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# Intercultural Coworker Relationships (ICORs) in the Global Workplace: A Grounded Theory Study

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Intercultural Coworker Relationships (ICORs) in the Global Workplace:  
A Grounded Theory Study

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M.A., Psychology, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2014

B.A. Psychology, University of Missouri- St. Louis, 2012

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in

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*“Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another. Community is the fruit of our capacity to make the interests of others more important than our own. The question, therefore, is not 'How can we make community?' but, 'How can we develop and nurture giving hearts?’”*

- Nouwen, 2006

The successful completion of my dissertation and Ph.D. fills me with gratitude for many “giving hearts” who provided me with a sense of community along this journey.

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**Abstract**

Previous research supports what employees intuitively sense: peers make the place (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Schneider, 1987). Extant research suggests coworker relationships have critical influence on outcomes ranging from turnover (Felps, Mitchell, Hekman, Lee, Holtom, & Harman, 2009) to creativity (Homan, Buengeler, Eckhoff, van Ginkel, & Voelpel, 2015) to organizational commitment (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002) to employee health and well-being (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). Despite the increase of Intercultural COworker Relationships (ICORs), particularly in multinational firms in the technology industry, research has yet to examine what defines coworker relationship quality in the presence of national cultural differences. In other words, how do employees define and experience relationship quality in ICORs? How do employees behave to facilitate relationship quality in ICORs? The present study sought to address these theoretically and practically important questions using a mixed methods design, with an emphasis on the qualitative data collected via grounded theory methodology. Findings reveal consistencies and important differences compared to monocultural coworker relationships. The current study offers a theoretical framework to conceptualize the development of ICOR quality. The importance of understanding how relationship quality is defined and facilitated in organizations with nationally diverse populations is discussed, both in terms of theoretical and practical implications.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*“In much of the world, relationships are the key to achieving results. Invest some time upfront to build strong relationships, and you will see dividends in the future when your goals are more easily met.”*

- *Aperian Global, 2016*

*“One of the most powerful tools in easing potential conflict on a team is establishing personal connections. Naturally, different global cultures have different norms about relationship building.”*

- *Molinsky & Gundling, 2016*

The value of high quality relationships in the increasingly global workplace is evident to both practitioners and researchers alike, as the quotes above illustrate. Despite their recognized importance, however, there is a paucity of research focused on *defining quality* in intercultural exchanges in the workplace (i.e., interpersonal relationships involving nationality diverse individuals in the workplace). In other words, research has yet to answer the question, “What constitutes a quality cross-cultural coworker relationship?”

The purpose of the present research is to understand how intercultural exchange quality is defined specifically in lateral (i.e., coworker) interactions in the workplace context. Coworkers are not only critical elements of the workplace, but they can serve to define the social environment for employees (Schneider, 1987). Although research has stressed the importance of coworkers with statements such as, “peers make the place” (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008, p.1), the majority of international research in workplace exchange quality has examined relationships at the leader-member level (i.e., leader-member exchange; Pellegrini, 2015). Sufficient attention to lateral interactions among coworkers is lacking. This is surprising, given that more than 90% of employees have

coworkers (i.e., “other individuals situated in the same stratum of an organizational hierarchy and with whom one executes tasks and has routine interactions,” Fairlie, 2004, p. 2) with whom they interact regularly.

