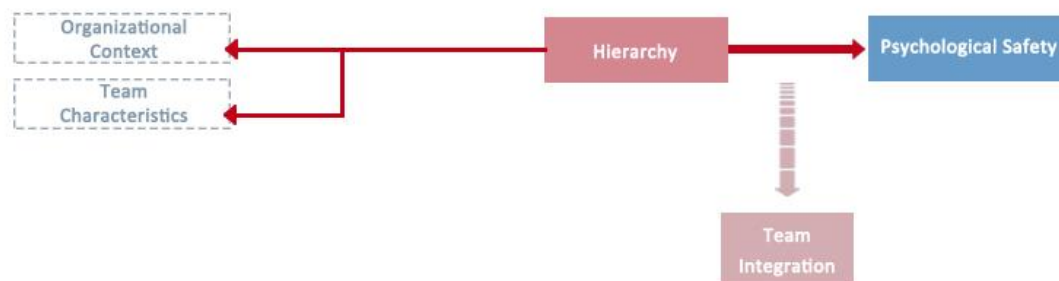


Figure 10.2.2b: The relationship among psychological safety, trust and hierarchy (own ill.)

more integrated a team appears, and the higher psychological safety a team has. Table 10.2.2c summarized how all teams behave in meetings in each companies, according to the case descriptions. The Chinese case serve as an example to explain that hierarchy reduces psychological safety. When teams have formal meetings in ECADI, only the president or the director can make decisions and other team members must follow their decisions. This can be explained by high hierarchy in China, causing employees not to speak up during meetings. This is also mentioned by R1 and R4,

“In China the hierarchy is very strong. In Chinese companies, if the highest person says that a thing is different, then this thing is different.”

“I worked with Taiwanese company, so Taiwanese people and Chinese people. And the director is always right, basically. You should always listen what the director says and you cannot be critical or have your own opinions too much. The director is more like a god of a company.”

Company Name	Team Components	Final Decision Makers	Meeting Forms	Participants	Decision Maker(s)	Team Interaction
ECADI	Local Team Members with 1 or 2 International Employee(s)	The President	Discussion	Junior Architects & Team Leader	-	Everyone can speak up
			Formal Meetings	Junior Architects, Team Leader, director & President	Director/ President	Only director or president can show their opinions. Team leader only gives presentations
FRI	International Team	CEO	Team Meeting	Architects & Project Manager	Project Manager	Everyone can speak up
			Team Meeting	Architects, Project Manager & CEO	CEO	Young Chinese Architects may be better to listen
gmp	International Team	Director & Headquarter	Team Meeting	Architects & Director	Directors	Everyone can speak up including interns
MVRDV	International Team & Freelancing Architects	Director & Headquarter	Team Conversation	Architects & Director	Directors	Everyone can speak up

Table 10.2.2c Comparison of Meeting behaves at 4 Firms

Power distance can be described as to what extent there is equality in a society. Power distance in countries, like German and the Netherlands, is quite low (shown table 10.2.2d), and this reduces their organizational hierarchy, increasing team integration (table 10.2.2e). Moreover, although design teams are mixing Western European and Chinese architects and there is an impact of face keeping and high-context communication, in general team members can more or less freely speak up during meetings. However, because of strong hierarchy at ECADI, team integration is weaker than in other cases. Thus, it can be concluded that organizational context

Country	China	France	Netherlands	Germany
Power distance Index	80	68	38	35

Table 10.2.2d: Power Distance Index among China, France, Netherlands and Germany (Source: Hofstede, 2010)

and cultural diversity modify the influence of tacit Chinese norms at team level.



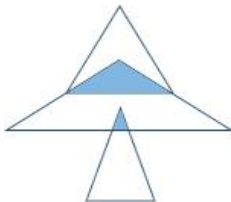

Company	ECADI	FRI	gmp	MVRDV
Team integration				

Table 10.2.2e: Comparison On Team Integration At 4 Firms

Trust

Trust is impacted by 2 factors, educational background and competition among team members. The French case shows that Western European and local architects with rich experience usually give their opinions and bring up problems during team meetings at FRI, pointing out that the design team hold less trust in Chinese young architects since they are less experienced. This is so, because the Chinese educational system is not as much developed as the Western system, causing Chinese young architects have less skills. Although it is found that trust can be influenced by internal competition and educational background in the team surrounding, this was only apparent in the French case, not in the German and Dutch case, and this finding should be therefore cautiously interpreted.

10.2.3 Team Performance

As mentioned before, hierarchy, educational background and internal competition impact on psychological safety and trust. As a result team performance is influenced, suggesting that poor trust and psychological safety reduce effective team performance.

It is assumed that guan-xi and the size of company impact on team performance. Since ECADI is controlled by the Chinese government, it can get more projects through the guan-xi ties of the director and the president, for instance from the government. Moreover, it has around 1,000 hardworking employers to work on different projects. Consequently, its can product more designs than other companies. For foreign architectural firms, FRI, **gmp** and MVRDV deliver designs with good quality, but FRI and **gmp** carry more projects than MVRDV, possibly because of stronger guan-xi ties. Because of their cooperation with a LDI or a local partner, it is not difficult for FRI and **gmp** to get projects each year. Therefore they need more people to run the projects, which may reduce team integration. Since MVRDV has less employees working in the Shanghai office, their communication can be more effective, resulting in higher team integration than FRI and **gmp**.

10.3 Comparison in Collaborative Teams

When collaborative teams work together, strong mutual trust and cohesion promotes team performance, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Table 10.3 summarized the results for the 4 cases.

Company Name	Decision Maker(s)	Negotiation	Clients Type	Meeting Forms	Psychological Safety	Trust Building
ECADI	Developers	Offer Options, Reference Images & Story Telling	Public/Personal	Informal meeting	Medium, but depends on the atmosphere.	Guan-xi
				Formal Meetings	Low, influenced by hierarchy, only director or president and developers can show their opinions in meetings	
FRI	Developers/CEO	Offer Options, Reference Images & Story Telling	Public/Private	Formal Meetings	Low, influenced by hierarchy, only CEO and developers can show their opinions in meetings.	-
gmp	Developers/Director	Offer Options, Reference Images & Story Telling	Public/Private	Formal Meetings	Low, influenced by hierarchy, only the director and developers can show their opinions in meetings	Guan-xi
			Private	Informal meeting	High, architects can give free talk	
MVRDV	Developers/Director	Offer Options, Reference Images & Story Telling	Public/Private	Formal Meetings	High, the director and the architect can give free talk, because the architect needs to give translation.	Guan-xi & Contract

Table 10.3 Differences of Collaborative Team Work at 4 cases

10.3.1 Hierarchy & Psychological safety

Hierarchy reduces information sharing and restrains team members to speak up in collaborative teams. All cases described that because of the powerful hierarchy in China, architects could not speak out when meeting with clients, only same level of people can talk with each other. Since developers (sometimes these can be the government) have money and power, the position of architects in China is not as high as their peers in Europe in figure 10.3.1. Consequently,



Figure 10.3.1: Role Of Players In Chinese Architectural Market (Left: Europe, Right: China); (Source: Atelier cnS & YCDA, 2014)

architects generally cannot contribute in meetings at the highest level. Architects at lower-levels are often hesitating to speak up when they need further instructions or have ideas to contribute because of fear to blame (Heidrick, 2012). This can explain that the hierarchy restrains psychological safety. However, it does not mean that architects do not want to announce their opinions in collaborative team meetings. As R1 described,

“At beginning of the project, you always try to give your best but in the end, the end result would not be good anyway. You know it all goes to be rush and all decisions made by hierarchy.”

10.3.2 Guan-xi & Trust

Apart from hierarchy, Guan-xi is another factor, influencing trust. Guan-xi can be described as an approach for two or more parties or individuals to get reciprocity. As table 10.3 shows, most studied companies built trust with developers by guan-xi. Guan-xi is a complicated and important concept in business behavior embedded in the Chinese mentality and conduct (Fang, 2014). Chinese people cannot live without guan-xi, everyone has individual guan-xi ties. It provides a short-cut to get scarce resources by exchanging favors instead of official or bureaucratic dictates (Alston, 1989). Though many people relate guan-xi to corruption, guan-xi is controlled by negotiation and reciprocity. Guan-xi ties have to be continuously reinforced (Alston, 1989). Since guan-xi operates at the individual level, when a person moves from one company to another, the guan-xi tie is following this person to the new company. Meanwhile, a new guan-xi tie needs to be built with new personnel. Foreign directors or CEOs who did not care to build guan-xi ties may find that local developers are not interested in cooperation of a project with them (Alston, 1989), unless they are famous.

Guan-xi is an approach to get projects and profits. For example, the director of ECADI utilizes his guan-xi to get projects. Not only local companies build their guan-xi, Western European firms, like MVRDV and **gmp**, are also trying to understand guan-xi and build their guan-xi ties. As R6 pointed out:

“Sometimes it is the friend from a friend, so they introduce to me (to get projects). Sometimes, I am in an event or I give a lecture so they approach me all the times. It (Guan-xi) needs time since it gets time to know a person. You keep contact with them and once a while you meet, so the developers know that you are there and

know you personally. Then you build up this kind of personal thing. I try to have a coffee with them once a while or go for a dinner, so that they know me, not only in front of the desk. Then it's also the way to build trust. They (developers) won't trust you only from one introduction you made from one presentation, because they want to know about your company or group everything and it takes time."

This statement shows that guan-xi is the way to build trust and meanwhile, trust stimulates two persons to make guan-xi. Since China is a collective society, Chinese people like to work with relationships based on righteousness (Hofstede et al., 2010). If they had a pleasant and satisfactory collaboration with a party, the trust is built and they are willing to have more and more cooperation. The more collaboration between two parties, the better architects know the same client, and this speeds up the process and consequently improves team performance.

Nevertheless, guan-xi is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is a convenient approach to get more projects for foreign architectural firms. Also it can help to reduce risks. For instance, if an architectural firm has good guan-xi with a developer, it can get paid from them. Other risks can be generated as following paragraph.

Contractual Problems

Contractual problems are divided into two perspectives, improper contractual agreement and clients' breach of contract. An unclear contract causes to deteriorate a relationship. Any defaulting contract agreement may quickly remove benefits (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005). Sometimes demands are missing in contracts, influencing the size or presences of benefits for foreign architectural firms. Clients' breach of contract is a risk for both the architectural design party and clients. Unstable architectural firm structures may lead a company to leave the Chinese market by poor management, which causing developers' investment to be at risk (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005).

Clients' Short-Term Focus

This risk is found to be a central risk for architectural firms. Because of clients' short-term focus, diverse foreign architects feel that local clients are less professional than European developers. Moreover, since two parties have different goals for a project, insufficient communication may lead to reduced trust (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005).

Unreasonable Requirements and Changes

Unreasonable requirements and changes are a risk to both parties. For the architectural firms, unreasonable requirements and changes make their employees to spend more time on modifying a design, which increases spending to finish a design before the deadline. Unexpected costs may be another risk for architectural firms. Additionally, sometimes changes are requested one-week before the deadline. Consequently, the design is not well thought-through and complete, in case of which clients will receive a low-quality project.

On the other hand, guan-xi may reduce benefits to foreign architectural forms. In other word, due to powerful hierarchy, local clients expect the foreign architectural firms to give up certain points. For example, clients require a project to change several times, but architects cannot say anything. Moreover R5 also mentioned one fact:

“We are building something only for few developers and we have already made 5 or 6 projects with them. However, they know that we are dependent on them, so they treat us very bad. They don't pay for the whole projects. They know they can do that because we need them for other projects.”

Therefore for foreign architectural firms need to keep a balance between being close to clients and avoiding not building any guan-xi with clients. Since guan-xi is only happens in the top level of a firm, it cannot get enough information in this research. However, from R6 statement, it predicts that guan-xi still have positive influence on collaborative team performance.

I like it. It is easily to build relationship with them. Because I am very confident what MVRDV can offer them, so I know that they can trust us. Sometimes, it depends on how you connect with them. It is hard to trust MVRDV immediately, but I also know that MVRDV is good and take care. You just should be honest so it is not that really difficult.

11.3.3 Face, Trust & Psychological Safety

Face which is related to guan-xi, also impacts on trust and psychological safety. Guan-xi always links two persons of unequal ranks. When the weaker partner call for special favors for which he does not have to equal reciprocate, another tacit norm, face is usually expected to be returned by the weaker partner, in order to finally get the favor (Alston, 1989). Face is about how good and powerful an individual would like others to see him, especially in a business environment (Fang, 2014). However, consequently it leads to inequality. Since the size of wealth is a criteria for Chinese people to measure success or happiness, someone who gives others the right to use their wealth, guan-xi ties and privilege is what the Chinese mean by “presenting a good face”.

A loss of face would result in a loss of trust and confidence in guan-xi. It could potentially ruin one's reputation (Fang, 2014). Apart from guan-xi, face keeping is the other cause that local developers are indirect and do not frequently criticize. Of course, architects are not allowed to criticize anything as well, for this reason. This may impact psychological safety as they cannot speak out freely in meetings.

However, this situation also depends on developers, as summarized in table 10.3. If a company cooperates with a developer who has much experience with international companies, they are willing to give and ask architects to speak out in the meeting as R5 mentioned:

“But some private clients, you can talk more freely.”

R8 also stated:

“如果对设计不满意我们都会直截了当的说。因为对境外设计师运用中国的交流方式可能行不通，不能含蓄要直截了当。你说好就是好，你说不好就是不好，因为你说好他们也不特别高兴，你说不好他们也不会不高兴。”

(“If we are not satisfied with the design, we will tell the architect directly. Because we cannot work with foreign architects as we do with local architects. It does not work. If you like it, you just show that you like it. And verse visa. Because they do not feel happy if you give a compliment. Also they will not be unhappy, if you criticize their work.”)

10.3.4 High-context Communication & Team Performance

In order to keep face, Chinese people are living in a high-context society, making team performance less effective. High-context communication means that when people communicate, the message cannot be understood without a great deal of background information. Lots of information that in high-context society are self-evident must be expressed explicitly in a low-context society (Hofstede et al., 2010). Improper behaviors are deterred by shame, loss of face, punishment, or ostracism (Hooker, 2008). As R4 described:

“You may criticize something, but in China you cannot really criticize things because you lose face. Thus you don't point out anymore.”

“Because of the hierarchy in China you have to pay respect to seniors who are above you and they can't be very critical like the director.”

However with increasingly international cooperation, developers the more and more understand how to collaborative with foreign architects. The latter have more opportunities to speak up in meetings, compared with 10 years ago. Yet, most collaborative teams are influenced by high-context cultural value, thus having personal conversations are essential at certain high level (Hooker, 2008), and this therefore will reduce information sharing and team creativity.

10.4 Respondents Synthesis at Individual Level

10.4.1 Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Cultural intelligence, as a reflection of cultural knowledge from foreign individuals, may improve an individual psychological safety. All of Western respondents gave positive answers that the longer they stay in China, the more they understand the whole system in China. Due to a lack of cultural intelligence, foreign architects may feel anxious in unknown situations, when they attend into a meeting with Chinese developers in the beginning. Described by R3:

In the beginning, I don't speak out so much, because I don't know the situation.

Also R6 mentioned that when she could not understand situation, she stops talking,

For us, if we don't take the response, we lose the project. So in that moment, I wanted to know what exactly the clients were asking and I wanted to give the response. But everything is not translated, since sometimes 4 people attended in the meeting and they all talked at the same time. However, you only get one translation from one person. Then you might miss things which might be very important. If it is my language, I can hear it and then I can react. And in that sense you got frustrated because at that moment, I would like to reply something, and it might not be a good reply since I got the wrong information from the interpreter. I feel frustrated since you get very limited information. If the interpreter misses something important, you can't explain what you are thinking. The process becomes very slow since you have to understand everything. If I get lost in the conversation, I don't talk. The more you hear, the more you feel comfortable.

Though the language is always the barrier in collaborative teams, CQ helps Western European architects to adapt themselves to the Chinese context quicker and better. The following quotations illustrate what R1 feels when working in the Chinese context and how he gradually changed his opinions.

“Before I came here, I didn't know more about it than only some common knowledge. Learning about the Chinese culture is definitely positively influencing working in the Chinese context. I was trying to get to know people and it is easier to make a step if you know the people here. It was a bit scary if you don't know where you get into. I now know the Chinese culture better, and I know better how to deal with the situation. When you disagree, you know you can openly disagree or should shut up.”

“In the beginning when you came here, it was exciting and difficult. And then when you stay longer, you get used to it and handle things better. Though you learn slowly but you get used to it. You get more used to China, how business, speed, scale, hierarchy are.”

“In the beginning, I did try to say my opinion, but also in the very beginning, my Chinese was not so good, I couldn't accurately point out what my concept is, though I could explain it a little bit. They didn't hear what I was saying. After working longer, my Chinese is getting better and I also understand the system better, so I know when I disagree with something, even you speak out, it is useless. So later I will say something although sometimes I don't, it depends on the situation. Most the informal discussion, I would go discuss with them, but when it was a more formal meeting, I just don't say anything.”

From his statements, it shows that R1 has better learned how to handle things at different occasions and situations. Moreover his Chinese has improved, causing him to be confident to

explain his concepts in the group meeting. Furthermore, R6 stated that:

“The more I know here, the more Chinese clients I work with, the more Chinese friends I have, the more I realize that it is different.”

In the end, respondents are willing to accept all of these situations and regard as different working methods. As R6 statement,

“It is less easy than in Europe. You are confronted with many problems and you feel many times frustrated. Sometimes, you don't understand what is going on and what is happening. It is a challenge but it is explicit and we take it.”

This supports what has been argued in developing the conceptual model that cultural intelligence has helped Western architects to understand the Chinese context. For example, as mentioned in the last chapter, after R6 understood the importance of guan-xi in China, she started to build her guan-xi ties. Another example can be that Western architects know the importance of hierarchy, and therefore do not talk in meetings.

10.4.2 Flexibility

Interestingly, both R3 and R6 mentioned that being flexibility is more important in collaborative teams,

(R3) “In China, everything is more flexibility than efficiency. It is more built on the flexible situation and changing. So they have a more flexible process and more flexible situation. It is not about efficiency but flexibility which is more important.”

(R6) “The government has very big power, sometimes the government changes things a lot so the process is quite different. I think the main thing is that you have to be much more flexible.”

However, there is a difference between junior architects and directors to be flexible. When junior architects work with Chinese developers, they hardly speak up in meetings, decreasing team performance. To improve team performance and feel secure in their positions, they have to be flexible to accept all changes and requirements. Whereas, directors need to be flexible to keep long-term guan-xi with Chinese developers, as R6 mentioned,

“Because it is about trust and you have to make the price lower. Sometimes, it is a big discount, but you have to. Because they always tell us, it is first time, you have to build trust.”

Since directors have more chances to talk with developers, their psychological safety is higher than junior architects. Yet, in order to build trust and try to cooperate with the developer, they ought to be flexible and thus to compromise some requirements.

10.5 Conclusion

The conceptual model in Figure 10.5 has been further adapted. The case studies showed that hierarchy is an important omission in the conceptual model and is therefore included in the model. Due to the strong hierarchy in China, it clearly impacts on the companies' organizational structures and team integration.

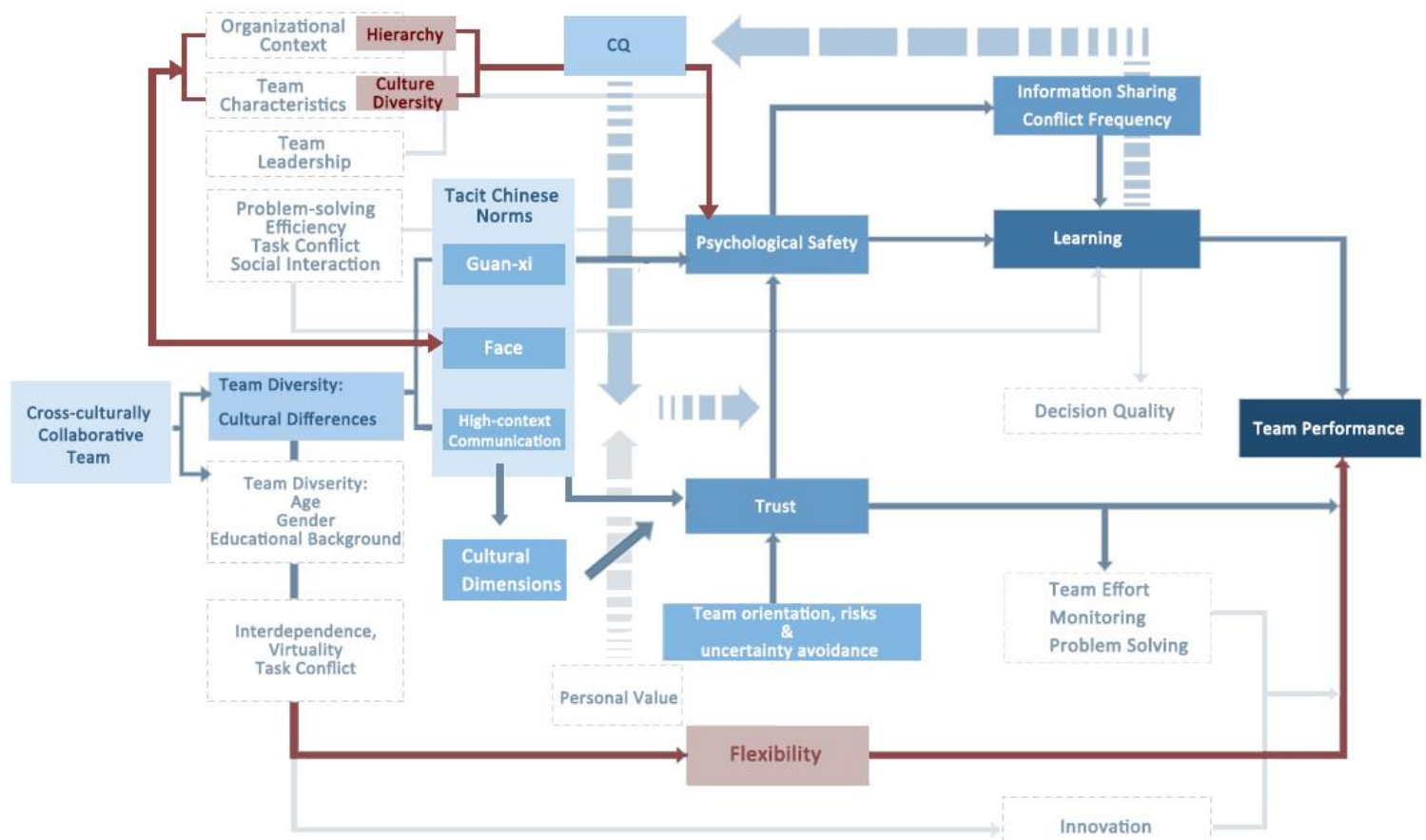


Figure 10.5 Chinese Collaborative Team Performance Model Based on Conceptual Model (Own ill.)

The red part of the model is another key finding of this study. Tacit Chinese norms, cultural diversity of team and organizational context influence each other. Guan-xi as a tacit norm is likely to have a dominating role in collaborative teams, as it is important to build guan-xi ties with clients, in order to ensure commissioning of new projects and therefore influences team performance. However, guan-xi is like a double-edged sword, causing risks, such as contractual problems, or because of clients' short-term focus, the request of unreasonable requirements and changes. Guan-xi thus can strengthen trust, but may also decrease trust, particularly to foreigners in teams. The latter may be particularly because of face keeping, which indirectly impact on trust, and is instrumental in maintaining guan-xi. Face keeping then and high-context communication are connected with psychological safety. Because of face keeping and gaining, Chinese clients do not directly point out their concerns and problems during meetings which may reduce team performance. But this is like a tacit norm, which according to this study Western European architects learned by experience. Yet, psychological safety is still important in collaborative teams, it is just that in the Chinese culture, because of a high hierarchy, team

members have to accept everything from their clients or directors, and cannot talk freely.

CQ is like a tacit knowledge that people notice by experience and concerns whether to speak up or not in different situations and meetings. CQ influences –facilitates- the development of team members' psychological safety. When individuals understand Chinese cultural better, they feel less insecure about how to act.

Since the Chinese context is a complex working environment for Western European architectural firms, it is impossible to fully detail or outline how to behave in such situations (Rouse, Cannon-Bowers, & Salas, 1992). However, it was found to be important that both junior architects and directors need to be flexible. Junior architects should be flexible to accept all changes for being secured to their positions, while directors have to accept changes or low prices for keeping guan-xi, as they are the lower ranking persons in the interactions with clients.