As globalization continues, research suggests that interactions among nationally diverse coworkers are only likely to become more frequent. Immigration to the United States has never been higher, as more than forty-one million immigrants live in the United States today and 13% of current residents are foreign-born (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Approximately one-third of foreign-born employees work in management, professional or related fields; and 26% of all science and engineering workers in the United States with a college education are foreign-born (Zong & Batalova, 2015; Science & Engineering Indicators, 2014). Outside the U.S., a similar pattern of globalization in the workforce can be observed. In the United Kingdom, the percentage of non-native workers in total employment rose from 7.2% in 1993 to 16.7% in 2014. Employed citizens originating from foreign countries of origin also increased in total employment from 3.5% in 1993 to 10.5% in 2014 (Migration Observatory, 2015). The Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration of China’s Ministry of Public Security reported that 26.11 million foreigners entered China in 2007, and over 10% of those individuals (about 2.85 million) immigrated for employment (Brookings, 2011). In Russia, over 22 million individuals immigrated in the last 25 years, with almost 4.5 million individuals relocating to Russia for work-related reasons (Aleshkovski, 2010). Globalization of the workforce is a worldwide phenomenon, suggesting the need for a better understanding of intercultural relational dynamics. A deeper conceptual understanding of intercultural workplace interactions should inform businesses in their efforts to develop and sustain

successful inter- and intra-firm relationships. Furthermore, intercultural relationships are likely to have critical influence for facilitating and sustaining growth for multinational organizations. Intercultural relationship quality is a timely consideration for talent management practices aimed at attracting and retaining the highest quality talent available in the world (Tarique & Schuler, 2012).

It is undoubtedly clear that intercultural interactions are increasingly common in the workplace, yet it remains unclear what defines a quality intercultural exchange between coworkers. The extant research on intercultural competence has focused only on individual characteristics (e.g., cultural intelligence) as predictors of quality intercultural relationships. Existing research has not yet offered a definition of quality intercultural exchange. Thus, previous research has examined the relationship between individual characteristics and intercultural exchange without clearly defining the criterion of intercultural exchange. Undergirding this pattern, the constructs of cultural intelligence (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar 2007), global mindset (Javidan & Teagarden, 2012), multicultural personality (Van der Zee, van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer, 2013), and expatriate adjustment (Black & Stevens, 1989; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005) all provide definition and explanation of individual-level characteristics, suggested to lead to an individual's competency in cross-cultural situations. While the literature has studied these individual level predictors in great depth, there is an instance of "the criterion problem" (Austin & Crespino, 2006; Austin & Villanova, 1992) in the lack of research defining intercultural competency outcomes, specifically intercultural relationship quality among peers in the workplace (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Odden & Sias, 1997). For example,

research has operationalized “relational skill” dichotomously as having (or not having) a good friend from another culture (Canary & Dainton, 2003; Thomas, Liao, Aycan, Cerdin, Pekerti, Ravlin, & Moeller, 2015), without theoretical understanding of what constitutes quality in the relationship. Other studies have included measures of individuals’ self-reported tendency to build intercultural relationships, but have not included measures to assess the quality of those relationships (Javidan & Teagarden, 2012). Thus, research has yet to explicitly define intercultural relationship quality (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).

Although previous intercultural competence research has yet to examine the definition of workplace relationship quality, social exchange researchers have studied coworker relationship quality (albeit only in U.S. work contexts). The constructs of coworker exchange quality (Sherony & Green, 2002) and high quality connections (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003) have offered rich definitions and descriptions for understanding workplace relationship quality among U.S. coworkers. This research has focused solely on U.S. coworker relationships, and was not developed in light of potential differences in the meaning of relationship quality across cultures.

Given the unique challenges inherent to intercultural relationships (e.g., differences in perceived social norms, expression of values, cultural schemas), exploring the meaning of relational quality is an especially valuable area to study in order to build theory as well as to inform practice (e.g., Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010; Kinloch & Metge, 2014). Research has predominantly examined the influence of national culture via cultural values (e.g., individualism-collectivism, power distance; Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Hofstede, 1980; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004;

Schwartz, 1994), but researchers have developed additional ways to more deeply understand the psychological mechanisms by which culture influences employee attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions. Schema activation and norm salience are both vital to understand the theoretical and practical impact national culture has on individual attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions.

According to cultural schema theory, individuals possess “cognitive lenses” that shape social interactions (Leung & Morris, 2015). Specifically, schemas guide individuals’ interpretations, expectancies, and responses in social interactions. In addition, research reveals that perceived social norms impact judgment (i.e., what is deemed appropriate or inappropriate behavior) and behavior patterns in interpersonal situations (Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009; Zou, Tam, Morris, Lee, Lau, & Chiu, 2009). Thus, national culture (via values, schemas, and norms) is a theoretically meaningful lens with which to examine how relationship quality in the workplace is defined, as well as what behaviors facilitate quality.

In sum, the current study seeks clarity regarding relationship quality among intercultural coworkers. To this end, existing conceptualizations of intercultural competence constructs (i.e., global mindset, multicultural personality, cultural intelligence, expatriate adjustment) will be reviewed. In doing so, the current study will also be informed by extant research on social exchange in the workplace (i.e., coworker exchange quality, high quality connections) will be leveraged to better understand the relational aspect of intercultural work. The plethora of work studying successful operation in cross-cultural situations (see Leung et al., 2014 for a recent review), has yet to clearly conceptualize quality intercultural interactions occurring specifically in the

context of the workplace. To address this gap, the purpose of the present research is to understand how intercultural exchange quality is defined specifically in lateral (i.e., coworker) interactions in the workplace context. The research questions will be developed at the end of Chapter 2, based on the insights gleaned in the review of the literature.

The following chapter will review the extant literature relevant to consider in light of the study's purpose. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology used to investigate the phenomenon of interest in the present study and why this methodology was chosen. Chapter 4 will reveal the qualitative and quantitative findings. Finally, Chapter 5 will integrate the qualitative and quantitative data, review the findings in light of extant research, and discuss the theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### General Intercultural Competence Constructs

Several constructs have been developed to encapsulate the general set of qualities (e.g., personality characteristics, mindset, type of intelligence) that explain the effectiveness with which one operates in situations involving cultures different from one's own. Effectiveness has been defined in terms of psychological outcomes (e.g., sociocultural adjustment; Leong 2007, Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van der Zee, 2003), behavioral outcomes (e.g., cooperation; Beechler & Javidan, 2007), and performance outcomes (e.g., sales made to culturally diverse others; Chen, Liu, & Portnoy, 2012). Importantly, review of the intercultural competence literature suggests the importance of the workplace context (e.g., the organization and industry) in interpreting the results obtained by the available research. Additionally, the majority of research conducted has focused on hierarchical relationships (e.g., managers and leaders) without much attention given to coworker exchanges that occur between colleagues. Studies examining the most widely researched intercultural competence constructs are reviewed below.

**Global Mindset.** Over five decades ago, Stogdill (1974, p. 259) suggested, "There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept." Global mindset (GM) is another term that has been defined in multiple ways depending on the perspective taken by the researchers (e.g., strategy, cultural psychology) as well as the unit of analysis (e.g., individual level, firm level). For example, strategy researchers study global mindset at the firm level and its relation to firm outcomes (Begley & Boyd, 2003; Bouquet & Birkinshaw, 2008; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Murtha, Lenway, Bagozzi, 1998), whereas cultural psychology



studies global mindset at the individual level of analysis (Kedia & Mukherji, 1999; Srinivas, 1995; Javidan & Teagarden, 2012; Javidan, Hough, & Bullough, 2010).

Integrating these approaches, research has mostly defined global mindset as a leadership quality beneficial for strategically managing complexities due to diversity across national cultures, where strategically managing refers to the competitive advantage for the organization (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Javidan & Teagarden, 2012). Global mindset continues to rely on this integrated definition.

Global mindset refers to a multi-dimensional construct that reflects a leader's ability to exert influence onto others who are dissimilar, including individuals, groups, organizations, and systems (Javidan & Teagarden, 2012; Javidan et al., 2010). According to this definition, the purpose of the intercultural relationship is to influence others in a top-down, outward manner that serves the influencing individual. In their conceptualization, Javidan and colleagues contend that a Global mindset reflects three dimensions: intellectual capital, social capital, and psychological capital. Intellectual capital encompasses attributes reflective of a leader's intellectual ability, as measured by three scales: global business savvy, cognitive complexity, and cosmopolitan outlook. Social capital describes the skills necessary for leaders to mobilize individuals, as measured by intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact, and diplomacy. Finally, psychological capital is "a positive psychological profile, cosmopolitanism, and passion for cross-cultural encounters" (Javidan & Teagarden, 2012, p.10). It is measured by one's passion for diversity, self-assurance, and quest for adventure.