Finally, though it was not intended at the start of the study, the case studies seem to suggest that when a foreign architectural firm decides to enter into the Chinese market over time, their organizational structure evolves in several steps. Based on the French case, an organizational development model is described of 4 steps, being preparation, adaptability, adjustment, and localization. Step 1 'preparation' shows the phase in which a firm plans to come to the China's market and accept Chinese projects, but the completion of the designs occurs in the country of origin, at the base office. This step helps a firm to understand the Chinese culture and get familiar with the China's market. The second step is adaptability. During this step, the company develops a representative office in China, but the design is still completed in the country of origin. The representative office boost communication between clients and architects. Meanwhile, with a better understanding of the China's market and further development of guan-xi ties, a company may find reliable and trustable clients, LDIs or other specialist companies. These parties facilitate a foreign architectural firm to further adapt to the Chinese practices and increase the opportunities for a firm to develop into step 3. After developing relationship with many parties, a firm might eventually develop a partnership. This step is called adjustment. The partnership allows the firm to gradually get in control of the design and construction process. In the last step, the company completes its development, being more localized and is in charge of the whole process of a project, as the partnership with the LDI would provide the organizations with the required permits.

11. Discussion and Recommendations

11.1 Discussion

According to the literature review, cultural diversity can boost innovation and creativity, however it also may reduce team performance through a negative effect on psychological safety and trust. Edmondson and Lei (2014) found that at the team level, psychological safety plays an important role in team performance. Building trust can increase individuals' psychological safety in teams. Since the theoretical model (Edmondson & Lei, 2014) was developed using research in Western societies, whether or not this model also works in the Chinese context needs to be further investigated. The importance of this study is that it shows that cultural diversity does impact the development of trust and psychological safety in collaborative teams in construction industry in China. This became apparent in two steps. First the literature review made it plausible that Chinese tacit norms like guan-xi and face keeping and giving were important to develop as a Western firm a portfolio in China. A major contribution of the case studies is that these made clear that organizational hierarchy, or power distance, is important concept for its influence on the development of psychological safety. This relationship seems to be mediated by the level of cultural intelligence on the one hand. However, hierarchy also influences tacit norms like face keeping, underlines the importance of high context communication in China, and the development of guan-xi ties. The case studies showed that adherence to these Chinese tacit norms is important and impacts the collaboration in a team as it for instance defines who is classified to speak out in a meeting with clients.

Figure 11.1 therefore shows a new collaborative team performance model that now includes the Chinese context. This model can help to measure and improve collaborative team performance between Western European architects and Chinese developers in the Chinese context and most East Asian countries. However, it is still possible to find other tacit Chinese norms may influence building psychological safety and trust, since this study only shows that such applies for tacit Chinese norms, like guan-xi, face keeping and high-context communication. The contribution at social level is to give typical Chinese working characters, as well as generate recommendations for Western European architectural firms who are working or are going to work in the Chinese context.

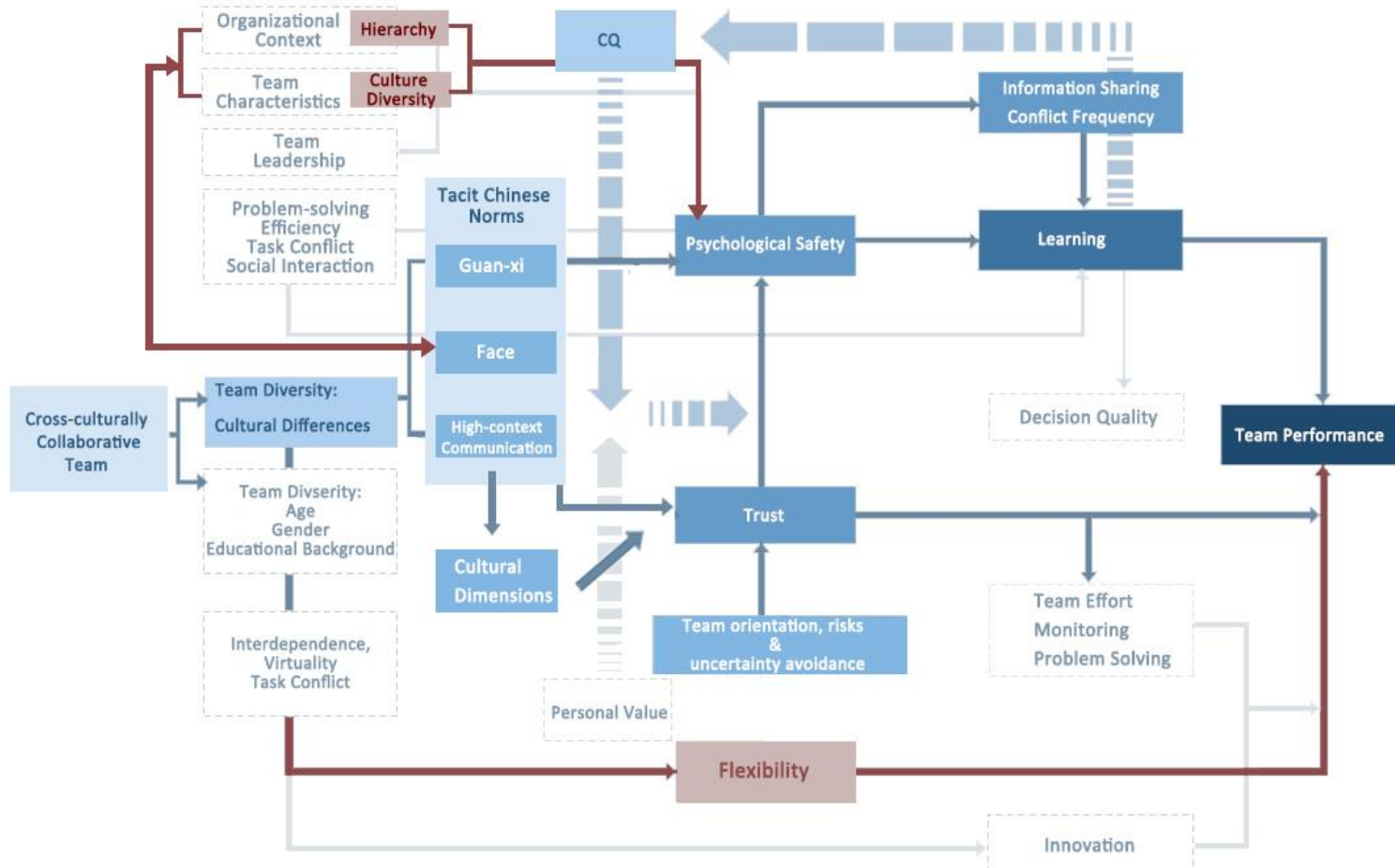


Figure 11.1 Chinese Collaborative Team Performance Model Based on Conceptual Model (Own ill.)

11.1.1 at Design Team Level

4 cases are studied including one LDI, ECADI and 3 foreign architectural firms, FRI, **gmp** and MVRDV. The case of ECADI shows that hierarchy is quite high, which reduced team integration and restrained team members to speak up. Moreover, guan-xi is very important for them to get more projects. Meanwhile, poor trust and internal competition decline to information sharing which negatively impacts project performance. Sharing information is considered a part of team collaboration in European working context. However, since there has a fierce competition among Chinese employers, and because guan-xi ties are individually developed, it is not easy to gain useful information in the Chinese context. Chinese team members may not give a clear answer in a team, unless there is a good guan-xi among them (Ling et al., 2007).

Most of time, Chinese architects who generally have less experience step back and listen to discussion during meetings, as was found in the French case. It is assumed that because of their educational background, Chinese young architects have less professional skills and are thus less trusted in compared to the senior Chinese and the Western European architects. Chinese young architects are regarded as less professional, creative and innovative, due to more poor education. Moreover, and impacted by the strong hierarchy, Chinese architects have to please their superiors in order to increase their job security. More recently, with the shift towards a market economy, Chinese architects started studying abroad and those who studied abroad were found to be more creative and conceptual, compared with local architects who did not have studied

abroad. At the same time, they were found to be more open-minded and work smoothly in cross-cultural teams (Ling et al., 2007). However, the current study did not focus at the important of differences in professional skills in developing trusting relationships, but since the internal competition is fierce and maybe present in most LDIs, this deserves further study.

Furthermore, guan-xi influences the organizational development of foreign architectural firms working in China. Due to the importance of guan-xi, Western architectural firms have to build their guan-xi ties to obtain more trust from their potential clients. To this end, they cooperate with local partners or LDIs. However, it seems that their organizational contexts still reflects from their organizational culture. Even though they might be active in China for a long time it seems that the less power distance the culture of origin has, the less hierarchy there is in the organization and the more open a team is. Whether or not such only applies to the current cases indeed needs further research. However, it is an appealing thought for further research.

From the 3 foreign cases it appears that, when a foreign organization tries to access and expand in the Chinese context, their development occurred in 4 steps, referred to as preparation, adaptability, adjustment and localization. It is thought that team integration is quite high at MVRDV because its organizational size is smaller than that of the other two firms and reflects an early step in the organizational development. It would be interesting to further investigate the here presumed development in organizational development. Also, since MVRDV also had the highest level of team integration, it would be also an interesting question for future research whether or not the organizational development steps decrease team integration.

11.1.2 at Collaborative Team Level

The most crucial finding is that although psychological safety is important in collaborative teams, it is restrained by the strong hierarchy in the Chinese context. Therefore, junior architects hardly get chance to speak up in collaborative meetings. Moreover, because of face keeping and high-context communication, some local developers do not give a negative feedback during meetings. However, developers who have a rich international cooperation experience are willing to architects discuss their ideas, and give feedback in meetings. Yet, this study cannot give a clear answer whether or not different type of clients influence development of psychological safety. Further study may compare the development of psychological safety across different clients, including the government.

Guan-xi affects trust. As face keeping is related to guan-xi, in order to keep guan-xi, it is important that architects protect the developers' face, instead of challenging them, leading to poor psychological safety. At first this may reduce team performance, but because guan-xi ties support recurrent collaboration, architects will learn to better know their clients. As a result, team performance is likely to improve over time. However, guan-xi is like a double-edged sword, causing risks, such as contractual problems, clients' short-term focus, unreasonable requirements and changes and unfamiliarity with cultural knowledge in local architectural field. Further study can also pay more attention to learn how Western architectural firms positively use guan-xi in the Chinese context.

It is also revealed that cultural intelligence (CQ) have a positively underlying influence on development of psychological safety and trust. In addition, both junior Western European architects and directors need to be flexible to improve collaborative team performance. Since this study focused on the relations between cultural diversity, psychological safety and trust, flexibility has not been assessed in full detail, since culture is a very complicated concept. Even though Hofstede et al. (2010) used cultural dimensions to measure cultures in different countries, each cultural dimension only shows a part of culture of a country. This shows that if a research needs to see the whole picture of a countries culture, all cultural dimensions need to study together. It seems that there are another concepts which may be useful in describing the cultural influence on the relationship between trust and project performance and is recommended to address in future studies as well.

Last but not least, team diversity can be cultural differences, but it also can be different gender, educational background or ages. It is expected that since women are more emotional sensitive than men, they may can better address guan-xi than men do. Furthermore, since old people should be respected according to Chinese values, it would also be interesting to investigate whether age impacts on team performance.

11.2 Typical Chinese Working Characters

China is a country that can accept certain bold architectural ideas. Surely not many developers desire to risk their projects for an architect to realize a fantastic idea, except for when your name is Zaha Hadid, Steven Holl or Rem Koolhaas. However, in working in the Chinese context, it is better to understand typical Chinese working characters, which can facilitate individuals who are working or are going to work in China to learn more about Chinese way of working and boost their CQ.

Chinese Value in Hardworking

It is not a coincident that Chinese GDP growth is the fastest country in a world. Behind it, the main reason is that Chinese employees are working super hard. In architectural field, Chinese developers are regarded as “slave drivers”. For reasons of an extremely competitive real estate market, the project speed is crucial. It is normal for employees demand to work on 24/7 schedule in local design institutes (LDIs) (Fang, 2014). Moreover, Chinese clients like to feel that their investment is worth and expect the architect to prove it via workload (Mayer, 2012). As the requirement of high speed design process, buildings are built rapidly. Compared with any Western European countries, the design process is much shorter in China. However, as presented in previous sections, due to developers require architects to change a design several times, the results are not always satisfactory.

On the other hand, most respondents mentioned that they had to change the design due to developer’s pressure, making them to feel less appreciated by these Chinese developers. This may be so, because most Chinese developers are businessmen lacking architectural knowledge, which explains why they do not to know what they exactly want. The second reason could be that the development of Chinese economy is too fast, and suffers from the underperformance

of the Chinese education system as it is reflecting the 80s'. Numerous Chinese developers still do not think that architectural design is a creative job, regarding architects as an artist. Influenced by strong hierarchy, many developers still keep the conservative thought that they buy the service as well as that they know things better, thus pursue to control and keep architects under pressure. However, things are changing. Currently, the government has realized that a speedy development is not acceptable, and it is looking for an approach to slow down the processes. Yet, hardworking is still the main driving force in China.

Work and Personal Life are not Separated

The most interesting perspective for working in the Chinese context is that unlike Europe, the personal life is interrelated with work. For example, CEOs or directors working in architectural firms have to create opportunities to get more projects. Therefore they should invite developers to have meals or a cup of coffee after working, to build guan-xi. When a CEO or director and a developer are friends, it is not difficult to get projects from developers.

Cost is the Thing

It is noticeable that foreign architects are in the situation where their work load do not cover design costs. It may develop into a love-hate relationship between developers and architects. Educating by conservative opinions, Chinese people consider bargaining as a part of daily lives. When developers buy architectural design services, asking for a lower price is common (Fang, 2014). Moreover, certainly LDIs charge much cheaper design payment than foreign architectural firms do, thus developers want to pay similar prices. Due to the current lack of new work in Western countries, most foreign architectural firms accept undercuts in design fees, in order to get the project and to gain another cooperative opportunity with the same developer (A. Mayer, 2012). However, with the increasingly international cooperation, a growing number of local developers notice the fact that the quality of the service is better than obtained from LDIs, and they would like to pay more for design fees, including travelling expenses.

11.3 Recommendations

11.3.1 Trust Building

Some risks occur between European architectural firms and Chinese developers, as mentioned in the last section. Here generates 4 ways to avoid possible risks. The detailed information is as follows.

Draft a Clear and Unambiguous Contract with Possible Demands

A clear contract means that both parties want to take responsibility and accountability. This can reduce the distrust between two parties. Besides, contracts are still a tool to build trust with developers and architects. Putting demands as detailed and many as possible may decrease negative effect on projects later (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005).

Seek a Reliable Partner

It is not enough to only organize a clear contract. Reliable partners with rich internationally collaborative experiences can facilitate and promote a project a lot (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005). Information sharing is easier for both parties. Moreover, Jin and Yng Ling (2005) also pointed out that reputation and collaborative experience, as a selection criteria, build trust in the early stage of a project.

Adhere to Mutual Goals and Cultivate Learning Climate

Development of mutual understanding of both parties' goals and objectives is important. A mutual learning system can help to foresee certain actions of a partner and build mutual trust as learning may reduce collaborative barriers and inefficiencies, and change attitudes of both parties (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005).

Maintain Efficient Communication

With sufficient communication, two parties could get better mutual understanding, increase trust, avoid disputes and decline cultural difference (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005). Meanwhile, a project could be deeply discussed amongst two parties, and as a result, the quality of a project can be guaranteed. Trust will be fostered among collaborative team members, if an efficient communication could be maintained during the entire process of a project (Jin & Yng Ling, 2005).

11.3.2 Actions to Boost Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence is important for employees working in a cross-cultural team. Earley and Mosakowski (2004a) suggested that the best way to boost cultural intelligence is through actions. Specifically, try to copy the same actions as local people do by learning from observation and listening. Acting as local people is a way to establish a kind of bond with local people, because from his actions it shows that a foreigner wants to get involved in the local context.

Apart from that, making local or foreign friends who live in the same cross-cultural context for several years can also assist in understanding such cross-culture situations by telling personal experience. Moreover, learning Chinese not only boosts communication, but also allows one to better familiarize with the Chinese culture. Consequently, a foreign architect could become more localized, and will better understand and more easily adapt to different situations. In the end, team performance will be promoted. For example, R6 mentioned that Chinese people prefer metaphors that are related to the soul or to the Chinese history when an architect explain design to a developer. Also, developers can understand a project more easily by using metaphors or storytelling, which means that the way of communication between two parties is encouraged and consequently, improves on team performance.

11.3.3 Language

Undoubtedly, language is the most serious barriers in a multi-cultural collaborative team.

Proper communication can build trust, boost team performance, and effectively share information. However, the language barrier is not the most significant challenge in design teams, since most of time architects can communicate by drawings. However, when cooperation with Chinese clients, it is necessary for foreign architectural firms to have an interpreter or Chinese colleagues who can speak English for translation. A professional interpreter increases team performance, according to R8.

However, it is still recommended to foreign architects to learn Mandarin, especially for CEOs or directors. It facilitates an efficient communication both in design teams and in collaborative teams. Learning Mandarin helps to better understand information, and information will be available more direct and complete, which is an advantage to people acting at a high level in an organization. They will be able to better interact with developers during meetings. Learning Mandarin increases security and avoid frustration to foreigners in meeting with local developers.

11.3.4 Accept Typical Chinese Characteristics

Though foreign architectural firms request high design costs, they still have competitive advantages, because of their creativity, logical and detailed way of design, and their capability of quality control, in Chinese market. However, being practical is also important in China, since the main goal for Chinese developers is increasing their capital.

Furthermore, guan-xi is crucial in China. Foreign architectural firms should try to make friends with developers or find a local partner with guan-xi ties to expand in the Chinese market. Establishment of a development business department also assists in approaching more local clients. This also applies to aligning with reliable LDIs with rich internationally collaborative experience, because it may offer much assistance and information. Being open-minded is necessary, however, being flexibility is also important to European architects. It improves the ability of members to seize an opportunity and better handle unclear situations.

Finally, staying with the company style and ensuring a good atmosphere and conditions for the humans living or working in it (Liu, 2014) are very important. In the end, as a developer consultant, R8 recommended:

更多要了解文化上的,要更接地气,过分追求形式,考虑文化方面较少的话,地气不接的话,最终成功的可能也不是太大。包括中国人的普遍价值取向,设计作品周围的地段,地块,周围的历史和环境,文脉都要比较清楚。就形式而形式的话,也许他能比较热门一阵,但是他是没有生命力的。

(Learning more about China, such as Chinese values, understanding of site and the history and context around the site is necessary. Do not pursuit too much symbolized architectural forms, since it is difficult to succeed in China. Remember: a symbolic architecture might be popular for a while, however it is not viable and valuable.)

12. Reflection

Studying abroad motivates me to connect collaborative team performance and cross-cultural management. The Chinese market is complicated and the Chinese value is profound. Both of them influence on a European architectural firms working in China.

An extensive literature study was conducted to get an understanding of cultural differences that affect psychological safety, trust and team performance. This literature study has been used to connect the relationship among cultural factors, psychological safety and trust in collaborative teams. The conceptual model in figure 12a was built on an existed theoretical model by Edmondson and Lei (2014).

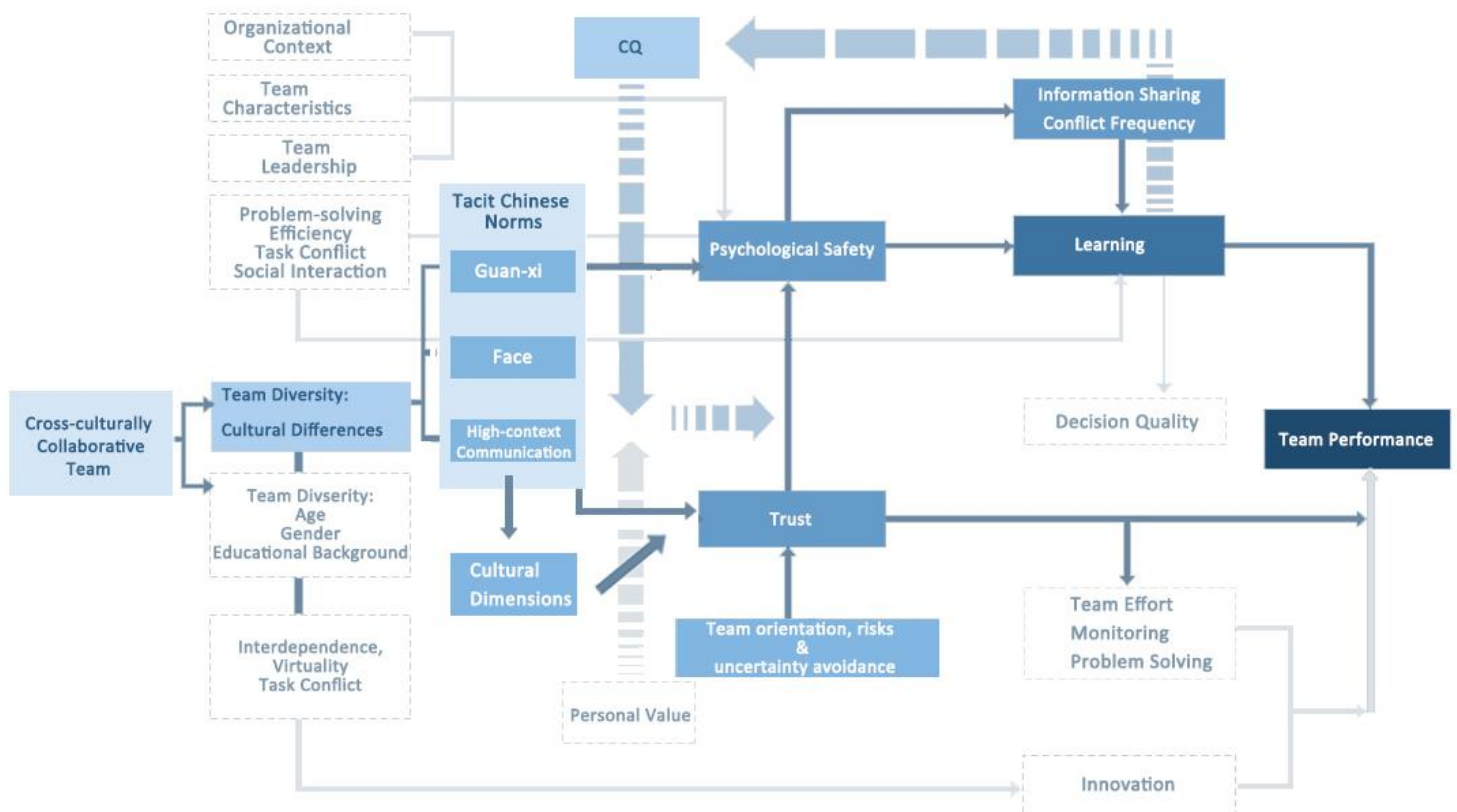


Figure 12a: Conceptual Model (Own Ill.)