Although empirical research examining global mindset has been scarce, researchers have found some evidence relating global mindset to workplace variables. A

correlational study found that international management training (dichotomous), manager's age, foreign country living experience (dichotomous), having a family member of foreign origin (dichotomous), and work experience in a foreign culture (dichotomous) all significantly and positively (with the exception of age, which exhibited a significant negative correlation) related to managers' intercultural sensitivity, global business knowledge, and global mindset (Arora, Jaju, Kefalas, & Perenich, 2004). Preliminary results also suggested that marketing and retail managers scored higher (although not significantly so) on global mindset than manufacturing managers. The authors noted that this may be due to the higher frequency and diversity of intercultural interactions for marketing and retail managers as compared to manufacturing managers. Thus, the opportunity to interact with culturally diverse others was noted as important for individuals to develop global mindset.

Organization size also correlated with employees' global mindset scores, such that smaller organizations (i.e., 100 employees or fewer) tended to employ individuals' with higher global mindset scores as compared to larger organizations (i.e., 101 employees or more). Although the authors did not discuss this finding, this may be due to the well-established "big-fish-little-pond" effect (Marsh, 1987). In other words, individuals in smaller companies may provide higher self-ratings of global mindset due to the smaller comparison group. In contrast, employees in more sizable firms rate themselves against a larger pool of globally minded talent. In self-report measures, the presence of many globally minded people may temper the self-ratings provided by individuals in larger organizations.

Further, individuals who serve on a Board in some capacity tended to score higher on global mindset. In addition, the number of Board memberships held by an individual correlated with one's global mindset score. This is likely due to the broader and higher number of network contacts that a Board member may have as compared to a non-member.

Level of education also positively correlated with global mindset. Significant differences in global mindset scores were observed based on education group membership. Specifically, those with a Ph.D., J.D. or medical degree tended to score the highest, followed by those with a Master's degree, then by those with a four-year degree (across areas of major discipline), and lastly those who had not completed any type of four-year degree tended to score the lowest on Global mindset.

Previous research on global mindset suggests women tend to be significantly higher on intercultural empathy (social capital) and passion for diversity (psychological capital), while men tend to score marginally significantly higher on interpersonal impact (social capital), quest for adventure and self-assurance (psychological capital), as well as global business savvy, cosmopolitan outlook, and cognitive complexity (intellectual capital). However, in terms of differences related to gender, substantive conclusions are difficult to draw due to the roughly 30% women compared to 70% men that comprise samples in previous global mindset research.

The number of languages spoken significantly and positively associated with one's global mindset (with diminishing returns after three foreign languages on average), and this relationship becomes stronger as one's level of proficiency increases. Previous research asserts that increased language proficiency in a foreign language reduces the

level of uncertainty in interpersonal interactions, resulting in increased general inclination to interact with individuals from different social groups (Gudykunst, 1995). Higher language proficiency may also facilitate interpersonal interactions by enabling the use of humor, symbolism, sensitivity, negotiation, persuasion that likely benefit from higher levels of fluency (Harzing & Feely, 2008). In addition, research in the medical field suggests that higher language proficiency can facilitate interpersonal interactions between physician and patient through the development of trust (Fields, Abraham, Manjusha Gaughan, Haines, Hoehn, 2016; Sadavoy & Meier, 2004).