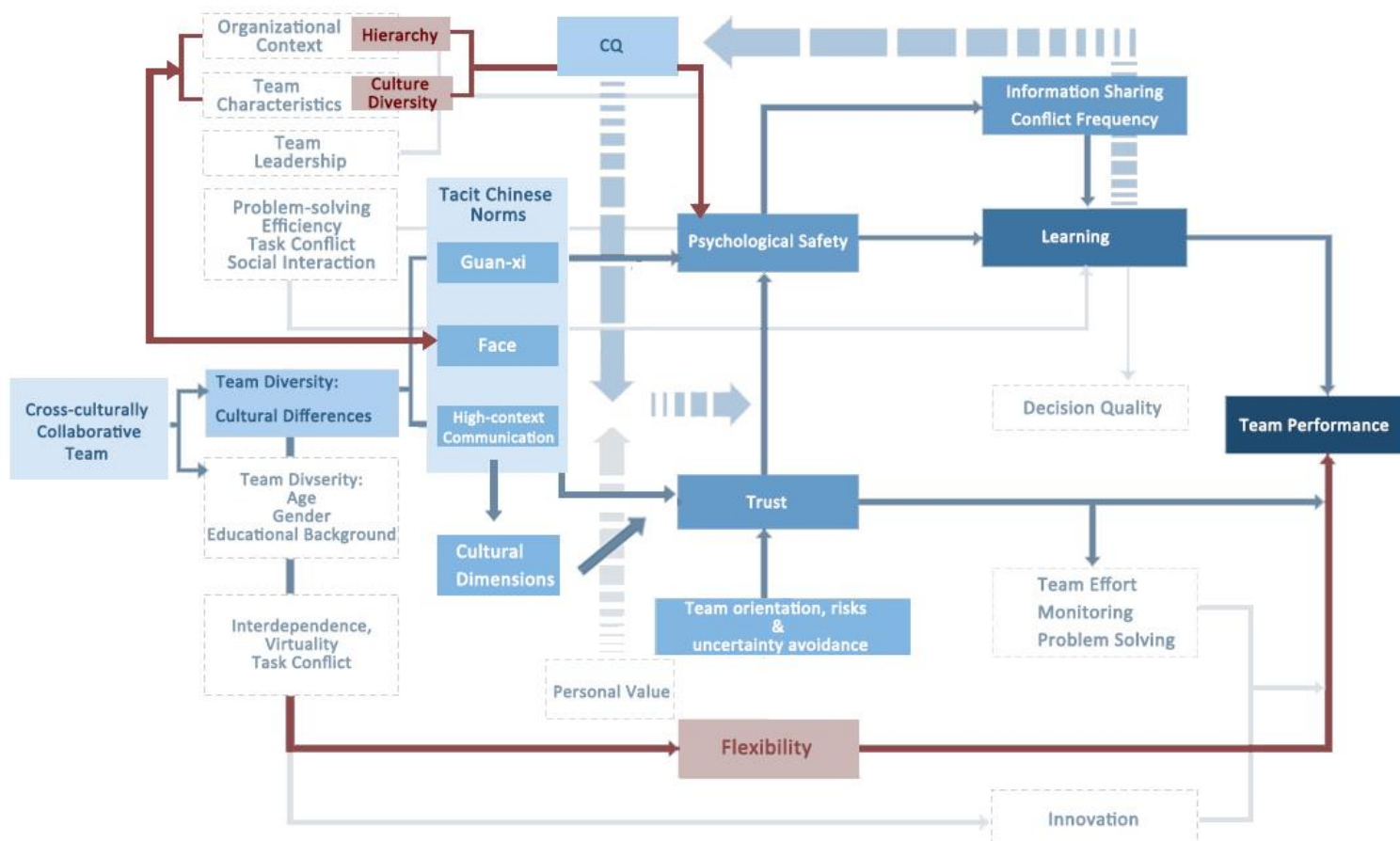
This is a qualitative research by applying case study methods. Because qualitative research help to understand organizational outcomes and a present phenomenon with a certain situation. Case studies can develop a robust theory linking problems, intervention and outcome, to understand the phenomenon in the real life. 4 cases were studied and 9 interviewees participated in this research, including a Chinese, France, German and Dutch case.

This study answer the main research question,

How does cultural diversity in collaborative design teams, consisting of Western

European and Chinese, influence the development of trust, psychological safety and team performance in the Chinese context?

This research proved and confirmed conceptual model that tacit Chinese norms influence on psychological safety, trust and team performance. The importance of this study is that it suggests that the model of Edmondson and Lei (2014) is mainly applicable to the Western context, but may not properly address collaboration with cultural diverse teams involving team members rooted in the Chinese culture. Figure12b is a new collaborative team performance model in the Chinese context. It is tempting to think that it might not be only the case for the Chinese culture, but that it also applies to the larger East Asian culture.



Look back at the process, I am satisfied with my efforts and hardworking. Writing a thesis needs to experience a long-time preparation, literature review, contacting with all possible interviewers, travelling back to China, data collection, analysis and synthesis. During this process, I enjoyed it, but I also suffered from it, and then I also learnt from it. It has been a long process for me to apply knowledge that I have learnt to this thesis, such as methodology and coding. Since I had not have any experience in writing a thesis in English, I learnt how to organize a thesis's structure and how to use appropriate words to describe things. Meanwhile, this study taught me not to forget the main research question and goals which I made in the beginning, and to continue these until the end!

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Indicators for Data Analysis

Indicators	Description
Psychological Safety	Team members' actions related to speaking up concerns and mistakes, seeking feedback and help, being innovative and spanning boundaries.
Trust	Trust is divided into 2 choices, rational and relational choices. When Team members show their affections or friendships, it is relational choices. When trust is built by mutual profession, it is rational choices.
Risks	Risks are connected with trust, which may reduce trust in design and collaborative team (between Chinese developers and Western European architects).
Hierarchy	Team leaders who has much power in design or collaborative teams (between Chinese developers and Western European architects). If there is large inequality in design or collaborative teams, how hierarchy impact on psychological safety, trust and team performance.
Culture intelligence	A person's capability to adapt as s/he interacts with others from different cultural regions. 4 elements take into Considerations, behaviors, motivations, adaptability and metacognition.
Tacit Chinese norms	Tacit Chinese norms are norms that are difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or verbalizing it in the Chinese context, relating to Chinese culture, such as guan-xi and face, to see how they impact on psychological safety, trust and team performance.
Decision making	The decision maker who make decisions in design and collaborative teams. How decisions are made in the design and the collaborative teams.
Design Team meetings	Meetings in design team, their meeting forms,

	discussions and process, people who attend meetings
Collaborative Team meetings	Meetings in collaborative team, their meeting forms, discussions and process, people who attend meetings
Information Sharing	Way to share information, which party shares information with architectural companies
Team performance	The output of a design team and a collaborative team

Appendix 2 Interview Questions for Dutch interviewees

1. Could you introduce yourself a bit?
2. What is your position in the company?
3. Before you went to China, did you read or search some information to get knowledge about China or Chinese culture? Can you tell me something about it?
4. What is your first experience as an architect?
5. Do you consider yourself as someone who is easy adopting a new culture?
6. Could you describe what you think are the main differences between Chinese and Dutch way of working? (eg. The position of architects)
7. Did you felt at ease during the meeting? Why, or why not. What made you feel like that?
8. When you working with Chinese developers (clients), do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting? (In the beginning- In the end).
9. What would you rather not discuss, what do you discuss. Are you addressing now different topics that at the time you first joined the team?
10. What kind of issues, topics do you consider difficult / easy to address in your team?
11. Do you stay with small talk> Do you feel free to speak out during the meeting (In the beginning- In the end)? Did you change your approach over the years (months)?
12. When you do not agree with Chinese developers' opinions, how would you address this? Could you explain me how you try to change their opinion? (In the beginning- In the end)
13. When you working with your team, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting (In the beginning- In the end)?
14. Is there a particular way in how you would address more sensitive things?

15. Did you change your approach over the years (months)?
16. How would you describe the way you communicate with your boss or superior? Did you ever show strong emotions, - strong positive emotions, and negative emotions? Would you still do so? (In the beginning- In the end)
17. How much do you like social activities with your colleagues? Do you easy show your emotions to them? Would they do so to you? (In the beginning- In the end)
18. Do others provide your team with sufficient information to do the job?
19. Do you feel you can rely on other parties in your projects? In whom would you rely most? In whom least?
20. What factors complicate or impede project outcomes?
21. How to avoid or deal with these risks?
22. Before having meeting with Chinese developers, how do you prepare usually? Is it difficult to meet the requirements of the Chinese developers?
23. Did you feel well prepared? Could one prepare for such an experience?
24. How often do Chinese developers demand changes to the design / project?
25. What kind of information do you obtain from Chinese developers?
26. Would you consider collaboration with Chinese developers a major challenge?
27. Could you describe the way decisions are made in a project?
28. Are decisions made in a different way if there is a famous architect involved
29. Could you describe a project in which decisions were reviewed? Did it improve project outcomes?
30. How do you deal with decisions that lower the project outcomes?

31. Could you tell me how did you communicate with Chinese developers? (translator? Mandarin? English?)
32. What did you found difficult to understand a Chinese developer/colleagues? Example
33. What did you found easy to understand a Chinese developer/ colleagues Example
34. Could you give me an example of a project that suffered from misunderstandings because of cultural differences? Could you elaborate?
35. How do you improve the way of communication?
36. What did you expect about the way a project would be conducted?
37. How well could you collaborate with colleagues?
38. How would you advise a new colleague to prepare?
39. What have you learnt from working in an international team over in China the years?
40. What have you learnt from working in a team with colleagues stemming from different cultural back grounds?
41. What kind of rules did you learn that are important to collaborate in an international team?
42. How did you became aware of the do's and don't's?
43. What was a big mistake, and what is the kind of things you found difficult to change in your behavior or reactions; are you still make mistakes because of a different cultural background?
44. What did you do very well?
45. International collaboration is probably more difficult than collaborating with colleagues from the same culture. Do you consider international collaboration in China more difficult / easy than elsewhere? Would it yield the same project outcomes? What is different?

46. What is the most difficult problem to overcome, when you collaborative with Chinese developers, cultural habits, language barriers, the way a team communicates?
47. Do you have any recommendations when collaboration with Chinese developers for Western European architectural companies?

Appendix 3 Interview Questions for Chinese interviewees

1. Could you introduce yourself a bit?
2. What is your first experience as an architect?
3. As a Chinese architect in an international team, are there any particular tasks you are expected/asked to do (in the local situation). Do you have some examples for me that help me to understand?
4. Are your foreign colleagues expecting you to help them in finding their way in China? How do you help your Dutch colleagues to understand Chinese culture and get used to Chinese environment? Could you give an example?
5. When you started, did you involve foreigners in a different way than you do now?
6. Could you describe what you think are the main differences between Chinese and Dutch way of working? (eg. The position of architects).
7. Did you feel at ease during the meeting? Why, or why not. What made you feel like that?
8. When you working with Chinese developers (clients), do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting? (In the beginning- In the end).
9. What would you rather not discuss, what do you discuss. Are you addressing now different topics that at the time you first joined the team?
10. What kind of issues, topics do you consider difficult / easy to address in your team?
11. Do you stay with small talk> Do you feel free to speak out during the meeting (In the beginning- In the end)? Did you change your approach over the years (months)?
12. When you do not agree with Chinese developers' opinions, how would you address this? Could you explain me how you try to change their opinion?

13. When you working with your team, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting ?
14. Is there a particular way in how you would address more sensitive things?
15. Did you change your approach over the years (months)?
16. How would you describe the way you communicate with your boss or superior?
Did you ever show strong emotions, - strong positive emotions, and negative emotions? Would you still do so? (In the beginning- In the end)
17. How much do you like social activities with your colleagues? Do you easy show your emotions to them? Would they do so to you? (In the beginning- In the end)
18. Do others provide your team with sufficient information to do the job?
19. Do you feel you can rely on other parties in your projects? In whom would you rely most? In whom least?
20. What factors complicate project outcomes?
21. How to avoid or deal with risks?
22. Before having meeting with Chinese developers, how do you prepare usually? Is it difficult to meet the requirements of the Chinese developers?
23. Did you feel well prepared? Could one prepare for such an experience?
24. How often do Chinese developers demand changes to the design / project?
25. What kind of information do you obtain from Chinese developers?
26. Would you consider collaboration with Chinese developers a major challenge?
27. Could you describe the way decisions are made in a project?
28. Are decisions made in a different way if there is a famous architect involved?

29. Could you describe a project in which decisions were reviewed? Did it improve project outcomes?
30. How do you deal with decisions that lower the project outcomes?
31. How difficult is it for you to well understand Chinese developers? Did it ever happen that due to a misunderstanding, a project went wrong?
32. Do you feel you need to educate Dutch colleagues, to build a bridge between Chinese developers and your Dutch colleagues to make them understand each other?
33. What did you expect about the way a project would be conducted?
34. How well could you collaborate with colleagues?
35. How would you advise a new colleague to prepare?
36. What have you learnt from working in an international team over in China the years?
37. What have you learnt from working in a team with colleagues stemming from different cultural back grounds?
38. What kind of rules did you learn that are important to collaborate in an international team.
39. How did you became aware of the do's and don't's?
40. What was a big mistake, and what is the kind of things you found difficult to change in your behavior or reactions; are you still make mistakes because of a different cultural background?
41. What did you do very well?
42. International collaboration is probably more difficult than collaborating with colleagues from the same culture. Do you consider international collaboration in China more difficult / easy than elsewhere? Would it yield the same project outcomes? What is different?

43. What is the most difficult problem to overcome, when you collaborative with Chinese developers, cultural habits, language barriers, the way a team communicates?
44. Do you have any recommendations when collaboration with Chinese developers for Western European architectural companies?

Appendix 4 List of interviewees

Code	Country	Current Position	Working Experience	Company Name
TR	The Netherlands	Junior architect	3 months	-
R1	The Netherlands	Junior architect	3 years	ECADI
R2	China	Junior architect	10 months	ECADI
R3	The Netherlands	Junior architect	6 years	FRI
R4	The Netherlands	Junior architect	2.5 years	gmp
R5	Germany	Junior architect	3 years	gmp
R6	The Netherlands	Director	2 years	MVRDV
R7	China	Junior architect	1.5 years	MVRDV
R8	China	Developer	25 years	-

Appendix 5-RT Transcription

Text Respondent

Master student at TUD

Junior Architect

3 month working and staying in China

Q: Before working in China, do you have some issues that you were concerned?

A: No, I do not have any working context before. It was my first time.

Q: Before you went to China, did you read or search some information to get knowledge about China or Chinese culture? Could you tell me something about it?

A: Yes, I read few books. I read a really nice book, it is all Chinese to me. It is about cultural differences. And also I read a book from a Dutch architect, who also lives in China few years ago, and he wrote a book about his experience. And also I prepared it in Dutch office, and they told me some basics how to behave and how to do the stuff. But rest of them, I just experienced there.

Q: Do you think your original prepared cultural knowledge negatively/ positively impact on teamwork? (Could you give me more details or examples? What was your feelings?)

A: Yes, yes. It is a lot. Especially reading the books. It was really helpful for sure. (Could you give me more examples)? Yeah, there are few things about face-gain, face loss if you don't know about this kind of things you cannot really working into Chinese social situation. You have to know about it. Hmm..and also just basic about guan-xi. It's really important, you don't have to know everything about it. But for me, I have not heard about it before I went to China. So it's really important that you know it exists. So I think it was helpful for sure.

Q: What was your first feeling when you were working in Chinese team?

A: Well, I was the only foreigner in a Chinese team. So it's really interesting. My first few weeks there were very hard because of the hierarchy in the office. We have one boss who is really like a boss like supposed to be in China. I only have some 25-year-old female colleagues and one male boss. And I was in between all of them. Because it is a project development company, I was the only architect in the office. So in the beginning, it was kind of hard, especially the language. They did not speak a lot of English only a bit, only the basic. Hmm...and also in the beginning the amount of deadlines was crazy. Just like "you have to finish this project before 16 today. "something like that. (Did your colleagues tell you about all the working tasks?) yes, the deadline is really unreasonable. And in the beginning, I didn't know how to process this, how to work with this. After while I learn that some deadlines are real deadlines. I had to do a lot of things which are not deadline but still you have work on it.

Q: After 3 months, do you think you understand Chinese culture better? Does it influence on

teamwork? On what perspective?

A: Yes, way better. (Yeah? So what's the difference like at the beginning and after?) Well, in the beginning, I had a lot of difficulties, as I said. But in the end, it was very nice that I only work with Chinese colleagues. Because of that, for sure, I learnt everything quickly. The difference right now is that I could be more relaxed in Chinese atmosphere. The first three weeks, I was very tense. Because I didn't know how to behave. My position was exactly in the hierarchy and going out for dinners. It is very important way go to sit and how you behave. And now I still don't know everything. I am not pretending to know everything, but now to be like comfortable in this situation. (So can you give me an example?) Yes, the meetings and dinners are very important, way more important than actual business meetings. The actual business meeting is just conversation but when you go out for dinner that is really important, since you make your connection, common ground and everything. In the beginning, I didn't know what the expectation of me was and where to sit. And we drink a lot during the meeting, of course, that was also something really interesting and yeah, it's just really hard if you are the only western guy in all Chinese context with some many social rules. I really want to be polite because I don't want to offense anyone. Although I didn't experience any rude situation, but I was very scared to do the things wrong and it's really difficult. But, as I said, when the time going, I learned more and more. And more colleagues are very nice to me. For instance, when we first time went to the dinner, they told me that you have to do this and this, you have to sit there and wear this, paying like this. This really made me more relaxed.

Q: Compared with Dutch developers, what is the difference from Chinese developers? (value? culture?) details

A: I think the biggest difference is that Chinese developers totally control everything. The one who pays, really decide what happen. In Holland, the architect, really has words, he has his saying, he has his vision about how he wants to design something and he can convinces the developer what we going to do like this because it will be very nice something like that. What I experienced in China was the other way around. We made our proposition, the developer denied again and again. In the end he came to one idea and we had to make this idea. Even though it was not intelligent idea, but we still need to have to do it. Because he denied everything. So they are really powerful.

Q: What do you think about the role of Chinese developers in a project?

A: Chinese developers are main controller. Because he is the one who founds it and develops it and he has all the connection. Probably he is also the reason that makes all of parties come together, my company presented there and other companies were also there. So in the end he can play everyone to know what he wants. In our project, the developer is really powerful part.

Q: Could you tell me how did you communicate with Chinese developers? (translator? Mandarin? English?)

A: Usually I talked to my colleagues what I wanted to the developer and they translate to the developer and also used Wechat (a software) to translate. So we can just directly use Wechat, he spoke Chinese and I spoke English. We can kind of getting what we are saying. So that we did a lot. The developers speak very little English. Once a time, we made a presentation in

English, so there was a Chinese colleague translate the most important words which are the most important information that the developer has to understand in Chinese. So we mostly use Wechat and the help from Chinese colleagues.

Q: Do you think learning Mandarin impacts on collaboration with Chinese developers? Why?

A: Yes, the most important conclusion is that if you can speak mandarin, it can help you to open many many doors, even a little bit. (What do you mean open many doors? Can you give me some examples?) I think Chinese developers knew that I only know few basic Chinese words. If I spoke few Chinese during the meeting, they really appreciate the fact that you learnt something about the culture and the language. So I guess the impact of our western persons to speak Mandarin will be enormous. I feel like they were extremely appreciate to the efforts to learning mandarin, so probably, professionally it would not make any differences. But for gaining friendship and good business relationships would make massive impact.

Q: Do you think the western appearance would helpful for making connections with Chinese developers?

A: Yes, there was something I was just had to attend because I look western. I had to be there, I understood it a bot. But I think if will help you at first and you think it helps to make connections but it is very shallow connections. They want to you have to there but there is no connection that you can use. (but do you think it is kind of trust?) No, it is not trust. (so what is the shallow connection?) yes it is like that making connection like friends but it doesn't help you to anyone trust you because you are western, you have to more than that. So I think in the beginning, it helps because you really standout a bit but in the end it is better to learn some Chinese and gain some proper friends than just looking western. It will just help you some small things.

Q: When you talk to Chinese developers, do you have experiences that they do not understand what you are saying or the other way around?

A: Yes, we did of course, some language issues. But I guess the most important issues is miscommunication is that the developers never say anything what they want, they said many things, they give you a story around but not what they want. And we are not used to that. In our culture, we are really direct. If I want the thing is orange, I just say making it in orange. And in china, you just say anything around it but they won't say anything what they want. That was very hard in the beginning. I didn't know it. I was really wondering why you just said what you want but I think it was a part of differences. (*How could you understand their meaning?*) Just experience, just learning get to know your developer. That's why the dinner and everything is so important. I have to get to know personally what he means. It just takes time. Time and experience are the most important things. (*Why do you think they are very indirect?*) I don't know, it may be because of losing face but I don't know the exact relation. I think it's something to do with saving face. They just gave you everything but I don't know.

Q: So you think the time is quite important, but can you understand their high-context communication or you still have problems when they talk very broad things?

A: Well, I started with very low way of communication, but after this 3 months, I get way better. But I still need to improve. If I want to understand everything clearly, it still takes my few years,

I guess.

Q: So when you have problem, did you Chinese colleagues help you?

A: Yes, they helped me to understand. They told me about the problem and I had to solve them and then they explain to me. But their English is very basic was not that really good. so they can't explain very well. It is kind of difficult. (So that means your colleagues really helps but on the other hand you still need to understand everything by yourself?) yes it comes from both sides.

Q: How do you collaborate with Chinese developers to exchange information?

A: Actually, Chinese developers never give us any exact requirements for designs. They were very vague about it. In Holland, we always have list of requirements. But in china, we didn't get this. We had a museum project, they just said the museum would be about 60000-9000 square meters with this and this. And we started to design. And then we start to ask them more questions. We made a presentation with very clear questions that we want to know and go to the client office for asking. Because the clients didn't understand that we need the information to make design. So we made questions and we sent questions in Chinese one week in advance. We had to prepare the meeting with the questions. We went to the offices to do the presentations with references, images and we work with the questions. That how we gain the information to start the design. (So it's kind of vague requirements) The requirements are always very vague and they changed the requirements very often like 2 times a week. First was 6000 then 9 12 then 4000 again. Because the corruption issues, a lot of projects have some kind of corruption. So some companies left the project since they got arrest, that's why the project requirements changed a lot. Since in shanghai only few value plots left, so everyone really wants to get these plots.

Q: So the developers give you a very vague team orientation, so how could you build trust with them? If one day they left the project? How can you have motivation to improve the work?

A: Well, I didn't have the trust with the developer. But my boss trusts him. He has his guan-xi, so he said you can trust him, it will be alright. So I just trust my boss. And he said that was trustworthy. I was sent to china from a Dutch company, they work together with this company, kind of joint venture. But my Chinese boss said I can trust them and also we did some project in Shanghai before. And all work out in the end so there is no reason not to trust him. As long as he has confidence, it would be fine.

Q: Do you know how your boss develops his guan-xi?

A: Yes, it's just family and very close friends, like cousins and studying in the same school few years ago. It's really personal, personal friends, nephews something like that.

Q: Except requirement description of a project, do you think Chinese value like dragon Patten or panda influences on project design and developers' preference?

A: Yes, a lot, actually. Because they like certain style, but they are not really existed, such as western modern style, Chinese modern style, Chinese commercial style. But it is not really something. If you would say give me an example what do you mean. But they can't give you an example. Because they don't know what you mean. They just say western modern style,

because we are western company, we can make it. But when we make western modern design but they say that is not Chinese. But they always like gold marble and also few lights in the ceiling. If we didn't put them in the design they just design straightly. (so how can you solve the problems?) Just experience with this developers, absolutely you will know what he likes. We have a developer he really likes black marble. So in our designs, we made design with black marble. And also he focus on lighting. So if we put beautiful lightning, then we have big chance to succeeding.

Q: What do you and your team usually do before meeting with Chinese developers?

A: We did some preparation. We saw some other project for the Guangfu Museum in Beijing. We visited his early design in Beijing before we start our design. Just get to know what he likes. We did some research. (Anything else?) Just try... we give him multiple options. And let him choose. We just try to get what he wants to be. But also that's the thin, in Holland it will be the other way around. Because we will make an option, but the decision from the developer would be that strong. The architect has his power to decide his design. So the developer has already know what architects like. And in china, the architect should to know what the developer wants. And then we have to bend a bit towards his opinion, if we don't do it, they just pick another architects. So we have the decision before, on one hand, we have our what we want, on the other hand ,we have the developer and of course we want to do the project but we don't want to break our principle. We want to make beautiful things as well, if the developer wants to do the ugly things, we won't do it. So you always have to consider what your want to perceive your project. Because the quality can go to very low, we had one project end up with very low quality. (Could you tell me a little more?) It was free trade area in north of Pudong, shanghai. It's totally failed project. The real estate project is totally failed. Because they don't want to exchange to tax free. And it didn't really work. It's extremely big area, because the total project failed and the money from our project cannot come, so they want to finish it quickly. In the certain point, they just stop talking and they just took our design. We just made primarily design, only the sketch. And they built it after 2 or 3 rendering sketch. (Do you still have the trust with this developer?) No, no at all. (Because of the whole project? Or the developer is not reliable?) In the end, he was not reliable. I think the whole project has already been collapsed. (What's the feelings of whole team with this this developer?) We probably won't work with him anymore.

Q: Do you have experience that when you thought a well-prepared project would be satisfied with Chinese developers but the developer still wants you to be improved?

A: Yeah, actually it's all the time. They always come to some new idea at the end of design stage and they want to change everything. They just wake up one day, thinking this is not good and calling us to tell us this is not good. At beginning, we said that we would try, but now we just said no, because is too late. We just make like some point no return. When you completed everything, something you can't change anymore. You can't change the whole plans in a week, because the quality of the less design will be good. You also read the book: "You can't change China, china changes you" I agree with that. You will have to work with china not against with them, but in some points, china should learn from Dutch. Because the end quality in china is quite low. If you see building in China 10 years ago, they are really bad. It's because of things like this. So in some points we just say no we can't do it. We want to deliver our quality. You

want to western architect because they deliver a nice design and good quality. Let do what we do the best.