Another factor related to global mindset is the number of foreign countries in which one has lived. As the number of countries increases (with diminishing returns after three), so does one's global mindset. In addition, duration of stay in other countries, when length of stay is two years or longer, positively relates to global mindset. Interestingly, individuals living abroad for a relatively short time (1-6 months) as well as a relatively longer time (more than 2 years) self-reported their global mindset the highest, while those in the middle of the range (between 6 months and 2 years) scored the lowest on global mindset. Although not discussed by the authors, this may be explained by the Dunning-Kruger effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). In essence, the phenomenon articulates the conventional wisdom that "you don't know what you don't know." It describes the cognitive bias exhibited by novices who mistakenly assess their skills as more developed than they truly are. In contrast, those with more experience and time spent in another country (i.e., middle scorers) may in fact be more adept than novices, but those with more experience also realize how much there is to learn (and thus rate themselves lower). Those with extended time spent in other countries may have realized

they have only been exposed to the proverbial tip of the iceberg, and that there is still much more for them to learn. Therefore, although others might rate individuals with more exposure to be higher on global mindset, the Dunning-Kruger effect suggests that they might rate themselves lower.

As illustrated in the Dunning-Kruger effect, self-report can present a number of limitations. In this way, global mindset shares problematic characteristics with other forms of intercultural competence in its measurement, such as cultural intelligence and multicultural personality. The dimension of knowledge (also present in cultural intelligence) is reflected by asking respondents to self-report their specific knowledge of other cultures. It is measured by items such as, “I know about the geography and history of other cultures.” At best, a person endorsing this item has a gross misunderstanding of the complexity and variation inherent in believing one “knows” the geography and history of cultures the world over. In other words, these quantitative measures may be improved upon by contextualizing the intercultural workplace situations in which the individual’s behaviors occur (e.g., knowing the geographic locations of a specific business market).

Beyond global mindset’s correlations with more demographic variables, there are some preliminary indications of global mindset’s relationship to work outcomes. For example, researchers have argued that individuals’ global mindset positively relates to efficiency and effectiveness in decision making (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). Javidan and colleagues also suggested that scores on the Global Mindset Inventory were positively related to identification as top talent (dichotomous variable) in a large organizational sample. In addition, empirical research suggests a positive relationship

between the aggregate level of firm leaders' global mindset (i.e., general focus of cross-cultural issues) on firm performance (Levy et al., 2007). However, there may be a threshold amount of global mindset, such that higher levels may not necessarily translate into higher levels of firm performance due to the lack of attention to the specific local context (Bouquet, 2005). Analogous to the phrase, "think global; act local," individuals cannot ignore the local context in which they operate, but must simultaneously balance a global focus with local operations. Studies examining global mindset at the firm level determine firm level global mindset by aggregating the individual scores of the executive team (or use the CEO's scores) to study its relationships with organization level outcomes (Levy et al., 2007). Furthermore, organization level studies on global mindset have often cited it as a critical skill for "exploiting emerging opportunities and tackling their accompanying challenges" (Beechler & Woodward, 2008, p. 281 and Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002, p.116).

In contrast to this characterization of leaders' global mindset and its aim to capitalize on global opportunities external to the organization, the present study seeks to understand what defines and facilitates lateral intercultural interactions among colleagues in the workplace. The present research aims to study intercultural exchange quality among coworkers, and in consideration of workplace context. In other words, global mindset defines successful leaders as those who are able to capitalize on opportunities in emerging markets across the globe, whereas the present study seeks to focus on understanding what defines relationship quality in lateral intercultural interactions within the workplace context.