Q: In the early phase, if they want to you change something, but you think the idea is good, what would you do during the meeting, persuasion or negotiation or compromise? What was your feeling? Can you tell me more?

A: Negotiation, always negotiation. It always is giving and taking. We will arrange a meeting. We will prepare our presentation. We will try to lead a little bit. Of course, it would be a bit persuasion to convince what we want the best. But it would be negotiation.

Q: During the meeting, do you have any chances to make decision by yourself or only a developer can make decision?

A: It depends on who attend the meeting. If the decision maker was not in the meeting, all people just talk around topic and they have to ask the guy who is in charge. So if the decision maker was there, the decisions will be made one by one, very quickly. But if the boss is not there, you won't make any decisions, because they have to wait for their boss. We have to wait. We try to present the meeting, but it always chaotic. So it depends on people who present.

Q: You were talking about negotiation, what was the way of the negotiation in your team?

A: We always used nice presentation, that's the way we are good at. We are architects. We know how to present stuff. We can present and convince in architectural way, facial stuff.

Q: Do you have experience about having conflicts or problems with Chinese developers?

A: Yes, like we said early, the developer who just steer the design not care about quality. It still start any time. Not many conflicts. But always negotiation, changing, fighting a little bit. But not really the conflicts. (Why did you have fight with the developer?) Just because of the deadlines, the developer trying to control everyone. We tried to let them understand that if you change frequently, the quality will get lower and lower. That's a bit of friction.

Q: How do you and your team build trust with Chinese developers?

A: The trust is from boss and I trust him. (You don't need do anything for building relationship?) Yes I joined the meetings, dinners and KTVs. (Give me something about dinners?) We had few dinners that we hosted. We booked a restaurant like a house, no open space only private rooms. They are extremely expensive and then we had some conversation. We shake with the host. We bought all expensive food and alcohols. You always have to walk to host and say something before drinking. And you also need to drink with guests one by one. The point is getting drunk very quickly. If you are drunk, it is easier to make friends. (What is the feeling of developer?) They are happy. I guess it is good thing and the point. It was weird for me. They were getting extremely drunk. But they were happy. I don't know, I just participate to it. (But now you are get used to it, how about the first time?) Yeah, the first time, I was very scared. Because I didn't what would happen. Everyone was screaming in Chinese and I didn't know what happen. Everyone starting to hug. And I had to drunk a lot because I am a man because I need to prove my muscularity by drinking a lot of alcohol and keeping other guests to drink. I need to stand up and kept drinking with a small cup to make sure everyone is happy. (Is the developer you

hosted a decision maker?) Yes, only important people you invited, especially go to the expensive restaurants, always developers or people from government. It is always the important people who help you to get the projects later on. You will invite them to the dinner and they will give you something you want to.

Q: Do you think have any feeling connections after the dinners or meetings?

A: Yes, if you had a dinner before, and you have a meeting after the dinner, you have known that you had dinners with them. You build some friendship recently. So you know we will get favor from them they will help you.

Q: So you would like to speak out in the meeting?

A: Yes, you will speak out in the meeting. Because the developer will not make you lose face. Because you invite him to the dinner and you give them goods. In the meeting, maybe, I don't know, maybe we had the conflicts but he will not fight you, I don't know, I think it's just gaining confidence or friendship. For us it is easier to make decision afterwards. (So can I say you feel more safe when you in Chinese context?) Yes, sure. Because Guan-xi is really difficult especially if you are not Chinese, it is very difficult. But what I understand is that, it is really powerful. So if you have some good connection, you can do a lot, you can do anything you want. But if you had bad connection, you can lose your company, projects and employees. Everyone can just leave because you did few things wrong. So if you good relationship, it makes you more safe.

Q: From bidding to a completed project, there are several phases. Do you think the degree of trust changes in different phase?

A: It improves slowly. But it always has problems. For example, something happened and you lose some trust and then you regain it. But in the end, you always gain the trust. If the project goes well, you can get more projects after. After Guangfu project and now we got 3 new projects. And really quick because they are satisfied in the end.

Q: Which phase is the most important to build the trust? Details and how?

A: I think it's really important to keep in touch with the developers after finishing the project. For instance, we got some reviews from the developers. And we still keep in touch with each other. Besides, all arranged the meetings and dinners help a lot as well.

Q: Could you describe what your feeling was when you talk to the Chinese developer at the first time?

A: Yes, the first time, I was bit scared. I only did the presentation but short one. Just to see what happen. I was just scared. (Afterwards do you feel better?) Yes, after few weeks, I feel better, and more comfortable. Because of guan-xi a bit. However, since I am not Chinese, I can't really understand it. And also because me getting more used to China. I can't say which one is more important. I think they are equal, so because I saw the developer more often. I always there. I always did something that made him to know I am trustable.

Q: After you get the feedback, what do your team do?

A: If the feedback is good, we got some project afterwards. But if the project is not good at all, we just stop the collaboration, which means that the relationship does not match them. Just stop.

Q: If the developer ask you change a lot, what was the feeling of your team?

A: If the developers we collaborate with each other for few years, it goes more easily. We had a developer collaborates with us 6 years ago. The longer collaboration is, the less changes will be. Because it also works 2 ways. Because we know what they want how to present but on the other hand, they trust us because they know it will become very good in the end. But we also have some new developers, they always ask us to change every day, every week, and every hour.

Q: Are there some unfair situations happened when you work with Chinese developers?

A: It is all the time. None bidding is fair. We always knew the result of bidding we did in front of the meeting. It is always about guan-xi. Guan-xi is extremely powerful.

Q: Could you tell me what have you learnt from when working with Chinese developers?

A: You need to accept unfair situation, you can't change it. I don't know. Also setting some boundaries for the company. Guan-xi is ok to use guan-xi, but it is not ok to do the stuff in illegal way. It is a difficult line. Fair and unfair. It is always in between. Because a lot of things in my experience, are really hard to say. I don't know its guan-xi or fair situation.

Q: What are differences between China and NL

A: In Europe, the bidding is fairer and hold by the government. It is impossible/ or hard to cheat. But here is fairer in China. I don't know which one I prefer. If you have many good connections like my boss, you would have very good experience, but if I didn't know him, I would not have this good experience. So in the end, I prefer to have fair situation. Because Guan-xi is always quite difficult. I don't like it.

Q: You always talk about your boss, how can you trust him a lot?

A: You have to meet him out of office all the time. Having dinner, KTV, lunches and prove that you are good at building relationship. Because he saw me that I learning Chinese and Chinese cultural. That is the kind of way we build our trust. He doesn't really care about your work only think he care about is that he can trust. So if he trust you, he doesn't care about what I did a good or bad deign. The work is not really a matter, just attend all the social activities. But in Holland, we have to be in the office at 9 which is really important. But in china, my boss doesn't care and I can leave the office for the whole week without saying anything, just because he trusts me. (Do you think it is nice working in this context?) Yes, it was nice to have trust relationship. But it also could go to the opposite way, if you had bad experience, probably it would be hard for me. We had some colleagues who fight with the boss, in the end, they just left the office.

Q: can you give me more information about your feelings for cultural issues?

A: I still don't understand Chinese culture totally. I still have feeling that I don't know it enough, so I can't say it is good or not but it is different. And now I know little bit more and I can

work a little bit better, but I still need to know more about Chinese culture.

Q: Do you have any recommendations when collaboration with Chinese developers for Western European architectural companies?

A: Learning Chinese just a little bit, few words. Reading some books about it and just don't make any mistakes and just for not being rude. Try to understand a little bit.

Appendix 5-R1 Transcription

ECADI



Master degree of Architecture at TU Delft

Junior Architect

3 years in previous position

3.5 years in China

(The only foreigner at the ECADI with 120 Chinese colleagues)

Q: Before you went to China, did you read or search some information to get knowledge about China or Chinese culture? Can you tell me something about it?

A: The first time I come to china was for university project but only one month, before that I didn't do that much. Before I went to study in China, I went to Chinese class in Delft. I was actively practicing my Chinese, making Chinese friends and reading Chinese culture. My friends mentioned that Chinese people demolished things as fast as possible. Basically, you learn how to talk to them and see what their ideas. Most of time you need to talk with them and then you learn. Before I came here, I didn't know more about it only some common knowledge. Learning Chinese culture is definitely positively influence on working in Chinese context. I was trying to get to know people and it is easier to make a step if you know people here. It was a bit scary if you don't know what you get into. I know Chinese culture better, and I know better how to handle situation. When you disagree, you know you can openly disagree or should shut up. For example, at the first time when I worked at ECADI, we had couple of project. The team structure was with headquarter manager, project manager, and project team leader and team members. When you were working on the project, the project team leader just said yes, that's fine, maybe you can a little bit like this. Once or twice a week, you talk with team leader. Every couple of day you talk with project manager. They just said, yes that's fine. But at the end of the week, you need to meet with architectural head, he says something completely different. And then the project manager and team leader also said the same that we need to do what he says. The hierarchy is very strong, so you have to follow what the highest person's desire. I didn't agree, I also felt very bad. In the beginning, I did try to say my opinion, but also in the very beginning, my Chinese was not so good, I couldn't accurately to point what my concept is, though I can explain a little bit. They didn't hear what I am saying. After working longer, my Chinese is getting better and I also understand the system better, so I know when I disagree with something, even you speak out, it is useless. So later I said something sometimes I don't, it depends on the situation. Most the informal discussion, I would go discuss with them, but when it was more formal meetings, I just didn't say anything. For example, there was another situation where I did a design that my project manager didn't like it. And he also discussed with other managers, then he came to me over the computer said that the design should like this and this. Then I said I do think it should like this. Then he said it is not an

impressive architecture. But in that situation, I was arguing with them, but later we had a meeting with many people and department manager. They discussed about my design, but I didn't argue anything, I don't want to go this discussion and I know it is useless.

Q: Could you describe what you think are the main differences between Chinese and Dutch way of working? (eg. The position of architects)

A: I think it is hierarchy. That's the main difference. In china the hierarchy is very strong. In dutch company, there is more discussion with boss, from both way. But in china, if the highest person says it is different than it is different. In china, it happens more that designs get down by references. They use references more, so every project can be very different. In the Netherlands, usually the company has already had its company style and with that framework, you make something. But in Chinese company, they do something like Zaha or something in between with many famous architecture. In china the way of working is bit different from the Netherlands. In china, people always make 3D models and you give them a quick rendering and I think in western company, they work a lot with physical models, thus you can adjust them quickly. Also the time is quite longer, in the Netherlands, it is slower and longer and here the concept design goes on 2 weeks.

Q: Do you have an experience meeting with Chinese developers?

A: Yes, there are two types of meetings, formal meeting such as the meeting you present your design, might be a competition and informal meeting that you discuss the progress of project.

Q: Can you challenge the clients during the informal meeting?

A: Sometimes, it depends. I didn't do any design work, but all drawings have done by ECADI. I was there for communication and to help. Since the developer is very nice and they keep the designer with whole process as a consultant. Every two months he came to shanghai to check the progress. Since the meeting is quite informal and regular, I always suggest something or give my inputs. It also because I need to translate something to the designer and translate back. I always put my opinions. They accepted my opinion, but it is not necessary to do. There weren't many decisions to make during the meeting, but they accept mine opinions. The most decisions are made during the formal meeting, but sometimes the decisions may postpone to make because they need to check and connect with other stakeholders.

Q: Who make the decisions in the end?

A: Usually the architect says like that I highly suggest you do this, though it is your money.

Q: Did you felt at ease during the meeting? Why, or why not. What made you feel like that?

A: It is quite Ok. Because the informal meetings are quite relaxed, no stress there and formal meeting, I didn't need to do the presentation. There is always my boss did, so I don't need to worry about anything. I was just there and show how the international company is.

Q: When you working with Chinese developers (clients), do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting?

A: I don't say anything because it makes my boss bad. It gives his face. If he says something wrong, I can't say it directly, maybe I can say it after. But in the informal meetings, sometimes you can challenge them but it depends on time. Sometimes, you have formal meeting with discussion, then it gets to be informal. Then it depends on the atmosphere in the room, then to see if I can say anything or not.

Q: What kind of issues, topics do you consider difficult / easy to address in your team?

A: I think the most difficult is that the most of design is made for good-looking. For example, in the Dutch way, you make a design start from a concept and you stick with the whole concept. Every details or shapes are from the specific concept. But in china, you have the project, you start from something but it keeps changing, in the end, you make a presentation. You already have nice images, floor plans everything, but you don't have concept. At the very end, before you make the presentation, you start to think about the concept. When you say maybe we need a concept, then they say no we don't have time. We need to make models and other plans. And we will see what we can do in the end. The software is also a problem. Rhino to Sketchup, illustrator to photoshop, indesign to power point. But before I leave, they change the software, since the most foreign architectural firms are using these software.

Q: When you working with your team, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting (In the beginning- In the end)?

A: It is no problem and for them, most of them are ok. But some of them, when you discuss the project, they don't participate the design discussion and afterwards they just do what the re-planning stuff. Though I participate in the discussion, I still stick with what I do, because I think it is the best idea. But it was only in the concept design individually.

Q: Is there a particular way in how you would address more sensitive things?

A: Usually you just accept, and there is not many things that you can do when you know it won't go with the plan. Because of the hierarchy and their favorite. For example people know what the boss like and they try to start with his preferences and make him happy.

Q: Did you change your approach over the years (months)?

A: You get more used to hierarchy but it is very difficult to adjust your ways. Because in the first year, I didn't do many conceptual design. But they hired me for making more design. So they said that they could switched me to another group to do more design, but it didn't happen. So in the second year, I wasn't very happy. It is also hard for foreigners to get higher positions in Chinese company. Then I don't want to really do good jobs with them. But if I am in the company that I like, I work harder to make my boss happy.

Q: How would you describe the way you communicate with your boss or superior? Did you ever show strong emotions, - strong positive emotions, and negative emotions? Would you still do so? (In the beginning- In the end)

A: It depends on which levels. With my project manager, if there was a problem, I told him directly. With the department head, I would not say anything. It depends, since you are doing project. But when I come here first time, they changed my desk all the time since they didn't have enough space for the old building. Then I have chance to sit next to architecture head's room, if he was there, we chat about everything. He told me about his life and that was relaxed. But the meeting was very formal, so I didn't speak so much. I hid my strong emotions. Once I had a very unfair situation, I was quite angry. After that, we still need to work for that project with my input. So I need to finish something, but I didn't do many things since they didn't come to me for help and also I didn't ask them do you need help and also didn't talk with him anymore. I learnt a lot from this time. I don't think I would do many things last time. I might do the design that he likes it but I don't like it. But it causes me the frustration.

Q: How much do you like social activities with your colleagues? Do you easily show your emotions to them? Would they do so to you? (In the beginning- In the end)

A: Guan-xi only happens in the top of level people. I had an experience when I was on business in Chongqing. The boss had to drink and dinner. From the dinner, I can see the guan-xi of the developer and my boss is very good. Thus they did name the project as ECADI which is not reported but the boss can get his profit. So if you go closely, you can see these things. But for me I am not into it. I don't mind that I go dinner and drinking. It is quite fun. Many foreigners don't have Guan-xi. They can be used by other Chinese to show their Guan-xi that they are international and give them face. But during the dinner, the relationship with my boss was improved. But I still keep my emotion in neutral, since it was with the hierarchy and also you couldn't get any benefits. So I keep it like a business.

Q: Do others provide your team with sufficient information to do the job?

A: Some yes, some no. Usually they have very strong taste but they don't show what they are looking for. Even though they have many projects, but they don't know the design so well. They know what they like and don't, but they don't have design background. They show some pictures during the presentation. For the competition, you see the previous project what they pick up to see what they like and don't like. Most of them like the design like Zaha Hadid. Some projects that the government get involved in. they give the government information but if you have a good developer, they also give you these information.

Q: How to avoid or deal with these risks?

A: Most developers don't pay for the architect, especially for small foreigner companies. Whenever, they changed something, they changed. If you have good Guan-xi, you can accept a lot. Since the seven, in the end the result is not good. Mostly the project manager and the boss handle these things. But if you have good Guan-xi, it helps a lot to avoid these problems. For example that I said some small companies don't get paid, but if you have good Guan-xi, you can get paid because you are good friends.

Q: Before having meeting with Chinese developers, how do you prepare usually? Is it difficult to meet the requirements of the Chinese developers?

A: If you meet the developer, you need to send everything to who do the presentation and to make sure that the presentation is ok. But I always put on the suits when we have formal meeting with clients but I am the only one. But these casual dress make the meeting less pressure. But during the company meeting, I would prepare the specific Chinese words to accurately explain my concept. So I can better convince and it worked better.

Q: Did you feel well prepared? Could one prepare for such an experience?

A: I had an experience that there was a design I join but the presentation made by a lady who doesn't know a lot for the project but she contacted to Chongqing branch many times and the head of Chongqing branch was not there. So she had to make the presentation. The presentation was not good, but I couldn't interrupt her. I got many experience but mostly is about your feelings what it is going on and you get used to the situations. I know what focus on and not in the presentation. Sometimes you need to mentioned the selling point which is it is international design.

Q: How often do Chinese developers demand changes to the design / project?

A: It depends. For example, I had an experience with Austrian architectural firm, Coop Himmelb(l)au. It was project in Changsha. In that project, it changed incredibly much. The area of the design was cutting to half. Firstly Coop Himmelb(l)au join the project, then since the project cut to half, and Coop Himmelb(l)au was too expensive, then ECADI redesigned for it. And then the developer said they still want to cooperate with Coop Himmelb(l)au again. You try to negotiate it as possible but sometimes you know that it won't change anything. You tried to make everything best, but sometimes it is useless.

Q: What kind of information do you obtain from Chinese developers?

A: You get the site plans, all the ratios, height, service area but it changes a lot. I had a project, in the beginning the client wanted to have a residential tower but then they didn't want it anymore. They also give you some reference images. The changes get the progress slower, but you can't do anything. You have to follow it. The more changes they make, the worse the design get. Because for every changes you have less time to adjust it, so you do it quicker and quicker.

Q: Would you consider collaboration with Chinese developers a major challenge?

A: It is more difficult than in the Netherlands. The developers in the Netherlands have more respect to architects and give freedom to them. They don't ask too many changes. When they give you the assignments, they may already do the research for 2 years. So they have very clear goals that they need. In china, some big decisions can be made in one afternoon, that also influence the design a lot, they makes to others changes. They trust you to do the design, but when they see some references that they like, then you have to change to like that references. Since they don't know design and they can't know the original ideas. They only know what they like, when they see something.

Q: Are decisions made in a different way if there is a famous architect involved?

A: I don't think, there is the differences but it depends on the client. For example, SOHO is a good client since they care about design a lot and they listen to the architect, they give freedom to architects. But for example for Changsha project with Coop Himmelb(l)au, that's also a famous architect, but they didn't not care about it so much. I think with a famous architect, even the negative feedback, they give less direct. They might send them email instead of telling them immediately.

Q: Could you describe a project in which decisions were reviewed? Did it improve project outcomes?

A: I had an experience which the client gave us the problems and also we told them the problem, then we discuss them by email forth and back within some solutions to ask them choose.

Q: How do you deal with decisions that lower the project outcomes?

A: You try to make it best but it is hard.

Q: Could you tell me how did you communicate with Chinese developers? (translator? Mandarin? English?)

A: I speak mandarin during the meeting but it is not necessary to say anything. Since I can understand what they are saying, I can directly give comments to them. If you have to wait to get translate it, then maybe they start to discuss other issues then it is more difficult to get involved. So mandarin helps a lot.

Q: What did you found difficult to understand a Chinese developer/colleagues? Example

A: That is very difficult. You don't need to understand everything, you just get the key words to try to figure out what they are saying.

Q: What did you found difficult/easy to understand a Chinese developer/ colleagues Example

A: The biggest difficult thing is to get too much information during the meeting. Like during the company meeting, you get emails that you understand immediately. But in the meeting with the clients, they discuss too many things. The easy part is they always appreciate with what the foreign architects do. They like foreign architects and like to call it international projects.

Q: Could you give me an example of a project that suffered from misunderstandings because of cultural differences? Could you elaborate?

A: I have a friend working in HongKong. They had a project and then he decided to call it "the white Lenten". Many Chinese colleagues was following the project, but no one said anything since they are afraid of their boss. So one time, one of guy who also working in HK told him that the name of the project was used in funeral.

Q: How do you improve the way of communication?

A: Mandarin helps a lot and try to get involved in. Try to say everything completely even it

might not completely correct. Learning mandarin can know more about Chinese culture and avoid some cultural faults.

Q: What did you expect about the way a project would be conducted?

A: In china, all things should be fast and big. Once a German company did a 10.000 m2 project which should cooperate with LDI. But they said 10,000 m2 was too small. Chinese make big project such as 80,000 to 90,000 at least with less time.

Q: How well could you collaborate with colleagues?

A: In the beginning, it was difficult since we don't know each other. Chinese people are not used to speak English and talk with foreigners. It takes some time. But in the end, I made some good friends there. Mandarin helps me a lot. It is hard to talk with them after work and during coffee break. Though they consider as friends each other, they don't hang out too much each other.

Q: How would you advise a new colleague to prepare?

A: Learning Chinese. Prepare hierarchy in china because it is very major influence for the project.

Q: What have you learnt from working in an international team over in China the years?

A: It is difficult. Though you learn slowly but you get used to it. You get more used in china, how business, speed, scale, hierarchy are. Also Guan-xi and money are important. You just get more and more about culture.

Q: What have you learnt from working in a team with colleagues stemming from different cultural back grounds?

A: In the beginning, for Chinese they can accept to hierarchy but it was hard for me to accept it.

Q: What kind of rules did you learn that are important to collaborate in an international team.

A: You shouldn't stand out too much, you should always try to keep it.

Q: How did you became aware of the do's and don't's

A: Just by observing your colleagues to see how they behave in the meeting.

Q: What was a big mistake, and what is the kind of things you found difficult to change in your behavior or reactions; are you still make mistakes because of a different cultural background?

A: At beginning of the project, you always try to give your best but in the end, the end result would not be good anyway. You know it all goes to be rush and all decisions made by hierarchy. On one hand, you always try your best but you are always disappointed. It is very hard to change but it is the part that I don't understand how to do it. You want to deliver something nice but you know you even try your best, there are too many facts that you

won't get the expected result.

Q: What did you do very well?

A: Learning Chinese. And I am very open-minded to get Chinese culture.

Q: Do you consider international collaboration in China more difficult / easy than elsewhere?
Would it yield the same project outcomes? What is different?

A: It takes time. In the beginning when you came here, it was exciting and difficult. And then when you stay longer, you get used to it and handle things better. But in china, they are get used to collaborate internationally.

Q: What is the most difficult problem to overcome, when you collaborative with Chinese developers, cultural habits, language barriers, the way a team communicates?

A: The way of communication. They expect you to do what they want instead of what your best and they give you feedback. And you don't know what they like. You try to learn from the references they give you. But even the references are very different from the project. They want something but they don't know how it works. They prefer foreign face and we see it is European scale.

Q: Do you have any recommendations when collaboration with Chinese developers for Western European architectural companies?

A: Try to get information to know how it works in China and speak to the architects who worked here before. Try to have Chinese who knows how it should be done in your team. They can help your for translation but you can't depend their translation all the time. When you can speak Chinese, if a foreigner can be a developer, they maybe you can sit in the both side to get the communication better and to tell the designer what the developer wants and tell the developer what the designer wants.

Appendix 5-R2 Transcription

ECADI

Rundong Wang
Junior Architect
Local Team

Q: 你觉得和甲方合作有什么感觉？

A: 在中国甲方想的不是很清楚他们想要什么，比如功能，房间面积设施。他们不能提出很细致的任务书，所以就很难进行任务布局。在中国甲方就告诉你我要造一个什么样的楼，大概关系，比如医院，科室，还是技术楼。会很大概的告诉你，但不会想的很细致，在做方案的时候，建筑师要把这些功能等要求替他考虑。建筑师在做设计的同时，也做了一部分的前期策划。你要告诉他，在你的专业背景下，这个楼需要哪些东西，怎么运营起来方便。包括做停车场的时候，要考虑车流、管理如VIP通道。领导（VIP）的坡道和普通病人的坡道不同。这些都需要替甲方想好。我们基本上在帮甲方做一部分的任务书，甲方看了你的任务书之后，很多地方他会赞许，但是也有一部分的地方会提出自己的想法，然后再按照他的来改。如果他们的想法并不正确，我们也会提出我们的想法，因为他们并不理解你平面设计的逻辑，流线。他可能只觉得某个地方不合理，他会提出。有些是正确的，但是有些是因为为了解决一个矛盾而引申出来其他的矛盾。如果已经在设计后期，就会提出来，告诉他不是所有东西都能做出来的还是需要取舍。比如我们现在做的项目（某高级医院），甲方的要求很高，但是空间利用率已经很高了，有些要求还是比较难做的，其实甲方心里也清楚，这时候你就要提出，要告诉他厉害关系。主要满足大的需求，小的要求还是可以完善的。

Q: 会议形式有哪些？

A: 大多数的会议都是在一些小型的会议室可以坐下 10 多个人，贝克先生（国际部门的设计师）汇报主要用英语汇报，我们会帮他翻译，一般我们会再多加几句，因为还是要加上自己的想法，因为他对中国专业性的建筑并不是很了解。同时我们再给他翻译的时候，也已经通过我们对中文的理解，再翻译给他，所以对语言上并没有很大的问题。并且作为建筑设计，很多沟通虽然有问题，但是还多情况下可以手绘。但是由于在工作上谈论专业比较多，所以也不存在文化上的问题，但还是会认为他是领导，不太愿意多去接触他。公共建筑问题并不是很大，但是如果你让一个外国人做一个中国国情下专业性很强的建筑，比如医院，那相对还是比较困难的。因为中国医院和国外医院的差别还是很大的，比如说，中国的医院会很强调病床数，因为每一张的病床就是一份收入，对甲方来说是很实际的东西。但是对于外国人来说他看的并不是很重，他会觉得是重要的，但是也会考虑其他方面的因素。而且中国的医院会强调病区独立，最好两个病区相同对称，但是老外不太喜欢这样对称的设计会觉得无聊，但是在使用上还是很实际的

Q: 如何建立甲方和乙方的关系？

A: 由招标也有领导认识。招标如果做得好的话问题还是不大的。

Q: 外国建筑师的优点:

A: 老外比较自信、直接和直接不会像国内设计师藏着掖着，他们认为做方案有问题也是正常的，并且做东西比较细致，也有可能他们设计方案的时间比较长，他们做方案不喜欢加班熬夜花很长时间在那里死磕。他会把自己的想法讲清楚，但是有很多亮点。他们更加强调方案的感觉，因为我之前看贝克先生画草图，他其实先分析，他会先比较形体关系，来考虑形态的好看。国内建筑师思考的就比较少，很多只是参照一个或者直接建模但也不知道要建什么，缺少了一个思考的过程。同时，甲方很喜欢看意向图，3D图比较能说明问题，特别在方案初期，老外就能找出恰如其分的意向图把问题说清。当然甲方会要求快并且要求很多个方案。。公司里的决定都是一级级汇报拍板，到了之后再给甲方做决定。比如说给甲方看之前先要给领导看，一般要4-5个方案，有些方案其实并不成熟。之后领导选中1-2个比较突出的方案，然后在深化被选出的方案，剩下的方案也会被附在后面来显示工作量，一起给甲方看。这个医院方案，我们一开始做了四个方案，甲方一开始来的时候，就给甲方看，然后因为所长知道甲方需要的东西所以他的设计方案在功能上很吸引甲方。因为我没有设计医院的经验并且我的方案也是贝克先生再给我指导，但是结果并不如意。虽然想法很好，但是医院的院长一看就不行。因为利用率不高而且会产生很多的问题。因为这个方案的要求比较高是给东盟元首、省部级、厅局级和普通病人。还是100米的高层。当时医院院长看了以后就说，虽然VIP有单独的人车入口，但是院长说这样会产生社会矛盾，因为每一层楼都能看到国家元首，当普通病人看到他们住的比较高端的话并不好。他们认为要放在最高的地方，让别人看不到，平时人家不能上去。但是在国外的话，就比较难想到。我认为审美都差不多，主要还是功能上不能满足要求。缺点的话可能就是不了解中国的国情，也许在国内外差别不大的建筑设计并不难，但是专业性比较强的设计他们就会有困难。与贝克先生交流问题的时候我也愿意说出自己的想法和提出问题。

Q: 国外建筑师的缺点?

A: 作为一名职业建筑师还是要平衡美学，经济效益和功能之间的关系。如果你是明星建筑师也学你可以不用这样，但是更像一个艺术品。但是在我的立场上来说经济效益还是很重要的。在国外，建筑师还是比较受尊重的。在国内很多甲方都不知道自己要什么也不知道这个方案要多少钱但是又很喜欢你的方案。但是选了以后钱不够又造不成一开始的效果。但是如果一开始甲方就告诉我预算，那么建筑师这边就能给出一个比较适合方案来建造。交流的氛围还是比较和谐的，因为贝克先生有学过古汉语，所以他有很强烈的中国文化的底蕴，很谦卑很尊重别人，和人打交道这方面还是比较好的。而且他并不是一个执着的建筑师，他很了解甲方的需求。另外，主要华东院技术力量比较强，可以做一个项目很精细，比如在一些细节的考虑上。而且如果有问题出现，华东院会想尽办法解决。但是项目上会花很多时间，因为我们公司会做很多补选方案，我们一开始比如说先做四个方案，然后甲方选了其中一个方案，然后给这个方案我们会做5个立面，在5个立面里，甲方再挑，然后我们会在做8个立面细部的造型，并且结合室内病房的造型和病房的功能，然后甲方再挑。给予这么多选择也是因为甲方不知道自己需要什么，但是当他看到图纸以后，就知道自己要的是什么了。也是增加他们的信任关系。但是因为大院有人手，所以有充沛的人手调配，这个设计差不多有10个人一起做。我们这个项目也是因为之前的

项目做得好，甲方才让我们做的。

Appendix 5-R2 Summary

Ruidong Wang is a junior architect, working in ECADI (one of LDI) for 8 month. His department mainly designs hospital. ECADI also has an international department and so far Ruidong is working with the head of international department, Mr. Bake, for a hospital design.

Process

Bidding is one of the way to get the project. The relation is the other way to get the project. For example, if there is a good cooperation for the previous project, the developer will ask the previous design team to make another project.

Chinese developers don't know what they want, thus they can't give a specific business case, such as functions, square meters. They give an architect general information about design but not very detailed. The architect also does a part of market research for the Chinese developer. The architect needs to tell the client what functions should be in the project and how to make the design to be use easily, such as VIP entrance, how to manage people and cars. So in the beginning, the architect helps the client to do a part of business case. Then the client takes a part of the business case and also tell the architect what they think. Based on their comments, the architect takes the correct part and the business case can be made.

When having meeting, the client suggests some parts need to be changed. If they are correct, the changes will be taken. But sometimes, when the architect try to fix a change (problem of the function), other problems are occurred. If it is at the end of the design phase, the architect will tell the client that it is impossible to realize everything, he has to take some ideas out.

Clients like to see reference image in order to image how the design will be, but they also ask the architect to make a design as fast as possible with a lot of options, because they don't know what they want. But when they see the renders or the drawings, they know what they want then. On the other hand, these options can also improve the trust between the developer and the architectural team. For example, before meeting the clients, 4-5 options are made. The head of the department selects 1-2 good options to make them better. Because the head of the department is very experienced, he knows what the client likes and how to be satisfied with the developer. During the meeting the developed options will be showed to the client but the other options will also be in the slides, to show how much workload they give. Later, the team will give 5 different options of the elections, then the client to choose one of them. Afterwards, they give another 8 different options of the details of elections, then the client choose again. The strength of ECADI is that it has many people to work on the project.

In China, making money is very important. As an architect, to balance the relationship between function, beauty and economy is very important. Besides, in China, architects are not as respectful as in Europe. Since the developer doesn't know what they want and he doesn't know how much to build a building. Sometimes, he likes a design and he wants to buy a design without budget. After he buys the design, he realizes that he doesn't have enough money.

Therefore, it is better to have a budget and then the architect can give a fitting design to the project.

Strength

Foreign architects are very confident and direct, not like Chinese architects hiding many information. For foreign architects, their design takes long time, leading them to think carefully and detailed. They like analyzing first then compared with different shapes. While Chinese architects like to use reference image to make/ copy a design. Foreign architects can find a suitable reference image for explain the design.

Weakness

For foreign architectural firms, they are quite good for design public architectures such as concert hall, museum or shopping mall. However, if you ask them to design a very professional building like hospital, it is quite hard because hospital is very different in China. Because the client thinks more about money and being practical, therefore he wants to have beds as many as possible in the building. Besides, the client wants to make different areas to be independent, therefore the design is more symmetry. However, foreign architects regards that it is very boring. Moreover, in China, different levels are treated differently. If the architect design a hospital in the same way for different people, the design will not be accepted.

Meeting with the clients

Most meetings are hold in small conference room which can stay around 10 people. During the meeting, Mr. Bake makes presentation in English and the Chinese architect translate his word with their opinions. Therefore, the language is not the problem during the meeting.

Working with foreign architects

Language is a problem but not the big problem in architecture field, since most of time, explanations can be done by drawing. Also because everyone is quite professional, culture is not influenced a lot in the design team. It is not hard to speak out when working with Mr. Bake to talk about what he thinks and ask questions, but as a junior architect, Ruidong still regards Mr. Bake as a head of a department. He doesn't want to communicate or talk with Mr. Bake a lot like a friend.

Communication

Since Mr. Bake has studied ancient Chinese before, he knows Chinese culture, how to respect each other and how to talk with people politely.

Decisions

In ECADI, Decisions should be reported to the up level, till the highest level agree.

Appendix 5-R3 Transcription



Frederic Rolland Architects

Architecture Master Degree of TUD

Junior Architect

6 Years in China

Multiple-cultural Team

Q: Before you went to China, did you read or search some information to get knowledge about China or Chinese culture? Can you tell me something about it?

A: No

Q: Do you have cultural shock?

A: Well, since I was study in TUD, there were many Chinese exchange students. I kind of know a little bit Chinese customers and behaviors to them, but I didn't read anything about Chinese culture.

Q: What did you think about China or Chinese culture before arriving there?

A: I didn't know anything about China before I arrived, Just knew it was a big place, the great wall.

Q: Do you think that your previous cultural knowledge negatively/ positively impacted on working in a Chinese context, such as behave properly?

A: I think it is positive influence for me. Because I went with very open-minded.

Q: After 6 years, do you think you understand Chinese culture better? Do you think that it affects teamwork? In what way?

A: I don't understand Chinese culture a lot. I think I know a little bit more, but it is difficult, because Chinese culture is very a big concept. It is like European culture. So let's say I know more about shanghai culture.

Q: The cultural knowledge you have known, do you think it influence on team work?

A: Of course, I understand why it comes from and you know what people don't talk about. It is more about communication, if you know a bit about the background, you know why people do this thing or don't do this things. A lot of Chinese don't take the initiative, now I kind of understand why. After few years, I understand a bit better.

Q: What are the differences between Chinese and Dutch way of working? (eg. The power of architects)

A: The legal position of architect is different from France, such as the legal responsible of architects is different. But here is no. In Holland, it is not that it's to be. If you want to build something, you show what it looks like. And they judge it by statistics, such as fire safety. Here, the architects are more like an advisor. The client also has architectural team, they get the idea is more from the others' idea. In china the brief is more blurred, and we cooperate with them. But when we finish the design, LDI has to take it for making details. So basically, the foreign architectural company in China is to give the concept to the developers and then the developers cooperate with LDI to detail the concept.

Q: In the beginning, when you are working with Chinese developers, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting?

A: Well at the first time, 6 years ago, I couldn't say anything, since they were all Chinese during the meeting. You don't know what it is about since it was all in Chinese. There does not have any translators so I just sat there.

Q: Now when you are working with Chinese developers, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting?

A: Now, I can vote a little bit. I think it is different during the meeting. The most meeting is my boss keep discussing with Chinese developers and talking all design. It has very high hierarchy. So in the typical firm, the architect can't be freedom to talk about the project, and the Chinese developer only talks about abstract about project. You have to a little bit work out then some information turn out. But it only in a small team. In the big team, I think it is not freedom. The hierarchy is always one person who make the decision. I have to change demands from my boss.

Q: Do you have chance to talk with Chinese developers?

A: Yes, but it is not so often. (So you can't communicate with Chinese developer?) Sometimes, it depends on what kind of developer.

Q: When you do not agree with Chinese developers' opinions, have you ever challenged them?

A: Yes, there are more argument during the meeting. Since the architect should stand on its design and see them both equals. However, in china, maybe it seems to be we are equal. The developers presume something, but you don't know. When the developer has something disagree, then I challenge them because I think that they lack some of knowledge. It is kind of share knowledge that you work with in the informal situation.

Q: You also mentioned hierarchy, when you talk with Chinese developers, do you feel some hierarchy with them?

A: I think when I work with Chinese developers, I feel less hierarchy than working with my boss as an architect. Because that is a secured position talking with clients. As an architect, I am a little bit insecure, if I need to please the client, make sure they like what we do.

Q: In the beginning/now, when you are working with your team, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting?

A: Yes, Most of the time, it is good with them. But sometimes that you feel you can speak out, then you think about it, you think that it is better to skip it, cause it is not easy to tell why for the agreement. Especially if some arguments are not very convinced, the outcome is still the same then. It is about something that you can foresee from the project, as a project developer that you can foresee. So it is not necessary to speak out.

Q: What do you think about “Face-saving” and “Face-giving”?

A: I think the concept about “face” is everywhere, we also have it in Holland. It is a basically respect. If you make the other person comfortable, you also need to speak out. Face is only important that the position as a head.

Q: In the beginning, how do you communicate with your boss or superior? Have you ever spoken out your feelings or challenged your boss or superior?

A: In the beginning, I don't speak out so much, because I don't know the situation so well and they asked me to attend the meeting since I have white face. The work for me was quite limited, just make me feel safe. And right now, I can speak out more, since I know a bit more about china. I know the situations more.

Q: When you attend social activities, how do you feel?

A: In the beginning, I had some social activities. But now, I don't have and avoid more social activities, since I think most Chinese developer are indecent. I am kind of related to Guan-xi and it is very professional. It is quite sad about guan-xi but also it shows that the architect is not professional. It indicates unprofessional clients how valuable about these things. For me, these things waste of time and it is just about giving others face. Since in my opinion, during the meeting you should be professional and it is unnecessary to have dinner with them. Well, maybe it makes the project more smooth, and knowing how to argue. But still it doesn't value to invest money and time on it.

Q: Do Chinese developers give you enough information such as design requirements, in order to set a common goal to reach?

A: All Chinese developers make the business case first, and all the requirements are there. In china, the most of them are quite vague in the beginning. The whole program, only 40% is fixed and 60% can be changed any moment, because the information is not there yet. They can't give you. The project changes all the time. It would be good with the good communication, which part are clear, which part is not clear. It is fine from the beginning with the communicating the program. This part is for sure and the other part can be changed. Otherwise you get the problem or the problem turns out late. You think the certain part is clear but actually it is unclear. (Do you think it is acceptable that the project change all the time?) Well, yes and no. It all depends on the communication about. It could be fine. But if the things are changed, then, for me, I am in the weak position. Since we got whole things already but then you said it should be changed. For example, when the situation is clear, only a part is not clear. I can only work on the clear

part. In Chinese situation, you have opportunities to say to architects that this is a mistake of a part of a project. So that is an opportunity for the business. But also Chinese developers they don't know what they want so they give us very vague scope. So as an architect, you can't split it into 2 parts. A developer team should make first business case that architect to make the shape. It is used to they buy the land first so the shape is not completely work out yet. So it is more negative. Then it should be in the contract, so you need to review the contract.

Q: Do you have trust issues when you collaborate with a Chinese developer?

A: It depends on what kind of developer. For me the trust build is depends on profession. If the client behave the way he has to, then it is fine, but if he hides things from me, then it shows that he doesn't build trust. If he shows thing, shares information and open about the things to me, then this is the trust. And I will feel weird that the client please me since I would think he might hide something for me. That was a client who wants to build housing while it says offices in the planning. So that is kind of indecent. Because he tried to be sneak by the government, which is a bit specious. Because as much as he wants pass by the government, he just wants to pass by. It doesn't shows enough trust but I have to work with the developers, since my boss choose developers. You should be conscious about that you don't trust your clients, but you need to change the way you work with them.

Q: Do you feel the process slow down?

A: Yes, you have to spend a lot of time to check what is it doing or check if it still works, because you promise what he says.

Q: Here there are some risks, can you chose 3 risks that you think that they will influence on trust?

- Partner incompetence
- Improper contractual agreement (Unclear contract)*
- Unfairness in bidding
- Partner's project personnel lacking interpersonal skills
- Partner's distrust and misunderstanding*
- Insufficient communication among partners
- Partner's short-term focus
- Partner's breach of contract (contracts are signed after the bidding stage and take effect during the design stage)
- Excessive demands and changes from partners
- Poor relationship and dispute with partners (Poor Guan-xi)
- Social and cultural differences

Q: Which phase is the most important to build the trust?

A: You build trust in the beginning with the professional attitude.

Q: During the meeting, do architects have any chances to make decision by themselves or anyone else?

A: You never make decisions by yourself, there always the key decisions are made in

communication with developers. The architects can't make decisions by himself, so you have to build consensus. People to get the idea. That's why a lot of architects argue about that this is what you want so they explain it, in order to give reasons why they want to change. In Holland, the architect leads the project. The client leases an architect to realize the project. They more talk about criteria that the client really thinks about important. But in china it is more about how the images look like, because generally Chinese developers are less professional but also not a lot of architects are bit of unprofessional. So they offer the client three options and ask them to choose one of them. This is strange for me because the architect is professional and they should know what clients want instead of giving the options. Also if you give them more options, they feel happier, but it still work on the personal work side, guan-xi is important, face is important. (Is that the way to make client to trust you?) Well, we try not to upset him.

Q: Who is the decision maker?

A: The client and my boss are the decision maker. My boss make the decision about the architectural idea, except the decisions that are not important.

Q: The project might change, thus the decisions may change as well. How do you adjust the corresponding decisions?

A: In our company, the policy shows that you have to follow all the decisions. That is kind of adoptable policy in order to avoiding wasting time of argument. I think it is more focus on flexibility but in Holland, it is more about being efficient.

Q: Could you tell me how did you communicate with Chinese developers? (translator? Mandarin? English?)

A: For me it combination of all of these things. Sometimes, they translate a bit. Sometimes, I can pick up some important words by myself.

Q: Have you ever had the experience that you miscommunicate with each other because of cultural differences?

A: That happens constantly. When you have communication, you should presume that you don't understand each other. And try to be as closer as possible. So you take time to understand each other and communicate with each other. But it is very inefficient way, so you don't talk about anything that unnecessary. You just pick something very important and make sure that the explanation is clearer. And make sure people can work on that issues. If the situation is out of control then you start step again and again. But it is not related to culture, even in the Dutch way, they still do the same thing. Of course, in Chinese context, it is more challenges. But you know people have different background and culture, so it is easier to accept that communication is not that smooth.

Q: How do you improve the way of communication?

A: Learning mandarin is one of the way to improve because it makes barriers less.

Q: Before meeting Chinese developers, what do you usually prepare?

A: We prepare presentations and slides, booklet sometimes. Printing some posters like A1 or A2. Since most developers are not professional, they don't really care about these thing too much. When they are less professional, they are more intend to the design looks good. Usually the slides including introduction with many renders, master plans, that's the way of the beginning. They improve the communication. The references images are not really do anything, but it can persuade them whether we design like that. Because the images are the images, if you don't give the tools that tell the developer which one is good and how to judge, then it becomes meaningless.

Q: Have you ever experience that you thought your project was well prepared and that the Chinese developer would be satisfied, and it turned out to be not the case (that the Chinese developer was not satisfied or demanded improvements/ alterations)?

A: A lot of time, it happens that it looks like this way but in the end it talk about the criteria. The most of time it happens is because the criteria of program is changed. It is quite weird that they say yes, but they mean no. But it really doesn't happen so much. If you create kind of atmosphere they feel ok what I am saying, that also make everyone pleasant. Nobody wants to be that indirect. That is still different being direct and being blunt, that is not the blunt is taking it. It is some degree of packaging but it is kind of direct but not completely direct.

Q: Most Chinese developers have their preferences, so what did you do for preparation?

A: That gives me more direction, although usually the architect give the direction of architecture which is not based on the references. Here you have to give something that the developer completely likes, that's the why they take the first place.

Q: How do you get information from Chinese developers?

A: By phone or emails. They would let you know the information is there or not.

Q: Do you have had frequent conflicts or problems with Chinese developers?

A: No, not so much. Because the conflicts such as payment will be taken care by office management.

Q: What have you learnt from working in a Chinese context these years?

A: Important communication in all the process. It is very important that everyone understand what it is. And in China, everything is more flexibility than efficiency. It is more built on the flexible situation and changing. So they have more flexible process and more flexible situation.

Q: What have you learnt from working in a Cross-cultural team?

A: Be clear about what you mean. You can't presume that people understand what you mean. The language is not the significant barrier, since most communication can go to drawings. I think education is the most significant barrier in China. Chinese education is very different from western education. They are still educating people for the 90s. China is developing so fast, but the development of china is faster than the development of education. Usually the education educates people for society. But the ideas of Chinese education is still based on 80s or 90s. It is

about professional conduction, because professional architecture in China is still young.

Q: Have you learnt how to cooperate with Chinese developers efficiently?

A: It is not about efficiency but flexibility which is more important. Also maybe they have money to be more flexible, so they don't mind how much they cost in couple of percent. And also because of the fast pace of development in China. But the project takes so long, so if you stay something fixed, it might not work, so that is why they keep it flexible. It is easy to control since it is hard to foresee. When it became easy to foresee the future, they might feel more secured about fixed program.

Q: Do you feel you can work the same efficient/effective way as in Dutch firm? Other criteria for team performance? What is different?

A: No. it is about efficiency in Holland. You have some kind of standards to get. The project is more and more developed.

Q: What is the most difficult problem to overcome, when you collaborative with Chinese developers, culture, language, communication?

A: A lot of architects want to please the developer because of the hierarchy. So they don't want to make them unhappy otherwise they might lose their project.

Q: Do you have any recommendations when collaborating with Chinese developers for Western/European architectural companies?

A: If you are a foreign firm, just stick to your own professional way, your professional conduct. If you are professional, it mirror that outcomes are also professional. You need to be clear why you sometimes do something different than what they ask you do. Not doing so much they ask for, but ask more questions to understand what they want and need. And then you can propose what they need or you propose both what they ask for and what they need. Sometimes what they say is not architectural expertise but in his own expertise, so you need try to explore why they say it and then just follow.

Appendix 5-R4 & 5 Transcription



gmp Architecture

Vincent Paar

Master degree of TUD

Junior Architect

2.5 years in China



3 years in China

Junior Architect

Multi-cultural Team

Q: Before you went to China, did you read or search some information to get knowledge about China or Chinese culture? Can you tell me something about it?

V: Yes, since my girlfriend (wife) was Chinese, so I study a little bit Chinese, follow some course and traveled to Beijing for studying some culture in the summer. It was 2012 and in 2013, I moved to Shanghai, China. I chose Shanghai is the most international city so it fits foreigners in China.

O: For me, I researched a little bit but not too much since I want to have a surprise. Of course, I was interested in some architectures and mostly when you research about China, they still show you a lot of ancient Chinese architectures. I was just trying something new and wanted to have a surprise. Because I heard one of Chinese saying it is better to experience what you see than what you hear.

Q: Do you think this research is positive?

V: Yes, that helps a lot because I know a lot about China so you don't get so much surprise. But also because my wife is Chinese, I can get more information.

O: Since I didn't do many research, I don't have many expectation. It is very different the way of working here. Of course, when you working in German company, it is also different. But it is just some basic differences. I've been working in two offices, in one of the offices, we have one big boss, and all people never question the boss and question about the tasks. If you get a task, you just do it, but I was a bit surprised that was a bit strict and not really free.

V: I agree, I worked with Taiwanese company, so Taiwanese people and Chinese people. And the boss is also right, basically. You should always listen what boss says and you cannot be critical or have your own opinions too much. The boss is more like a god of a company.

Q: Did you try to challenge your boss?

V: Sometimes, I tried, but sometimes they let you know that they are not happy like this. But

other people, the local colleagues, not even trying, they only say yes.

O: For example, the boss likes something, even we all know, if we do it, it won't look good. Most colleagues will do it. Even you know, after showing it, you can delete it directly, but they did many overtime job. It is very hard to convince the boss, but you can.

Q: So when you challenge your boss, what would happen?

V: They let you know directly, normally Asian people like finding another way to tell you the message. They don't want to tell you something what they really think. But you have kind of feeling that what they are talking about.

O: It really depends on whether your boss like you or not, whether the boss is convinced by what you have done or not. In our company, German and Chinese are treated differently. Working good is to make them get more confidence from the boss. But it is still very hard.