In addition to the difference in focus, the present study seeks to more clearly define the parameters of effective intercultural interactions, which are viewed as a critical outcome variable for organizations. As noted by Levy et al. (2007), “the diversity of perspectives and the pervasive use of the concept 'Global mindset' have resulted in conceptual ambiguities, as well as contradictory empirical findings.” In their empirical investigation of global mindset, Javidan and Teagarden found a number of high intercorrelations among the key attributes identified, and although their factor structure resulted in only two, rather than three, factors, the three factors were kept to be used “to provide insight into an individual’s global mindset, and is thus useful for development and training purposes” (Javidan & Teagarden, 2010, p. 32). In their discussion, however, the authors also differentiated between two kinds of social capital, structural and relational. Structural social capital applies to more distal social relationships (e.g., a leader’s acquaintances or network connections), while relational social capital refers to more proximal relationships at work that benefit from interpersonal competence and emotional connection. Unfortunately, descriptive information distinguishing structural and relational aspects of social capital is limited. It is not clear how these dimensions manifest themselves for individuals in their workplace interactions, nor is this distinction captured in the measurement of global mindset. Furthermore, there is theoretical imprecision due to the tautological nature of the construct, as global mindset combines both predictor and criterion into the same construct. Social capital is defined both in terms of an individual’s qualities (i.e., predictors) as well as the individual’s associated relational and structural relationships (i.e., criteria). Conflating predictors and criteria may make limit the interpretation of the findings. The present study seeks to build on the

work of previous research in global mindset and to clarify this ambiguity by focusing on the criterion, and defining quality in lateral intercultural interactions occurring in the workplace context.

Global mindset has certainly contributed greatly to our understanding of intercultural competence, particularly for firm leaders who wish to exert outward influence and compete in the global marketplace. As globalization continues, however, firms may increase their chance of success in other ways. Rather than focusing on leaders' outward influence, instead organizations may turn inward to attend to the quality of relationships among nationally diverse employees within the company. Because of the increased national diversity within the firm, application of a more internal focus to intercultural relationships among employees may be merited to ensure cohesion, cooperation, and communication via quality interpersonal interactions to facilitate the firm's success. To be successful in the modern global context, individuals may need to influence (as well as be influenced by) business collaborators without overreliance on the traditional lines of authority as has been done in the past (Beechler & Javidan, 2007). The present study recognizes these shifts, considering both the quality of intercultural workplace interactions and from a lateral coworker, rather than top-down, point of view.

**Multicultural Personality.** Based on decades of research suggesting that personality is relatively stable and positively related to a variety of outcomes (Barrick & Mount, 1991, Hertz & Donovan 2000), multicultural personality attempts to specify the personality facets predictive of effectiveness across cultures. In this endeavor, it aims to redress lack of specificity to multicultural situations as was a concern with the Big Five personality framework, which is considered broad in nature (Hough, 1992; Schneider et al., 1996).



As a result, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (*MPQ*) was developed to measure five narrow traits with some items specific to intercultural situations (i.e., emotional stability, social initiative, open-mindedness, cultural empathy, and flexibility) suggested to predict success operating in environments characterized by cultural diversity (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Emotional stability reflects the degree to which one remains calm, even under stressful or unfamiliar situations (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer, 2013). Social initiative refers to an individual's tendency to initiate social interactions (Van der Zee et al., 2013). Open-mindedness reflects the degree to which one has an open and unbiased attitude with respect to cultural differences (Van der Zee et al., 2013). Empathizing with culturally different individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions is defined as cultural empathy (Van der Zee et al., 2013). Finally, flexibility captures a trait described as "interpreting novel situations as a positive challenge and adapting to these situations accordingly" (1: Van der Zee et al., 2013). These five traits make up multicultural personality. Successfully operating across cultures is operationalized in psychological outcomes and two performance outcomes, as discussed below.

Research on multicultural personality has focused mostly on its relation to psychological outcomes. Studies have suggested that multicultural personality positively relates to self-rated sociocultural adjustment for expatriates (Leong 2007, Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van der Zee, 2003), psychological well-being (Van der Zee et al.; 2003; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002; Van Oudenhoven et al., 2003), and mental health (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). In addition, one's multicultural personality has positively related to international inspirations (Leone et al. 2005, Van der

Zee & Brinkmann 2004, Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) as well as expatriate job satisfaction (Van Oudenhoven, 2000).