Q: What is your first experience as an architect?

V: The very first one project, it was an earthquake in Sichuan. My colleague had a project sponsorship for the educational buildings. So I was helping this and we did it for free. In the beginning, the project was not so different except the earthquake background so that was more emotional feeling. But it was not typical Chinese project. The typical Chinese projects are the most commercial projects, shopping malls. You make something very quickly and main goal is making money. You don't put a lot of effort to make a good quality but speed.

O: It was master plan of multi-cultural building with shopping mall, small and big offices. And few different tower to get in the UN studio. It was very international type of working because there were many international people and also we work for SOHO, very professional client and it was very nice because they always required a lot, but it's ok. We had weekly meeting. The first working experience was always working a lot and changing a lot. In the end, they just sold the project to another architect. So it was a lot, the foreigners to make a design and in the end to move LDI. But later on, we also have that kind of problem that you never know about what clients thinking. They are just businessman and they have two phases. But at the end, few project got cut but you never know and you never hear from them and half year later, you heard that you have a governor come on, can you make a presentation in 5 days. It was quite crazy for us to prepare.

V: I am predictable that for the client is more about relations. If the boss and the client have very good relationship, you can get project very easily and the process of the project is quite good, otherwise the client also choose not to pay your money or ask to do things very quick or try to trick you.

O: Yes, even the context is good, because now in our office has very good context. Sometimes we are building something only for few developers and a lot of stuff are going on, so we have already made 5 or 6 projects with them. The other one, they know that we are dependent on them, so they treat us very bad, they don't pay for the whole projects, but they know they can do that because we need them for other project. Maybe in the positive part, it is their way to build trust but negatively it show their power. Most developers have a lot of money but only few of them are interested in architecture. But most of them want to reselling the building very quickly, doing business.

Q: Do you consider yourself as someone who is easy adopting a new culture

V: Yes, I would say so. Because I am Dutch, we are a small country, we always have to adapt to some new cultures. I try to be open-minded as much as possible. My vision of the world becomes bigger, and you understand how the world working better. But then for Germany and Europe are easily to adapt since we are quite similar but for China, it is different because all background and history are different. The way of thinking and the way of behavior are very difficult to understand for foreigners. For example, the education, how people live, the history, the manners of people that we think it's polite but it is rude for Chinese, and the way around. The way of humor, like the jokes, they cannot understand, thinking we are serious not laughing.

O: Actually it is the same. Somebody comes China from Europe. These people are open-minded, otherwise people would not come. But in Europe, some news are about pollution or strong economical in China so we make business with you. But when you are here you like something you also don't like something also like my hometown. But it is hard to adapt, it is about integrate with Chinese. And we are in our own "bubble" and also Chinese. I don't think I totally integrate into Chinese culture and most of the time I don't understand. But I am still in the polite level and also I have a lot of Chinese friends. For example, the language is hard for me because I realize that it is very easy to speak English. And the other part is lifestyle because you don't have family or real friends here, we go to socialize after working. But Chinese has family and friends here, they need to take care of kids and family. It is very hard to meet them out of work, except playing badminton. For me that is the way to make friends. You have to be open-minded, but I feel that Chinese way of expression is different. Chinese people are very indirect and too polite since in Germany we say what exactly what we think. You say it and honest and direct. I am used to it, but maybe here, people think that I am rough and rude. Just respect to each other and I have to behave like that.

Q: Could you describe what you think are the main differences between Chinese and Dutch way of working? (eg. The position of architects)

V: I think the most different is hierarchy and in China you have to respect to seniors who are above you and they can be very critical like bosses. I was in the team everyone is involved in and this low hierarchy. And also the process of the working is different, in china it always has limited working time and it is quite unreasonable for designer. They always want to something be quick and very cheap but good result. But in Netherlands, everything is very slow and done by very carefully and thoughtful plan. I think in the end, our quality is better because we think carefully and also for the budget. But for Chinese, the result can be better. But maybe it also easily to change it by demolition. In European, we are more sustainable and keep it many years.

O: As an architect, you make the creative job and here sometimes it lacks of appreciation about that. I think some of them cannot understand that, they just try to have products very quick. Appreciation of creative process is very important and takes time. The difference is because we are from developed countries and China is developing country. Because if we build a house, we have so many rules, such as the color of facade, tress, what can be built, what cannot be built, square meters etc. Here is more like video games sometimes, if you like

big area, the developer just give you very round number. And if you ask more details such as the square meters of retail, they say that I don't know, you can find out.

V: the developers don't really know what should do, so they ask a lot to architects to make decisions for them.

O: The thing is you have to do some marketing research, how much square meter you can built. But for Chinese, they don't know how to make money, so they are unsecured. Nobody can predict the future what kind of functions are very important for China. They built too much shopping malls, after 10 years, it might be empty. People need to make marketing research seriously, this cannot be done by architects. Specialization and suitability like functions and quality are very important for Chinese developers to know.

Q: Did you felt at ease during the meeting? Why, or why not. What made you feel like that?

V: For us to attend the meeting is because of white face. I can speak a little bit Chinese but I can't understand the real meaning because they talk very beautiful. So I just sat there and try to listen, but sometimes you don't understand but try to understand. Now, in the current company, we have translator, it is better.

O: It depends on the clients. We have some private clients working for longtime, they just want to build offices or retail shops for themselves. They are very nice and they have designers so they can speak English, they do something for themselves which they are interested. We have good relation with them. If you have a big client, the meeting will be very formal, a big table, 20, 30 people, big beamer. Mostly they are in Chinese but always have translators. It was not relaxed.

Q: When you working with Chinese developers (clients), do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting? (In the beginning- In the end).

V: In Chinese company, the hierarchy influence a lot. The certain people can only talk to certain people. During the meeting, only boss can speak because they are in the same level and rest people just sitting there and trying to make notes and listening the clients, trying to understand clients what they mean. When you make the decision what the boss said is the most important. You should try to remember that and try to guess what they want.

O: The same. But some private clients, you can talk more freely, but when boss is talking, you should never interrupt. It is very impolite.

Q: What would you rather not discuss, what do you discuss. Are you addressing now different topics that at the time you first joined the team?

V: Normally, we discuss about design and presentation to show what you have and give the story based on that. We give them several options, then the client react what they like and not like. And try to ask questions, like report what you are doing. We don't discuss a lot. Because the client don't really understand architecture, they trust your profession. Normally, he says that he likes it but it's not true but he never really say he doesn't like it. But they trust on you, since they pay money and wants to have good architects so that's why they pick you.

Q: In the beginning, I didn't notice the differences. I learnt this by experiences.

What kind of issues, topics do you consider difficult / easy to address in your team?

O: We have very efficient, think detailed and good architects in our office. Mostly it doesn't have problem if the boss give exacts role to everyone. After a while, you know how the team set up. If someone is good at design, or organizing design, others just trust he/she. The only thing I have the problem is not about architecture, but it's about working hours. Chinese are willing to work so much, but for me it is too much. But it is not very efficient. Since they make too many options which show your weakness instead of confidence and what you like. It should be like showing 5 options which the clients or the boss like. Normally, I work 8 hours then I go home because I arrange everything in these hours and others need to respect what I do. Even in the UN studio, it was the same. Since now we are working on computer, you can do many jobs. When we are working by hands, different scales need to work on different stages. But computers make us work more and people draw too much details on certain scales. Now people make them too much troubles and show their profession.

V: When we are working with Chinese people who studied abroad, so we have sort of same thinking how to deal with works. Based on that, we have better understanding and manage work good. However, when you work with local Chinese people, the way of working is very different and you don't understand each other. They are not creative and always do the same options which your boss will be happy. Maybe it is very sufficient and can earn much more money. They also a bit hide their work, so they never open about showing what they are doing. Because people are afraid of their position. When they know something, they don't tell you. So it is very difficult to get information, especially for westerns, they only give you the information that they want to give you. For European people, we are more sharing information and you learn something from each other not really hide from each other. It is kind of competition, but for us, we don't feel it is a competition since we think we can learn more. And for them, they worry about their position and fight for each other a lot. But currently, the team in my company all have international background.

Q: Did you change your approach over the years (months)?

V: yes, since now you know the Chinese thinking better, so you know more what is going on and you try to adapt more. And few years ago, you don't what is going on and very fresh idea. But by experience, you know more, so you adapting more. And sometimes, you don't show your face, for example you say something but not really mean what you are saying.

O: When the client criticize something, you have to always tell the story that clients like.

When you do not agree with Chinese developers' opinions, how would you address this? Could you explain me how you try to change their opinion? (In the beginning- In the end)

O: since so far, in china, it doesn't have many projects, so you have to adapt more and be quite, make them happy. Our offices are very cooperated and we make many commercial design, so if the client wants something, we just do it. But story telling can change developers' opinions. Mostly we do something and have the developer's story afterwards. They are happy because they always want to know why things are, they feel safe even it is not the truth. If some famous architects like Zaha Hadide, join a design, they don't need to tell the story, since the client wants to have the shape of the building and they buy it. But mostly you have to talk about story.

V: It is hard to influence the clients' opinion unless you are on the high level. Some people are good for sale, as an architect, we don't do business, you can't tell what the clients want. So it is very important to sell the design during the meeting and presentation in a beautiful way like using Chinese saying, history.

Q: When you working with your team, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting (In the beginning- In the end)?

V: In GMP, I like to speak out, since everybody can say something, even interns can say something, you have the right to say something. But in the Taiwanese company, you can't really talk since people think that you don't know anything, you are so young, you don't have right to talk.

O: In the beginning, even the boss doesn't like what I am saying, I can't hide anything. But after 2.5 years working here, I see how things work and sometimes it is hard to change the thing, you have to do something. Sometimes I have bad mood, because the power here is too high. Some offices, they argue architecture with history, with design, and feeling but others, they only talk about square meters, efficiency and structure. You have to see where you fit in.

Q: Is there a particular way in how you would address more sensitive things?

V: For me I don't feel comfortable in the company, since I am treated as a guest. They treat foreigners well but they treat Chinese badly. **O:** I still cannot understand face-saving and face-giving. (**V:** yes) I am sensitive but maybe I got trick many times. Maybe someone said that it is so cool, he wants to save my face, but I don't notice. I think these things make no sense.

V: Of course, you can learn how to give face to your boss or someone who has high title.

O: But I don't like fake face giving.

V: Yes, but it happens all the time.

O: I think for me I don't get the whole idea.

Q: Did you change your approach over the years (months) with your team?

V: Yes, now you know a little bit how to talk, how they thinking and how it works, so you can easily adapt that. You won't say certain things for example, you may criticize something, but in China you cannot really criticize things because you loose face. Thus you don't point out anymore. Or you try to be more indirect. You say something else but you mean something like that, which they may understand. Because of my wife and her family, otherwise I wouldn't know.

Q: How would you describe the way you communicate with your boss or superior? Did you ever show strong emotions, - strong positive emotions, and negative emotions? Would you still do so? (In the beginning- In the end)

V: No.

O: yes, I did. It depends on the person. There are some architects who are more bond with china. Because of their family and responsibility, they have to agree and fit in the systems

much more. But others like myself, it's more like adventure, being here 2 or 3 years and having fun. You don't need to adapt it so much. I try to show my ideas to see whether it works or not, otherwise you will be crazy one day. The job is about give and take, if you don't do a good job, you will be kicked out. When you talk about it, it shows that you are professional. If you don't talk about it more, they also don't treat you nicely. They will say something like we are very satisfied with your job, but it is all about balabla.. it is in very unprofessional level, but job should be professional.

Q: How much do you like social activities with your colleagues? Do you easy show your emotions to them? Would they do so to you? (In the beginning- In the end)

V: no, not for us maybe some Chinese. It depends, like the client, contractor or suppliers, they want to keep good relationship with you, so they invite you a dinner or KTV. They didn't invite me but other Chinese colleagues, since they want to get other projects. So they have to stick close and become friends. But as foreigners we don't do sort of stuff.

O: More local companies do that things.

Q: Do others provide your team with sufficient information to do the job?

O: I think it depends on your clients, LDI who is powerful. Normally, LDI has more power since they need to build that, draw all plans and everything. Sometimes, they want to protect their position, so they hide some information. Sometimes, they don't cooperate.

Q: Do you feel you can rely on other parties in your projects? In whom would you rely most? In whom least?

V: It depends on relation, normally we don't rely on them but you have to work together. People try to get responsibility to other parties. If there is a mistake, you have to talk about who should be smart. It is also very political way. You have to talk smartly and don't say something wrong and don't say too much information. You fight for your position.

O: It depends. For example, our company is very well-known some very well-built building so we try to control all the details so we are one of the companies that check the drawing 3 or 4 times. It is not other companies, after designing and they giving the design to LDI, they don't care about the result and normally the shape is good but when you walk closely, the outcome is awful. You have to make the quality control all the time.

V: The other problem is that it is also not pay for the architect. (O: it is extra work) In Europe, we have rules that if the architect do the quality control till the construction, you have to pay for it. But in China, you make a design to certain stage, then you have to pass the design to LDI since they have the certain license based on Chinese rules. Then most companies, they pass everything to LDI and they hope everything is good. You don't really check it since you don't really get money. For LDI, they have more power because they are partly government control and partly other parties control. They have good relations, so they get more projects. It is difficult for foreign companies to be as equal as LDI.

O: But now LDIs are looking for international architects to build up their international team and want to make competition design. They are trying to control everything.

Q: When you check the quality and it doesn't meet your criteria, what do you do?

O: you have to check it again and again in our company. And we push them to make it better and we need to report to our client. To tell them since you choose GMP, you want to have good results and details, so please do it again. But they don't always follow our requirements, it depends on relation but we try to make it best.

Q: How you make relation with your client?

V: We have a department who is responsible to make relation with them. An architecture design part is run by Germany boss and business part is run by Chinese boss. He is the partner of the company and he has all the relationship to get the projects and to deal with Chinese circumstance. So he probably does the most social things. So foreign boss more focuses on the projects.

Q: Choose the top three risks,

Partner incompetence (V)

Improper contractual agreement (Unclear contract)

Unfairness in bidding (V)

Partner's project personnel lacking interpersonal skills

Partner's distrust and misunderstanding

Insufficient communication among partners

Partner's short-term focus (O, V)

Partner's breach of contract (contracts are signed after the bidding stage and take effect during the design stage)

Excessive demands and changes from partners (O, V)

Poor relationship and dispute with partners (Poor Guan-xi)

Social and cultural differences

V: also like clients they don't know what they are doing. They just have bag of money, but they don't know how. Also in some competitions, you have already know the winner because they have relations. But for the public they still keep the competition.

Q: Before having meeting with Chinese developers, how do you prepare usually? Is it difficult to meet the requirements of the Chinese developers?

V: Only the presentation and design. You make all slides and physical models then you present. I never heard that they compliant anything.

O: Sometimes they compliant about content but not on the quantity plans.

V: They always have conflicts like certain money but not in term of work. Normally it is money issue. I think most of time money issue is frequent. They pay in different phase like 20% each phase. And also they don't want to pay the last of 20% because this spend a lot.

Q: Did you feel well prepared? Could one prepare for such an experience?

O: It comes from experience, we have good project managers. They do this jobs for many years and they know how to response money issues.

Q: How often do Chinese developers demand changes to the design / project?

O: always. It is a power.

V: Most of time. And also not only the clients but also the boss. It always changes. Sometimes you make something beautiful but the clients choose something else. You just change it. Some projects you have to change for 10 times or takes a year or two years to know what they like.

Q: What kind of information do you obtain from Chinese developers?

V: Very general, not specific. They can't give you clear answer if you ask something, they say it depends on the designer.

O: we lack basic information for many times, such as where the red line is and what is the program exactly. Here people want to make things very quick but in the end it takes things even longer. For example, in Germany, people want to make a competition, they figure out all the stuff before, like marketing, research and all the plan, basic requirements. They give you the requirements and you finish it in 2 or 3 months. In the middle of the companions, you can ask questions. In Germany, the preparation lasts one month or longer for a project. But in china, they want to everything in 3 weeks. And after 2 weeks, they change whole program and you have one week more, but the result will be very bad. So a lot of time, they make another competition, another, another.. and in the end, only the bad quality offered. They cut themselves which is a problem. And later maybe the governor change, they need to rethink again. Thus sometimes it is worse thing to do for the fast pace. You get bad result, not satisfied, so you have to get another round. In the end, slow down the process. Of course, compared with western process, it is fast in the beginning. But in the end, the result is not. For example, if you compare the design after 4 months, the German people are more organized things and much better output. You have to get all information by yourself or draw from google maps since sometimes they don't give you any plan.

Q: Would you consider collaboration with Chinese developers a major challenge?

V: It is very different from working with European developers. It is different mindset and different priorities. It is a challenge to learn how to deal with that. Maybe you can learn it but it takes some times for foreigners. For example, like my boss, he's been in China for 10 years, he knows exactly how to deal with these things, but for us, you have to get.

Q: Could you describe the way decisions are made in a project?

V: Only the developers and the bosses to make decisions.

Q: Are decisions made in a different way if there is a famous architect involved

O: I think they have more power and more respect. They have the name

V: It's about respect and face. If the boss show up in the presentation, everybody feels happy.

Q: Could you describe a project in which decisions were reviewed? Did it improve project outcomes?

V: Yes it always happens. Normally, it depends. Sometimes the budget problem, so it decreases

but sometimes it also improves if they find something interested.

Q: How do you deal with decisions that lower the project outcomes?

O: I won't agree, but the boss has to make decisions for making quality or quantity.

Q: What did you found difficult to understand a Chinese developer/colleagues? Example

V: yes, since every part is different, small and big ones and also depends on what person you are dealing with. They have different attitudes, since they want to make money and we want to good quality. Some of them are good but some of them are bad. It depends on their profession. Some of them don't know their position. The competent and bad attitudes are still there. They don't understand many things.

Q: Do you think learning mandarin is better when you collaborate with Chinese developers?

V: Yes, if you can understand them a little bit, but you can't get their same level of mandarin. Since you are foreigners, they don't give trust. They give to Chinese.

Q: What did you expect about the way a project would be conducted?

V: We more think about quality and contributing the society. But most Chinese care about money.

Q: How would you advise a new colleague to prepare?

O: You shouldn't obey the boss too much, and you can't lose your creativity and own ideas and fight for it.

Q: What have you learnt from working in an international team over in China the years?

O: respect each other and trust each other because all different idea of architecture cannot just do what you want. We need to meet in the middle.

V: give the gifts and sharing is quite nice.

Q: How did you became aware of the do's and don't's

V: you realize by your experience

Q: What was a big mistake, and what is the kind of things you found difficult to change in your behavior or reactions; are you still make mistakes because of a different cultural background?

O: Now I am having hard time when people argue only with the fact of architecture, like square meters and efficiency. Sometimes all the discussion is the clients' mind. The architects adopt too much developers' thinking though you need to get some of their thinking but in the end architects make the nice space and design things. They never come to social, technical or psychological thinking, such as public or private space. It is very sad, I feel that I am surrounded by developers, even in the architectural office. It is unprofessional way. I can't take this things that architects don't care. People only think the design looks good or not. People have to trust you in the architectural office or the meeting with

developers. People don't trust themselves so they make the safe option. In the end, all buildings look the same. No body cars. I feel rarely to do the architecture. You have to make the decision for the quality and quantity.

V: I am more practical. I kind of adapt it. Maybe in Europe, it has more space to do that but you need to live and take the reality.

Q: Do you have any recommendations when collaboration with Chinese developers for Western European architectural companies?

O: The most Chinese colleagues say the boss ask me to do it or the clients like it. People don't speak out their feelings they just follow.

V: You have to adapt Chinese market, and you can't do your own thing as in the Europe. You have to understand the way of Chinese thinking and how it works. I think GMP does it quite well. Most companies don't do it very well because they don't really understand what it is. Maybe you can find some Chinese partners that you can trust and then can help with it.

Appendix 5-R6 Transcription



MVRDV

Director Asia

1 year and 7 months Years in China

Multiple- cultural Team

Q: Before you went to China, did you read or search some information to get knowledge about China or Chinese culture? Can you tell me something about it?

A: I didn't know anyone in Shanghai, and now I made many friends here. Shanghai is very dynamic. You don't need to stay in the office a lot. You have to go out a lot to go to events and know many people. Before I went to China, I only worked for a competition 3 months. I didn't do anything, before I came here. I didn't have enough knowledge about China. What I knew was the only projects they were doing. I had rough idea but I have even expected that is too different. I am a person that I thought myself who is easy adopting a new culture since I travel a lot and lived in different cities in Europe. The more I know here, the more Chinese clients I treat with, the more Chinese friends I have, the more I realize that it is different. It's because of the culture. Although it's very exciting and different, you really have to learn and understand. We know about globalization. Though it has different culture, in the end we were born in the same place. The expectation or other things are the same. But then I realized it was very different, the culture and especially the way of communication. both with your clients and your friends. For example, with the clients, they are much more direct, straightforward and things are very clear in Europe. When the project goes to start, it is very clear what is the goal to be done and brief is also very clear, but here is not. That you meet the client in the beginning is very rare. They don't have clear goals and brief so you have to work very flexible in the way you working and planning. Chinese clients are less direct and less straightforward. You have to read in between lines and what they mean and what they are saying, which is quite difficult. You have to understand. But in the beginning, I didn't know what they really meant. I made many errors and mistakes and it is less forward than done in NL. Also many times when you win a project in Europe, we understand that they agree with our design. However, in china when you win the completion, it only means that they want to work with you but the design will change a lot. And for us, it is difficult to understand that. Then it took longer time to understand. Also in here, the government has very big power, sometimes the government changes things a lot so the process is quite different. I think the main thing is that you have to be much more flexible. In Europe, you can image how the project will be and more predictable but here is less and you also realized the fact that the communication is less clear. I think it is because of the mother language since you don't understand when you talk with Chinese. But when they talk to each other, they can understand.

Q: Who help you to accept the differences?

A: You have to learn. Since I can't speak Chinese, we have Chinese colleagues here. Chinese colleagues need to translate. But sometimes, I think, we underestimate that importance of translation. When it is the small discussion, it is ok by translation. But when the discussion is complicated and dedicated, you need someone who has more experience in architecture and Chinese people. We have some good Chinese colleagues in our office. For example, we have a Chinese project manager that she knows everything so she can always jump in the project. We find that these people should require more knowledge. Before it was a senior BD who helped me a lot, and I can always call and ask question in NL. We try to get the backup. If it doesn't work here, it is always misunderstanding and like a disaster. I was lucky that when I arrived here, there was a senior DB person here. And he was next to me all the time when we were having meeting. So I can understand a lot. Because of him, I can understand many cultural things and clients. Also I could see and I learn a lot. And now he is not here, sometimes the communication is a bit difficult, because Fei is junior and he doesn't understand or know what things he missed, because he doesn't have experience. When you have experience, you will realize. Then I realized that there are something that he doesn't know, then I called Chinese project manager in Rotterdam. Then the problem solved, so I think it is needed.

Q: Did you felt at ease during the meeting? Why, or why not. What made you feel like that?

A: Normally, it always has big and formal meetings with government and clients. There are many people attend in Chinese meeting and in the beginning I was quite surprised. For example, 10 people are present but only 2 people talk. I feel frustrated sometimes, because I cannot talk the language. Then sometimes you want to know what is going on because you realize that the tone is getting serious. For example, we had a meeting with client and we were talk about design. They wanted to change some part of design because they had new requirements. It was a big meeting and very important client. For us, if we don't take the response, we lose the project. So in that moment, I wanted to know what exactly the clients was asking and I wanted to give the response. But everything is not translated, since sometimes 4 people attended in the meeting and they talked at the same time. However, you only go one translation from a person. Then you might miss things which might be very important. If it is my language, I can hear it and then I can react. And in that sense you got frustrated because at that moment. I would like to reply something, and it might not be a good reply since I got wrong information from translator. My feel is frustrated since you get very limited information. If he miss something important, you can't explain what you are thinking. The process becomes very slow since you have to understand everything.

Q: When you working with Chinese developers (clients), do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting? (In the beginning- In the end).

A: Yes, I think so. You always ask what you need to know and you always say what it need to be said. Now I realized that my explanation and approach are more accurate and effective than before. Since in the beginning, I treated Chinese clients as European clients, but then I found the differences. In the beginning, it always about cultural issues and analyzed

everything to understand situation since you don't understand the language. Then you try to understand local behavior and what they think is right and not right. Then you can go further. You want to understand languages but you can't. So you start to know other things to understand the situation. According to what you understand, you decide what you talk. If I lost in the conversation, I don't talk. The more I live and work here, the more I found there are many misunderstanding. It is not only about misunderstanding the language but situation. You learnt what they expected then you can explain things accurately. It needs time. In china, the design approach, the negotiation, culture are very different, you have to learn these things. The more you hear, the more you feel comfortable.

Q: Could you describe what you think are the main differences between Chinese and Dutch way of working?

A: The main difference is about information that they provide. The brief explain everything. They have plan. You know what people needed. In china, you get brief means you are lucky but the brief changes every 2 weeks. You have to know it can be changed like square meters, so you should be flexible. Once we won a competition, and they told us that the program is changed becoming smaller. So everything should be changed. But you didn't know it long time ago. I felt that the developers and clients want to know why being like that.

Q: What kind of issues, topics do you consider difficult / easy to address with the clients?

A: I think it is ok, since everything in the office is very Dutch way. The thinking is very acceptable here. But if I work with Chinese, they are less conceptual. Sometimes, I found it is different again that people's minds are less conceptual and less abstract than in the Netherlands. Here you also work a lot with metaphors. That's rare in NL and I have never seen you describe a project like that. Most developers want to see a project can be like a metaphor. For example, this looks like a mountain or this looks like sun rise. Something is connected with spirit or soul. Then they understand better and they like it. It is not difficult but you have to adapt. Chinese employees can help for the language but on the other hand, their thinking a less abstract. I try to keep the European way to tell them that you can't lose your concept here.

Q: When you do not agree with Chinese developers' opinions, how would you address this?
Could you explain me how you try to change their opinion? (In the beginning- In the end)

A: We just say it. You don't think you can against anything without saying anything. But I think it is the way in negotiation. You have to show what you are saying is reasonable. If you find a good reason and then they open the discussion. In the negotiation, we just find a middle point. There is not a formula to negotiate with the clients. You have to know the client, since every client is in different situation then you know how to approach to them.

Q: When you working with your team, do you feel free to speak out anything during the meeting (In the beginning- In the end)?

A: With the team, yes.

Q: Did you change your approach over the years (months)?

A: I think I learn from my colleagues, people and everything. I am also lucky to know foreign people here and I learnt a lot from them what the things mean, how to do things. It is kind of evolution. You just learn and then you understand better. It is very useful to talk with foreign people who work and live here longer. They tell you their experience and they know the differences so I find many support from them.

Q: How do you build relationship with developers?

A: It has different ways. Sometimes it is the friend from a friend, so they introduce to me. Sometimes, I am in an event or I give a lecture so they approach me all the times. It needs time since it gets time to know a person. You keep contact with them and once a while you meet so the developers know that you are there and know you personally. Then you build up this kind of personal thing. I try to have a coffee with them once a while or go for a dinner, so that they know me, not only in front of the desk. Then it's also the way to build trust. Like guan-xi is also a new culture that I searched on internet. They won't trust you only from one introduction you made from one presentation, because they want to know about your company or group everything and it takes time. Sometimes they are afraid that we won't take care of the project. They told us that if you do the project, you have to make the project special. Like this things I didn't know it for so long. They really direct to ask. If you are not familiar with each other, this question would be asked since they know you are working for that.

Q: How do you build trust with Chinese developers?

A: It is not only talking with them but in the end, it is working with them. Sometimes, we approach to them. Sometimes, they call us that they have a project and they know you are working on it. You work for them and next time they also come to you since they know you are good. But sometimes they don't have project but you communicate with them continuously. I talk with them or sometimes invite them to come architectural events or seminar. So they see that we influence these things. Little by little, we build the trust with them. For a new client who work with us first time, they ask us special fee. Because it is about trust and you have to make the price lower. Sometimes, it is a big discount, but you have to. Because they always tell us, it is first time, you have to build trust.

Q: How much do you like social activities?

A: I think it is interesting. In Europe, it is very different from work and life. Your personal life is very strict. You don't allow your developers jump into your personal life. And here, you have to be flexible then you go with clients to do many things and they also invite us to do many things. It is not that they don't respect you. It is different way of working. I like it. It is easily to build relationship with them. Because I am very confident what MVRDV can offer them, so I know that they can trust us. Sometimes, it depends on how you connect with them. It is hard to trust MVRDV immediately, but I also know that MVRDV is good and take care. You just should be honest so it is not that really difficult.

Q: Do others provide your team with sufficient information to do the job?

A: The main information is from clients and also many parties involve into the project, like engineer, landscape, etc. in the end, you have to collaborate with them if you want to make a project good. And this is what we try.

Q: Choose the top three risks:

Risks: Partner incompetence
Improper contractual agreement (Unclear contract)
Unfairness in bidding
Partner's project personnel lacking interpersonal skills
Partner's distrust and misunderstanding
Insufficient communication among partners
Partner's short-term focus
Partner's breach of contract (contracts are signed after the bidding stage and take effect during the design stage)
Excessive demands and changes from partners
Poor relationship and dispute with partners (Poor Guan-xi)
Social and cultural differences

A: Demands is much more missing in the contract. So if it is in the contract, it is ok. But if you change a design many times, it shows that you don't respect the architect. And also they also ask change in a short time and it makes the project difficult. The partner's short focus. They don't see the whole picture of the project. They don't see things which might happen later. The communication is quite different. Some clients have many experiences working with foreigner companies, the communication is better. But if it is the first time to work with foreigner companies, then it will be very annoying. He doesn't know anything and everything is very vague. So insufficient communication can be that the clients don't have enough experience.

Q: How to avoid or deal with these risks?

A: We try it in the contract. For example, if they ask change more, they have to pay more. But sometimes, the contract is less valued than in Europe. When you say it is in the contract, then they tell you ok, you have to change this. It always discuss and change a lot. We try to put these in the contract, but it doesn't mean it will happen.

Q: Before having meeting with Chinese developers, how do you prepare usually? Is it difficult to meet the requirements of the Chinese developers?

A: If I meet with clients, I try to know them what projects they do. If I've already known the client, then I just need to know the project.

Q: Would you consider collaboration with Chinese developers a major challenge?

A: It is less easy than in Europe. You confront many problems and you feel frustrated many times. Sometimes, you don't understand what is going on and what this happen. It is a challenge but it is explicit and we take it.

Q: Do you think that many changes requirements making the project outcome lower?

A: It is never good if they ask too many changes. They ask for change but they give us very short time. So you don't have time to rethink and to make thing properly. I think it is not good. Sometimes you have to put more people, because you want to make things well. Something that you don't expect, you have to be very flexible. You don't change the things in a short time all the time because it means that you have to put more people. You have to be very smart to find solutions.

Q: Could you describe the way decisions are made in a project?

A: More dialogue. You have to know what clients want with options. These options make you to understand what clients want because clients don't know what they want. And you have to tell them what they need. You see their reactions and what they talk, you know what they like. Options also make them think. Sometimes they say they don't like a design directly. So you know what they don't want. Sometimes, they say between this and this so you give a respond it is possible or not. Maybe it is impossible, but you can make things possible in other way. If you work few times with the same client, then you know them.

Q: Could you describe a project in which decisions were reviewed? Did it improve project outcomes?

A: If the decisions are bad, we wouldn't accept it. We change something because we find something reasonable. Normally, if we changes something, we talk with clients and give them reasons.

Q: How do you deal with decisions that lower the project outcomes?

A: By supervision. We always cooperate with good LDI. We always supervise their drawings. Drawings go to Rotterdam, then Rotterdam gives them supervision and then they change it.

Q: Could you tell me how did you communicate with Chinese developers? (translator? Mandarin? English?)

A: Few clients can speak English. But in the end, it should be in Chinese.

Q: Could you give me an example of a project that suffered from misunderstandings because of cultural differences? Could you elaborate?

A: The way of explain the project. They understand better if we use metaphor. It is not east to communicate with Chinese developers. You learnt in the beginning. I think if I can stay here 5 more years, I will realize how little I know today. I know more things than 1 and half years ago but I don't know how much I don't know. You learn things every day. This design and negotiation culture is much more different than I image. For me it is very different.

Q: How do you improve the way of communication?

A: I think I observe a lot and I try to have Chinese friends, so they can teach me how things

work. I try to be close to Chinese people and get involved in Chinese context. I ask them things I don't know. At the end, the best way is to close to local people, not only with my colleagues also with my friends. I also have some friends who are developers but foreigners. They are here for many years and they can speak Chinese so you talk with them and learn from them. You should be as localized as possible. Learning Chinese is also another way to boost communication. From my friends, they are life is easier and more professional to learn Mandarin since you understand what is going on. Also when you learn a language, you don't not only learn a word, you learn cultural as well. And it is what I need.

Q: How would you advise a new colleague to prepare?

A: You have to be very open-minded. In the beginning, I think I underestimate with the word “open-minded”. You have to be very patient and manage to frustration. And you have to accept the mistakes you made and the way you are not efficient. Everything takes much more time. You need to translator since they give you text. Then you don't understand, you have ask your colleagues. In the end, you really feel handicapped. You are not as efficient as in Europe and also you are with frustration, when your performing is not as efficient as you can, and the resources are different from the Internet but VPN is not working. You have to deal with frustration. In the beginning, I was very stressful. But little by little you accept it. It helps me a lot to talk with other people then I understand that I have to accept it.

Q: What have you learnt from working in an international team over in China the years?

A: I learn to be flexible, to hear and to observe. In NL, you work very straight, but here, the major problem is flexible on what you think, the way you working and talk with people. And also be patient to accept this flexibility. You learn a lot here. And also I learn manage frustration. I learn many things from local people and foreigners. You can get support from people.

Q: What kind of rules did you learn that are important to collaborate in an international team.

A: You can't impose your client. You can give their suggestions and you need to give them many dialogues. It takes much time.

Q: What is the most difficult problem to overcome, when you collaborative with Chinese developers, cultural habits, language barriers, the way a team communicates?

A: I think it is language. If you know Chinese, it will be much easier. The other thing is people say things different. You have to understand what they mean. It is difficult. In NL, people are super straightforward and very clear. And here, they say that but they mean other things.

Q: Do you have any recommendations when collaboration with Chinese developers for Western European architectural companies?

A: They have to open and to be flexible. And they have to localize. They can't use the same way in Europe. It doesn't work here. And it is not fast. The more localized you are, the better company service will be. As a company you have to close to LDI, and that helps a lot. Try to have local team and team up with other engineer. Try to work with local people.

When you work with LDI, you know more about how to work here and valuable. Never underestimate what “relationship” means, because in China it means a lot. You can’t always follow your clients. You should respect each other. In western culture, it is more black and white, here is always in the between. Everything is quite vague here. In the beginning, you feel it does not make sense, but after few years, you feel it does make sense here. You have to find LDI or partners who can be trusted. Sometimes, you don't understand things if you trust them, you can ask and they will tell you. I take it since I trust you. I might miss many opportunities in the beginning since I didn't know things. The more time you are here, the more things you understand, the more opportunities you will have.

Appendix 5-R7 Transcription

Fei Wu
MVRDV
Junior Architect

Q: 第一次做建筑师的感觉？

A: 要考虑到业主的需求和规范。

Q: 作为中国建筑师在国际化的团队，你有什么特别的一些事给你做？

A: 因为 Marta 需要和业主进行沟通，需要参加各种活动。所以我需要和她共同出席各种场合，包括和业主交流，参加讲座并且做她的翻译。感觉建筑设计是一个很复杂的东西，是在荷兰工作室没有学到的。

Q: 你的队友有没有希望你帮助他们了解中国并且有更好了解在中国环境下工作？

A: 她对中国的文化，还是保持着好奇和保持新鲜的态度。她会要求我去查相关的资料并且研究有关内容然后解释给她听。比如，在一个论坛遇到一些人，她会让我去了解这家公司的背景和他们做过的项目。然后解释给 Marta 听这家公司的背景等等，来看这家公司是不是与 MVRDV 合作，是不是应该和他们进一步接触。

Q: 你是怎么帮助他们了解中国和中国文化的？怎么让他们融入中国环境？

A: 主要是双方的。如果她有什么想知道的，我会和她解释。然后平时聊天的时候，我会觉得在文化上的不同和有趣的事情。聊天的时间会说起

Q: 你觉得中荷工作方式的差异在于？

A: 在荷兰我主要担任一些很单纯的角色，但是在这里我还要接触更多的事情。比如说了解其他公司的背景或者市场调查等等。在荷兰做的项目会在中国做深化，在这个阶段是需要监督和反馈的。包括还要与业主交流等等。还要和结构、园林各个环节协调交流。

Q: 会议的形式有哪些？

A: 一种是前期，在项目还没有开始之前，我们会展示我们的项目，提出我们粗略的想法，看看他是不是有兴趣把项目给我们。另外，我们做完方案的汇报还有一种就是在不同阶段参加业主的会议，去听他怎么分配工作，比如结构工程师要做什么，当地建筑师要做什么。和业主的会议会相对正式一点。

Q: 你觉得在会议中比较放松么？

A: 我主要的工作室准确表达荷兰设计团队的意图然后反馈甲方的意见给荷兰团队。主要是做桥梁的工作。翻译上也会有很多问题，比如说一个重庆的项目，他们是用方言交流的。那这就对我的翻译效率受到影响。有时他们会互相讨论，然后 Marta 总是想知道所有的信息，但是他们没有在和我们说话。有的时候会有些困难，因为外国人总想知道所有的东西，总怕漏掉什么，有一种没有安全感。但是有时，很难翻

译所有东西给她听，所以还是挑选一些重点和相关的内容进行翻译。

Q: 和甲方开会的时候，你会大胆说出你的观点么？

A: 我会提一些意见给甲方或者施工团队。但是这些意见是根据荷兰团队的设计理解的解读，我会试图坚持一些东西。大多数情况下，他们会采纳或者会后讨论，因为他们知道我们是代表公司给出意见。

Q: 你觉得哪些问题比较好解决？哪些不好解决？

A: 如果说有些事情我不能解决好的话，我会像我的上级反应情况，相应关系的层级，比如项目领导或者项目经理来解决。我主要是项目反馈的工作。

Q: 在一个项目，如果 MVRDV 不同意甲方提出的修改意见，你们是如何解决的？

A: 首先我们还是坚持自己的想法然后给出甲方认可的解释。如果他们不接受，只能在不牺牲我们概念项目的情况下，做妥协。因为业主的意见还是很重要的。

Q: 与设计团队合作的时候，你愿意说出自己的想法么？

A: 在中国的项目，我们会招聘一些自由职业工作者，和我们一起完成竞赛项目，有鹿特丹这边进行监督。所以我也会直接说出自己的想法，因为荷兰人会很直接？

Q: 你们是怎么解决一些敏感的问题，如不公平的投标等？

A: 我们会尽做大的能力和他们沟通

Q: 你们有没有一些为了建立关系的饭局？你是怎么想的？

A: 在吃饭的时候做一个翻译工作，主要是和设计单位合作的相关事宜。会有一些主动性的沟通使沟通进行的更加顺畅。之后会把所有的信息反馈给 Marta。比如说 Marta 会参加一些论坛，同样参加这个论坛的人会相互认识，我们会进一步交流和沟通。如果有兴趣的话我们在合作。

Q: 除了甲方，还有没有第三方提供一些有用的信息？

A: 主要是境内事务所合作。他们也是作为我们与甲方之间的协调，传达中国规范的东西。靠他们给的一些意见。

Q: 你认为和甲方合作存在风险么？

A: 有时候我们会投入很多但是却没有得到回报。比如一个竞赛，我们会花很多时间在上面，但是最后却不了了之，我们会失去很多钱。主要投入产出得不到回报，所以我们会很谨慎衡量参与的方案。

Q: 一般在面见甲方前会做些什么准备？甲方会不会满意？不满意的时候会怎么办？

A: 第一阶段的准备主要是公司的作品集和大概的想法展示给他们。在设计进行和深化阶段，主要是甲方和鹿特丹方面的桥梁的作用，传达他们的意图。看下他们的文本，理解鹿特丹方面想要强调的方面。汇报阶段，主要是把方案做完，做 PPT。很多情况下是甲方来找我们，联系到我们或者是一些我们认识的渠道，所以我们会了解一下并且他们也会很乐意和我们讲他们要什么东西也会告诉我们他们想得到什么东西。他们是抱着合作的心态而不是一种测试，他会把他们的需求透露给我们，但是我们主要是透过聊天的形式比如电话，来了解他们的需求。

Q: 甲方提出改动的频率高不高？怎么应对？

A: 如果改动后是业主的满足，结果也不一定这么壤业主会自己说出他们的要求，我们也会询问。如果想知道什么就问，他们会尽量告诉你他们要什么。也是很直接的交流。相对国内建筑院，甲方还是比较尊重境外事务所因为我们也是明星事务所，除了一些要报批的硬性指标，他们不太会为难我们。我接触的甲方还是比较有经验的。

Q: 甲方一般会给予什么信息资料？

A: 有些任务是会完整，因为有的时候甲方不会直接找我们，他会通过招标代理，所以他们会把任务书写的很清楚。有些项目是朋友介绍的话，任务书不完整那也没有办法，但是可以通过朋友询问。

Q: 谁来做决定？

A: 最后做的决定一定是甲方。我们会做测试，告诉他们选择。

Q: 当有著名建筑师参加设计方案的时候，决定的方式会不会改变？

A: 会有。因为在中国有很多人都会崇拜 Winy Maas 所以他的意见他们会比较听从。

Q: 万一方案的结果不尽如意会如何应对？

A: 我们每个方案都做到监督，LDI 做的图，我们都会看，如果不是很满意，我们会告诉他们并且要求他们作调整和反馈。

Q: 你认为理解甲方的要求困难么？有没有因为理解不当而导致方案效果不理想？

A: 我们的风格如果不确定或者不知道就要问，防止设计上的偏差。也是对设计上有帮助的。

Q: 你觉得有没有必要去教荷兰建筑师如何和甲方建立关系并且让他们更好的理解对方的想法？

A: Marta 有自己的一套方法，我们也会提出一些建议，比如对中文的习惯和理解。

Q: 你和你的同事合作关系上如何？

A: 在荷兰我们做方案，建筑师做概念，然后我们按照他们的意图设计和推敲。和 Marta 方面，我们是比较好的沟通，商量意图。两方面的工作也是比较信任的。在方案设计上不同想法我会提出。

Q: 你认为你在一个国际化团队中学到了什么？

A: 设计方法，公司的设计理念和设计逻辑。国外会更加理性和有创造力在国内的设计会更加实际。

Q: 你认为与甲方合作最大的障碍是什么？

A: 我们公司的想法太过超前，甲方无法接受。比如形式、或者设计没有见过，他们会考虑会不会有风险。如果他们无法接受，我们会争取说服他们，或者他的一些提议不会很大程度上改变我们的设计理念，我们就不会和他们 argue。

Q: 请给出你对欧洲建筑公司的建议？

A: 我认为所以境外建筑事务所他都应该有一个专门做市场的（**BD**）一个部门。在中国的项目主要还是和甲方的关系而不是纯靠设计，如果他们很崇拜这个事务所，这是另一件事。但是如果有一个部门专门打理和甲方的关系还是比较好的。假如想更好的与甲方融入在一起还是需要有一个角色。

Appendix 5-R7 Summary

Role of Chinese architects

Fei Wu is a junior architect at MVRDV. At MVRDV, the main design office is in Rotterdam, office in Shanghai is for communication with clients. His internship was in Rotterdam office for half year and now he is working in Shanghai. In Shanghai, fei needs to do market research, supervise and give feedback about drawings from LDIs. Except architectural work, Fei needs to attend many presentations and sessions with his boss Marta as her translator. Since his boss Marta has worked in China for one and half year, she is still very curious about Chinese culture. Sometimes, Marta will ask something about China to Fei, so he needs to explain to Marta. Sometimes, they talk during the break, Fei will also tell something about Chinese culture. Moreover, when they meet potential clients in the session, Fei needs to find information like background about this company, to see whether this company fits to MVRDV or not and whether has potential to cooperation. Except working with Chinese developers, Fei also needs to work and coordinate with other parties like LDIs, landscape architects and civil engineers. LDIs is the most frequent for MVRDV to cooperate because LDIs are familiar with Chinese architectural rules. And also MVRDV supervise their drawings to keep the good quality.

Working in Chinese office, the role of Fei is more like a bridge to link the gap between Dutch design team and Chinese developers. He needs to give the concept and other design information to Chinese developers accurately, while he also needs to tell Dutch design team what the developer wants. Usually, Fei gives and insists some suggestions based on concept from design team to the client and contractor. In the most of time, the developer accept his suggestions because they know Fei represent to MVRDV. However, when the developer doesn't agree with their suggestions, they will insist. If it is still not working, they communicate with the developer and make compromise by keeping the original concept because clients' suggestions are also important.

Meeting with developers

There are two different ways of meeting with Chinese developers, according to the phase of the design. In the beginning, when the project still not starts, MVRDV should make a presentation about their previous work and their rough concept about the project. To see whether the developer is interested into MVRDV or not. The other form is quite formal with developers. When the design starts, most of meeting is like a presentation in different phase, to see how the developer develop the design.

Since Marta needs to connect with potential clients, she invites their (potential) clients to have meal sometimes. Fei needs to be as a translator during the meals and meeting with the developer to make the meeting easier. Sometimes the translation has the problem. For example, they had a project in Chongqi Province. During the meeting, the developer was talking dialects, therefore Fei needs more time to understand what they were saying. The other example is that the developers like to discuss with each other, thus there were 3 or 4 people talking at the same time. Fei only can pick up some important and related information to translate to Marta,

however Marta is a bit insured and she wants to know everything in the meeting. The developer is the only person who make the decision, but MVRDV will do test to give the developer some recommendations.

Mostly foreign architects have more creative ideas but Chinese clients want to be more practical. The concept of MVRDV is quite new and creative, some developers cannot accept it. Then Fei has to persuade and communicate with the client. If their suggestions don't change the basic concepts, MVRDV won't argue with them.

Information Sharing

MVRDV choose projects carefully because they spend much money on the competition but sometimes you don't get any feedback after participating some competitions. Most Chinese projects is that the clients approach to MVRDV or the relation is made by Marta. Therefore, they are willing to tell MVRDV what they want and what they need by chatting.

When the client asks for changing the design, MVRDV will try to fulfill clients' need. Actually, sometimes, the change is not bad. If MVRDV don't understand what clients mean, they will ask clients directly to get more information. The client is willing to tell you everything that you want. Compared with Chinese architectural firms, Western architectural firms get more respects. And also MVRDV is quite famous in China. Except some rules, the clients are quite professional and they don't always ask too many changes. For example, some clients admire Winy Maas, therefore mostly they follow Winy's suggestions. Some projects, the business cases are quite completed because the client asks the tendering agency to approach the architect. But some projects are from friends introduction, the business cases are quite vague. The architect can ask the client any questions to get information.

Psychological safety & trust

Because the office in Shanghai is quite small only 2 architects (including Fei) working there, sometimes they recruit some freelances to do the work together. Since Fei studied in TUD for 2 years and also worked in Rotterdam office, he speak out what he thinks in the design team because Dutch people are direct. When working with Marta, there are more communication between Fei and Marta, in order to build trust.

Recommendation

Each foreign architectural company should have business department to make relationship with the clients. Because in China, get the project is not only depending on the design, but depending on the relation. If a company wants to get into Chinese context with Chinese developers, it is better to set up a department to deal with these thing.

Appendix 5-R8 Transcription

Jianzhong Li

The consultant of developers

Professor in Architecture Department at Shanghai University

Q: 和境外事务所的经验?

A: 与境外事务所的合作有很多次, 在上海比如, 邦杰公司, 本杰明公司 (新天地项目) 等等。在南京主要是贝氏公司和 HBA 公司, 都有比较深度的合作。特别是与贝氏公司的设计师贝建中先生的合作, 并且建立了良好的关系, 所以与他们讨论的设计细节也比较深入, 对项目产生了很重要的作用。

Q: 介绍一下在南京与贝氏公司的合作?