Studies examining multicultural personality and expatriate adjustment have replicated the positive relationship with participants from Western countries (including Netherlands, U.S., U.K., France) adjusting to Taiwan (Van Oudenhoven et al. 2003), from Western countries (U.S., Germany, U.K., France) adjusting to Japan (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012), and in one study with a varied student sample (Asia ( $N = 220$ ), South and Central America ( $N = 47$ ), Europe ( $N = 39$ ), the Middle East ( $N = 18$ ), Africa ( $N = 9$ ), North America ( $N = 5$ ), the Caribbean ( $N = 2$ ), and Australia ( $N = 1$ )) adjusting to the U.S. as part of study abroad programs (Yakunina Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovaca, & Elsayeda, 2012).

Multicultural personality associates positively with multicultural activities, such as self-reported number of languages spoken and number of friendships with individuals from differing cultural backgrounds, as well as international orientation and inspiration (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). The multicultural personality dimension of social initiative (i.e., the tendency to initiate social interactions) was the primary trait driving the positive correlation between multicultural personality and multicultural activities (Van der Zee et al., 2013; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000).

Importantly, while social initiative measures the tendency to initiate intercultural interactions, it does not define the quality of these interactions.

Lastly, research has demonstrated the connection between multicultural personality and two performance outcomes. One study found that multicultural personality significantly positively related to students' test grades when working in

culturally diverse teams (Van der Zee, Atsma, Brodbeck, 2004). In this study, the level of cultural diversity among student teams was manipulated, such that some teams had high levels of cultural diversity, whereas others had low levels of cultural diversity. In highly diverse teams, flexibility positively related to exam scores. Interestingly, in less diverse teams, the opposite relation was observed; flexibility negatively related to exam scores. This may suggest that those with higher flexibility as measured by the *MPQ* not only view new stimuli positively, but are motivated to succeed by novelty. Most items are reverse-coded, including, “Works according to a strict scheme” and “Functions best in a familiar setting” (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; 2001; Van der Zee et al., 2013). These items may suggest that individuals high on flexibility as measured by *MPQ* work best in teams characterized by low levels of routine and high levels of novelty.

A review of current literature examining the relations between multicultural personality and work-related outcomes such as expatriate social and work adjustment, international orientation, and job performance suggest that attention to workplace context and the culture in which relationships are built is needed. Consideration of context may influence both interpretation of previous research findings as well as inform the present study on intercultural relationship quality conceptualization and behaviors.

In terms of multicultural personality’s relation to workplace intercultural interactions, there is little evidence on which to base definitive conclusions. Intercultural interactions occurring in the workplace are increasingly common, with more than 244 million migrants in the world today (Trends in International Migrant Stock, 2015), and the prevalence of virtual work that is not limited by geographic location. Despite the extensive body of research on multicultural personality, the research has not clearly

defined what constitutes quality in intercultural relationships, or the behaviors that that facilitate these relationships.

At present, the items that are used to measure the dimensions of multicultural personality raise concerns of conceptual clarity. Two dimensions (i.e., flexibility and emotional stability) are almost entirely reverse-coded (emotional stability has one positively-coded item in the revised short-form scale; Van der Zee et al., 2013). The rationale for this decision is not clear from the research. Reverse-coding raises concerns of conceptual clarity for three important concerns (e.g., Weijters, B., Baumgartner, & Schillewaet, 2013). The primary reason for concern is that reverse-coded items may introduce unwanted variance into participant responding. It is unclear whether respondents truly understand the question, or if they miss the negation of the scale. Second, reverse-coding increases the cognitive load placed upon participants, making it more likely that items will be misinterpreted. For example, asking participants to endorse an item such as, “Is not easily hurt” (emotional stability), places additional interpretive burden on respondents. Third, reverse-coded items raise concerns regarding methodological effects that impact conceptual understanding. Reverse-coded items tend to load on a separate, method factor, where items cannot be related to one another theoretically, though recent iterations of a short form of the scale have improved upon this concern (Van der Zee et al., 2013).