A: 贝氏的合作是从第一接触开始到项目结束有四年的时间。这个项目比较重要, 作为南京的地标建筑, 南京六朝博物馆, 南京圣和府邸以及精选酒店的复合项目。该项目的难度相当高, 于是也邀请了与我关系较好的同济设计院的院长与他们院比较有名的明星设计师做了一些方案, 包括东南大学以及南京本土的设计院也谈论了很多方案, 但是到最后, 考虑到对国内设计院的方案并不是最好也不是最满意, 所以还是希望有一个效果较好的方案出现。于是就委托到了贝聿铭的事务所, 当时甲方专程飞到纽约希望与之合作, 并且他们也接受了这个方案。基于这样的前提, 我们开始接触。最后请出贝建中先生主导该项目。在项目中, 由于国内的方案大多为封闭式, 围合式的, 而贝氏公司提出了国内建筑师不一样的思路, 面对总统府开放式的设计, 一下子把设计的思路打开了。当时南京是的领导在会议中提出很有新意但并不是很满意, 但是对于我来说对于总统府的压力和总统府的安全来说, 这样的方式是最佳的方案。由于总统府都是较矮的平房, 但是我们的项目体量较大, 与其只有 20 米的距离, 并且总统府是国家重点保护单位, 所以对周边建筑都有很多的限制。所以根据南京市当时的规划来说, 靠近总统府的建筑不能超过 24m。于是根据贝氏的方案, 逐步把建筑的体量高度和关系再确认下来。这个项目也比较难, 在中国博物馆与酒店结合的案列基本没有, 在之后也许也不会有。因为在中国的规范里来说国家博物馆是不能与其他建筑合建的, 必须是一个独立的单体。但是由于地皮和周边环境的关系, 两个单体必须要联系在一起, 所以对贝氏也有一定的挑战。所以贝氏也组织了他们最优秀的团队, 对这个建筑, 规划和规范不断的解读, 不断去解决问题, 这也是我认为他们比较成功的地方。

Q: 与贝氏合作的原因?

A: 因为贝氏之前的作品比较有名, 比如苏州博物馆, 这是一个很重要的原因。但是作为我们也并不是只有他们这一家境外事务所, 但会优先考虑他们的方案。第一贝氏比较擅长公共建筑, 而博物馆是他最擅长的。从卢浮宫到美国华盛顿国家艺术馆东馆, 贝聿铭在我们中国华人圈来说做的最好的也是最优秀的建筑师。同时也是因为这个项目的地位, 需要一个大牌的建筑师和大牌的团队来做这个项目。像同济和东南的很多的明星建筑师来尝试做这个方案, 但是和贝氏的方案比较下来确实有很多地方没有他们考虑的周全。从项目的专业高度来说还是有一定的差异的。

Q: 对项目的期望?

A: 当时希望这个方案能成为南京的地标建筑,我也提出了很具体的希望,比如我希望这个项目可以像美国国家艺术馆的东馆一样的水准或者可以像德国柏林历史博物馆这样一种影响力就成功了。这就是我对这个方案的标准也算是这个方案的参考。但是他们也提到太具体的要求可能还是不太能做到,由于用地,周边环境和要求都不同,陈列的内容也不同。我说主要是现代和古典的有机结合的比较好,建筑细节很耐看。如果我们能做到参观者在参观博物馆的同时也能参观我们的建筑,能达到这样的高度就成功了。贝氏也很直接的说这样的高度是可以达到的但是却不能保证100%的相同。我们委托你做就是信任你,相信你有这样的水准,能力和经验。

Q: 最后得到的效果?

A: 应该说这个项目的效果还是得到认可的,东南大学的一位权威教授就说这个建筑是很成功的。那么非专业的媒体也都报道了,在南京的这个地块他还是比较有特点的和其他建筑不同。大家就是大家。包括市民路过这个项目的时候也会眼睛一亮,认为这个建筑很难看。尽管他的体型并不是很张扬,还是很低调,但是在特殊场地来说还是恰如其分的。这也是贝氏的特点,也是他的能力。

Q: 开会形式有哪些?

A: 我们有很多开会的形式,因为从双方订立的合约来看,也有约定设计师要有几次到现场,有很多重要的会议必须亲自来参加,比如方案汇报的会议,从概念设计到深化方案,重要的会议必须要到场。所有与建筑师有关的问题都要及时的沟通,除了会议以外,主要是可视频会议协调的。到现场的会议都是比较大型的会议,有很多市领导要参加的,包括市长、市委书记。所以这个项目在南京和其他项目都不同。该政府决定的事项都是政府决定,比如建筑高度、建筑体量(规划部门)。涉及到有关配套的问题,比如市政问题相关职能部门是需要来明确的。甲方是来控制功能,功能上的面积,功能性空间的关系,数量大小和形式。

Q: 和甲方的意见不符合时,如何处理?

A: 这样的事情发生很多,因为甲方对项目的要求比较具体因为毕竟项目还有商业上的考虑。包括博物馆有功能上的考虑,包括能否吸引参观者,酒店能否吸引旅客都是必须要考虑的。与建筑师的意见不一致,这经常发生。建筑师有的时候可能并没有充分考虑甲方的需求,那么他会适当的妥协。甲方也会要求过度,建筑师的建议也许也是比较合理的,那也要一定的妥协。主要也是比较友好的气氛里达成统一。这种统一主要大多数考虑到了建筑师的要求。因为建筑师的创意和细节要求如果阐述的很清楚详细的话,因为他也主要是为了业主、项目和功能的考虑。关键是双方在沟通到一定程度都能理解的话问题就比较好办。就怕建筑师比较固执的坚持某一个设计的话,如果他是合理的,业主也有可能妥协。如果不合理的话,业主也会坚持否定的态度。

Q: 甲方有特殊的喜好怎么办?

A: 这样的矛盾也有,由于贝氏的设计包括用材用色都有比较自己的特点,但是最为业主和老板来说,他的美学修养和美学鉴赏的能力可能和设计师有比较大的差距。问题就是,这次的业主他比较喜欢暖色调,但是贝氏比较喜欢灰色调,比如说从卢浮

宫到东馆都是用灰色调比较多，最后就产生了争执，最后老板就说我们是酒店，用灰色的话可能色调有点冷，一般在中国的贵宾可能不太能接受。一开始贝氏也并不想让步，因为我们一直运用这个颜色并且在很多酒店上被运用。但是作为业主和投资方，他的要求我们能适当妥协和让步也许也会达到不错的效果。我也拿出了一些其他成功方案的效果。贝氏也分析了一下，认为古铜色会比较奢侈。如果这样的话幕墙铝型材等构件都用暖色也是可以的，最后双方也达成了一致，运用了既不是很灰色调的也不是很暖色调的颜色，运用香槟铜色，古铜色两个颜色在不同位置之间取得了比较好的分配和关系。对博物馆外立面我们主要保持一个古铜色，内立面标出香槟色。古铜色和香槟色还是一个色系，用的比较巧妙。用色还是很讲究而且在功能上也的到了平衡。

Q: 设计一开始的方案，会由于文化差异而不能接受？

A: 这些差异并不会太多，因为贝氏本身对中国文化有很好的积淀，并且他们在中国承接的项目数量也比较多。都是中国人投资的，所以他们对中国的文化也是比较有谱。另外贝氏的设计师对中国文化也是比较理解所以对他们来讲也并没有很多的难度。而且他们的工作方法就像很多境外建筑师一样，对项目所有有联系的资料都是研究的很透彻的。他们花了很多的时间来研究这个东西，比如博物馆已有的文物，周边的一些建筑和地块之间的关系，从交通景观视线，包括细节，还有一些建筑构件都有分门别类的研究。到最后的建筑形式上还是有一些争议的。因为他们做的驻美大使馆也是比较成功，他们运用比较简洁的语言，比如窗洞就是方方正正的窗洞，细节不多。但是作为酒店来说，这个细节太素了。最后商量来商量去做了细节比较多的窗形，对建筑立面相得益彰。

Q: 开会形式的沟通交流？

A: 他们配中文翻译我们配英文翻译，效率还是比较高的。项目周期比较长项目费用也是比较高的。这里都是成本。理解上也并没有很大的困难。毕竟他们做了很多中国的项目，这里也有很多专业的人士参与协调，并没有太多浪费的东西。如果对设计不满意我们都会直截了当的说。因为对境外设计师运用中国的交流方式可能行不通，不能含蓄要直截了当。你说好就是好，你说不好就是不好，因为你说好他们也不特别高兴，你说不好他们也不会不高兴。

Q: 与境内事务所最大的不同？

A: 他的差异性有很多方面，首先他的工作方法不同。因为他们做的东西很精细，中国的精细程度不够。第二设计的方法的另一方面如对历史的研究，建筑可行性适合性的研究，中国建筑师很多把他当做一个任务去完成，但是他们的态度是当成创作来完成。设计的表达上的深度和习惯也不同，他们会做的很精细，所有的细节会在图纸上表达出来，效果图也是，方方面面也是。当然这个收费的多少也是有一定的联系。对于境内事务所甲方对于收费会压制的比较厉害，对境外建筑师来说你要就是这个价你不要我就不做，所以费用上的自由度会比较大。在工地上他们每一个角落都会去看都回去对比，在境内的建筑师比较粗狂。因为对时间的投入也好还是精力的投入也好都会不一样。

Q: 是不是因为总督府的项目时间长所以他们考虑的项目比较精细？

A: 也有可能是一个因素，因为这个项目也是贝氏比较重视的项目，而且是最好的一个

也是花的时间也比较长。有很多境外事务所他们本土化了，比如前面所说的像邦杰也好、本杰明公司也好，他们更多的商业化。从认真程度来说会比中国建筑师更认真一些，因为他们的习惯使然，但是时间紧的话也有很多细节没有关注到，这是时间的关系。不是他不愿意去关注。但是其他公司的设计收费也是有高有低，有的很高，有的低的也有。MG2 做的我们其他的项目。整个项目也是英国建筑师做的，但是是一个时间的要求，一个费用的情况和项目的难度都是因素都会影响到工作状态。工作建筑师也有认真的，他把一个建筑当作品来做，差异普遍的来说是工作习惯。因为中国长期以来，从计划经济这样的模式下转向市场经济，目前还没有 100% 到位。关键是中国对建筑设计师的地位的成果的认可度不是很高。因为在国外建筑师是一个很受尊敬的职业。在中国无非是赚钱比较多的职业，没有认为你是一个艺术家或者是一个崇高的地位。这可能是一个本质上的差异，如果有明星建筑师参与的话也会不一样。

Q: 最大的困难、容易？

A: 其实没有什么大的困难，主要是按照合同去执行。我们制定了很详细的合同，把要解决的问题都写在了合同里，约定好。有的时候他们来中国的时间不多，需要他们在现场指导和确定的时间会比较长的时间。因为我们还是比较尊重设计师的，不是说甲方定了我们就决定了，还要通过建筑师的意见明确采取操作。对于贝聿铭来说，他还是比较有名的，还是很多人认同和钦佩的。做事的时候也并不存在困难，按照合同和一般要求操作就好了。但是和一般的小型境外公司来说，业主会相对强势一点，比如坚持的东西会多一点，不太会谦让，当然和我们从专业的角度来控制。比如我们认为更合适的材料构造的做法和布局，这都有，从总图到剖面到细节都有。合适是我们认为在中国某个材料会更加适合我们的需求和造价的控制。因为境外建筑师会使用比较国际化的和国际水准的东西，但是在中国，从采购和使用的技术都不一定能到位，所以就不是很慎重的选择，我们这里会有更多经验的考量。

Q: 如何建立信任？

A: 这肯定有磨合过程，既然他能在中国开业承接项目，就是说他有一定值得信任的地方。至少，他们的公司层面的信誉度是存在的，至于个人信誉度的建立总是有方法吧。你不能说一种模式一种方法。毕竟不同国家有不同的文化，还有受教育的程度，为人处世的方法都是不太一样，但是作为工作来讲，我想都不是障碍。毕竟大家都很专业，我们也考虑比较专业的意见。甚至到最后，我们来决定也有。他们会来询问，甲方怎么看。每个公司都有，甚至贝氏也有。也是相互尊重这样的前提下很多事就没有问题

Q: 甲方任务书信息是否完整？

A: 我们有成熟的框架，比如你的设计原则是什么，设计条件是什么，目标，功能要启用，面积要求，形势要求，时间，质量。这都有规定套路的东西。但是任务是是一个动态的东西，不可能说是静态的东西。因为在任务书起草阶段，很多问题考虑的深度没有到最终的结果，正因为这样的情况，随着项目的深入和推进，有些要求会适当的调整，这是很正常的。但是这种改变是不违背我们规划的要求，有些必要的调整也是很正常的，也是必须的。如果刚开始就考虑的很成熟，这显然是不太可能，因为哪怕你经验在丰富，你对这个项目，可利用的经验并不是 100%，基于这样的原因，动态的东西肯定会有一些。一般方案大变得可能性会比较少，对于国外建筑师

来说相对会比较敏感，工作量的计算，会用公函的形式告诉我们，对应合同的要求，价格要相对调整。

Q: 设计要求的形式有哪些？

A: 做概念要求的时候，我们要求设计公司给予多个方案。

Q: 与境外建筑师合作的有没有风险？

A: 风险也不是没有，我们就碰到过，组织结构不稳定后，在中国市场有大的调整，甚至撤销。所以我们也是通过合同的方法，尤其是付款的时间，要把握好，只能是逐步付款，不能是大节点去付款，否则再收回就非常困难。比如有一次，一个英国建筑公司退出中国市场了，正好建筑师还留在上海，我们就要求项目跟着这个建筑师走，但是我们支付了象征性的款项，虽然有损失，但并不是很多，毕竟建筑师还在上海，整个设计方案还在他这边。但是我们也和转接的公司讲清楚，我们一部分费用已经损失了，并不能给他们了，但是毕竟工作量少，我们也要保护甲方的利益，作为一名管理者也是基本的要求。

Q: 合同是不是也是建立信任的重要关系？

A: 合同付款本身就是有一个滞后过程，如果要求达不到，乙方也很难去拿到他的款项。主要就是保证甲方自身的利益，在合同的结构上也是有一方面的原因。虽然也有一些境外事务所会写上比较苛刻的条件，但是在合同操作的过程上，一般都是友情操作的，一般我们也不会死扣合同，否则合作氛围就会很差。因为我们反复强调设计是智力劳动，他不是像机械劳动，产品数量是无法衡量的。所以如果大家合作愉快，又很尊重彼此，那么双方协调也不是很困难，很多问题也是比较好商量，当然合同大的原则不能违背，比如乙方参加会议的次数啊，投入的时间，等等。这已经是合同约定的东西，也并不能去推翻和违背的合同。

Q: 选择境外事务所的原因？

A: 主要是因为他们的设计，比如形式和效果的可能性，还有功能合理性的考量。因为从投资者的角度来说，中国建筑师都比较年轻，即使年龄比较长的建筑师他们的经验和能力，由于中国政治的影响、干扰比较多，所以专业上的成熟度还不够。

Q: 在调整方案以后结果不尽如意怎么办

A: 有的时候调整方案会越跳越好，有的时候会越调越差。这主要看甲方的控制水准和把控能力，主要很多主观的因素，客观来说好用就是好的。主观就是专业的评估能力。所以双方应该都有一定的专业能力，如果你 100% 依赖建筑师，实际上也会一定的失误。

Q: 比较境内外事务所结果有什么不同？

A: 主要是质量的差异和效果的差异。从综合成本来说，境外事务所并不一定高。但是我们一个建筑可以起到一个很有影响力的效果，或者成为一个地标，或者成为一个人家可以欣赏的、仰慕的建筑，那无心的效果比做广告还要好。所以作为我来说，从概念阶段还是会请境外建筑事务所来做，并不是为了节约成本，还是为了创意等等。现在主要是形成了一种思维定式，做方案一定要是比较好的建筑师做概念，后期还是更多的会让境内事务所接上去做。主要是中国法律的规定，因为境外事务所

是没有出图资质的

Q: 如何控制质量?

A: 通过境外建筑师在合同的约定，他们在整个项目施工的过程中，也有所监控，当然你也要支出一部分费用。而且费用也不低。让境外建筑师监督境内设计师，让建筑设计的质量能够达到他的要求。他的要求尽管在合同内有所表述和约定，但是合同的条款毕竟是文字比较少，所以真正执行的话还是需要人去执行。所以在后期现场的跟踪和服务，境外建筑师的责任和义务都是在合同中约定的。如果你放弃的话也有，后期施工的可能性比较大。

Q: 评价境外事务所?

A: 境外事务所现在做的好的话，也是对中国市场的一种促进，至少他刺激了中国建筑师的一种内在的情绪和利益。因为中国建筑师也受到了很好的教育，在国内的事务所从事工作的话也会比较好。对我们来说，对一个项目来说不一定能调整到作品的话，地位还是很难提高。如果只单纯的把建筑设计作为一种商业行为的话，地位就很难提高。也许并不是能力问题，主要还是态度问题，你没有一个好的态度，出不了好东西。主要境外建筑师还是很入中的去雕琢一个作品。主要境外事务所的工作氛围很民主很友善，大家都是为了出一个好东西在努力，所以太商业化反而会降低自己的身价，也会影响整个项目的操作。

Q: 因为文化产生的冲突矛盾?

A: 有，但是很多专业上和技术上的逻辑是很清晰的，大家如果不违背技术逻辑的话也不会有太大的问题。比如造价会非常昂贵，作为业主我们还是会考虑技术效果，也许会用其他结构来替代来达到相同的效果。因为毕竟最终是要落到最终的费用上的，如果没有费用支持，再好的设想都是空的。

Q: 建议?

A: 更多要了解文化上的，要更接地气，过分追求形式，考虑文化方面较少的话，地气不接的话，最终成功的可能也不是太大。包括中国人的普遍价值取向，设计作品周围的地段，地块，周围的历史和环境，文脉都要比较清楚。就形式而形式的话，也许他能比较热门一阵，但是他是没有生命力的。

Appendix 5-R8 Summary

Jianzhong Li is a professor in Shanghai University. He has rich experience working with foreign architectural firms. Recently a mixed project that he joined, a combination of the grand mansion a luxury collection hotel and Six Dynasties museum, has been finished in Nanjing, China. The project was done by Pei Cobb Freed & Partners Architects (PCF). The interview is more about why the developer chose PCF and how they worked together.

Process

The project is very complicated and challenged, combining with the grand mansion a luxury collection hotel and Six Dynasties museum, opposite to presidential palace relic site. Since presidential palace relic site is national relic protection, there are many strict rules around the site based on urban planning in Nanjing. For example, the buildings around the site cannot higher than 24 meters. Moreover, there is no any previous project like this project, combining with hotel and museum together in China. Since according to Chinese architectural rules, the museum and the hotel should be independent as a single building. However, because of the land use and the relationship with surrounding, the hotel and the museum have to be together. In the beginning, the developer invited some famous Chinese architects to make the design, however the developer was not very satisfied with their designs.

In order to get a nicer project, the developer decided to try foreign architectural firms. Considering PCF did many successful architectures around world and also its main architect, I.M. Pei, did many famous design in China, based on Chinese culture, such as Suzhou Museum, thus the developer decided to cooperate with them. Except its reputation, PCF is good at designing public architectures, especially museum. In the developer's opinion, Pei is the best architects in Chinese architectural circle. Furthermore, since this project is very important in Nanjing, it should have a famous architects to join in this project. Compared with Chinese architects' designs, PCF is more professional. Except name, choosing foreign architectural firms is because their designs are more creative, professional and feasible. For the investor's perspective, Chinese architects are too young to have enough experience.

During the design phase, the developer gave some specific famous architectures as reference to realize his expectation. However, for PCF, they were too specific. It is hard to many an architecture like the same as other building, because of different site, surrounding and requirements. But the developer also trusted PCF because he believes that PCF has certain profession, ability and experience. In the end, the project is very successful and got good comments from architectural field and citizens.

During the project, everything is followed by detailed contract which lists all possible problems might be happened. When the developer working with famous company, most of time they follow their suggestions and contract because of their profession and name. Sometimes the project will be asked to change but not very often. The workload will be calculated and the cost

will be changed based on the contract. Besides, in the contract, the developer ask the architect to make some options to choose. The outcome of changes depends on whether the developer is professional or not. Moreover, in the contract, it gives that the design team should supervise the construction process and the developer pay for supervision. It is also possible that the developer doesn't ask for supervision. For PCF, they put time and energy to control the project quality in the every corner of construction site. But when they work with some small companies, the developer has more power and less compromised.

Strength

Foreign architectural firms are different from Chinese architectural firms. First of all, the western way of working gives more detailed than Chinese. All details are shown in all perspectives, like drawings and renders. Furthermore, they did many researches about Chinese culture, history, feasibility, what kind of exhibitions in the museum, surrounding condition, views Chinese architectural rules and urban planning carefully, in order to solve many problems. When an architectural firm knows about Chinese culture and did many successful projects in China, culture is not the problem and not difficult. Moreover, they take the project very serious not like Chinese architects who thinks a project is like a mission.

All of these things are related to high cost. Sometimes the developer is also afraid that the western architectural firms don't want to take the project if they give the low price. Therefore, the cost of a project has more space when the developer cooperate with foreign architects while the local firms get strict budget. Although foreign architectural firms cost more, a good design can influence on a company's image. The creative ideas are the reason why Chinese developers want to collaborate with foreign architects.

Weakness

Sometimes foreign architects don't take Chinese current construction technology and procurement into consideration. They like to choose some materials or structure in international standards. For Chinese developers, they consider about the current technology and how easy to get the material by their experience, in order to control the budget.

Meeting with PCF

There are many ways to have meeting. Since the office of PCF is in New York, based on the contract, the architects had to attend some important meetings for certain times. For example, in the contract, it shows that important meetings like project presentation from concept to development of the concept, the architect must present. These meetings were quite formal, because mayor and other governors should be presented. Most of meetings were held by video conference for coordination. Besides, they also make a deal that all problems related with architecture should communicate with the architect immediately. The meetings were quite efficient with translators and also many other professional team members coordinate each other, therefore it is not hard to understand each other. If the developer was not satisfied with design, he would tell the architect directly, since it is different way of communication with foreign architects. You should speak out directly, because they won't be unhappy by what you said.

Communication

It is quite often that architect's suggestions are different from the client's want. Because for Chinese developers, they have very specific goals for the project. They think more about business than architecture, such as whether functions of the museum can attract visitors or whether the hotel can have enough tourists. Sometimes, the architect may not fully take the clients' needs into consideration. Then he had to compromise. However, sometimes the client ask too many requirements and the architect recommendation is reasonable, then the client also needed to make certain compromise. All discussions were in the harmonious atmosphere to reach unity, mostly based on the architect's requirements. Because if the architect can explain his creative concept and details clearly, the client will take his suggestions. Also the client knows that the architect mainly considers functions and projects for the client.

In China, aesthetic appreciation of the developer is quite different from the architect. Sometimes, they have their preference. And at the same time, the architect also has his characteristics. Because of that, the conflicts happen. For example, in the project the client likes warm color since it Chinese people like this kind of color. But PCF insisted to their grey color. In the end, both of them did compromise to achieve a better result.

Most of problems were solved by discussion. To handle problems easily, the key is that both sides should understand each other. However, sometimes some architects are too stubborn to insistent their designs. If his recommendation is reasonable, the owners might compromise, while if it is unreasonable, the client will also insist on a negative attitude.

Western architectural firms in China

Western architectural firms promote and boost Chinese architectural market but many western architectural firms are too localized in China now. They did many commercial projects, required to be fast. Though they take a project more serious, they may overlook some details in a short time. Time and cost are influenced on the quality of projects. If many Western architectural firms make too many commercial projects, the status is hard to be improved in China. Instead, the status will be decreased by too commercialized.

Chinese market

China is still switching from a mode planned economy to a market economy. People don't highly accept the position of architect in China. In China, the architect regard as a position which can simply make money instead of an artist or a respectful position. But if there is a famous architect involved in the project, the story will be different.

Trust

The trust should be built by time. But if the developer approaches a foreign architectural firm, it means that their profession is trustable. If both parties are professional and respectable, it is not hard to build trust. When the trust be built, the architect also would like to ask developers' opinion.

Uncertainty avoidance

The developer gives a clear brief such as the goal of the project, main functions, quality, time and square meters, etc. to the architect. However, the brief should be changeable, because the developer didn't consider deeply in the beginning. It is hard to consider a project maturely in china. There are too many things are uncertain, therefore, with the development of the project, some requirements are changed. And it is usual and necessary.

Though sometimes some foreign architectural firms give very strict rules, Chinese developers don't follow the rules too much, only some important rules that the architect must be followed such as work load. Because if two parties work good and respect each other, it is not hard to coordinate and communicate with each other.

Risks

When working with foreign architectural firms, the risk about that the firm may leave Chinese market is possible. Thus the developer uses the contract to reduce risk by pay money in different phase.

Decisions

Decisions are made by the government and the developer, depending on what kind of decisions. If the decision is related to urban planning like the height and volume of the building, the urban planning department should make it. The developer makes decisions about functions, square meters and shape.

Recommendation

For the most Western architectural firms should to learn Chinese cultural, thinking about how to design a building related to Chinese culture, value, history and environment. Though many projects are more about the shape or good looking of the building in China. They may be quite popular currently, but a design with local culture and history is more valuable and acceptable.