While multicultural personality is useful as an indicator of general behavioral tendencies, the current model lacks conceptual clarity and adequate consideration of intercultural exchange quality. It is not clear in the research how intercultural

interactions are defined or the specific behaviors individuals enact to facilitate quality intercultural interactions.

**Cultural Intelligence.** Cultural intelligence (*CQ*) is defined as one's capacity to operate effectively in environments characterized by cultural diversity (Ang & Van Dyne 2008, Earley & Ang 2003). The model conceptualizes cultural intelligence as a type of intelligence, distinct from other types. In this way *CQ* was developed according to the multifactor conceptualization of intelligence (Sternberg & Detterman, 1986), and not according to general intelligence (i.e., Spearman's *g*; Spearman, 1904). Cultural intelligence (*CQ*) is comprised of four dimensions: metacognitive, knowledge (also called cognitive), behavioral, and motivational. *Metacognitive CQ* is the capacity an individual has to acquire and understand culturally relevant information (Earley and Ang 2003) as well as develop approaches for coping with challenges associated with cultural differences (Ng & Earley, 2006). *Knowledge CQ* is the capacity an individual has for understanding particular norms, practices, and customs in settings characterized as culturally diverse (Ward & Fischer, 2008) as well as familiarity with the processes through which the culture influences individual behavior within a particular society (Thomas, 2006). *Behavioral CQ* is "the capability of a person to enact his or her desired intended actions in a given cultural situation" (Earley & Ang, 2003, p. 91). Finally, *motivational CQ* is the tendency to focus as well as maintain mental effort to support effective functioning in environments characterized by cultural diversity (Earley & Ang, 2003).

In previous research on intercultural competence, *CQ* has received the most attention by far compared to similar constructs, such as global mindset and multicultural

personality. Research provides evidence for relationships between *CQ* and several individual level variables, including psychological, behavioral, and performance outcomes (Leung et al., 2009). Most of the psychological variables have been examined during expatriate assignments. These outcome variables include cross-cultural and psychological adjustment (Abdul Malek & Budhwar 2013, Ang et al. 2007, Gong & Fan 2006, Huff 2013, Lee & Sukoco 2010, Lin et al. 2012, Moon et al. 2012, Ramalu et al. 2012, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2006, Ward & Fischer 2008, Ward, Fischer, Zaid, & Hall, 2009, Wu & Ang 2011) as well as expatriate intention to complete a foreign assignment (Wu & Ang 2011). *CQ* has also been associated with higher psychological well-being (Ang et al., 2007; Ward, Wilson, & Fischer, 2011), less emotional exhaustion (Tay, Westman, & Chia, 2008), and lower culture shock in expatriate assignments (Chen et al., 2011). In terms of expatriate performance, task and contextual performance have been related to *CQ* in multiple studies (Abdul Malek & Budhwar, 2013; Ang et al., 2007; Chen, Kirkman, Farh, & Tangirala, 2010; Chen, Lin, & Sawangpattanakul, 2011; Chen et al., 2012; Duff, Tahbaz, & Chan, 2012; Nafei, 2013; Rockstuhl et al., 2013; Şahin, Gürbüz, Köksal, & Ercan, 2013; Ramalu et al., 2012; Wu & Ang, 2011). Previous research suggests *CQ* is positively related to expatriate performance because it facilitates adjustment, which frees up personal resources (i.e., lowers the impact of cognitive load) to be allocated to performance.

Although the studies summarized above discuss cultural intelligence as a predictor, its definition (i.e., one's capacity to operate effectively in environments characterized by cultural diversity; Ang & Van Dyne 2008, Earley & Ang 2003) convolutes the theoretical intention of the construct. Cultural intelligence, like global

mindset, combines both predictor and criterion into the same construct. While cultural intelligence research has provided critical insights for intercultural competence literature, there is significant theoretical as well as practical opportunity to understand individual characteristics (i.e., predictors) and the variety of ways to operationalize the capacity to operate effectively in environments characterized by cultural diversity (i.e., criteria) distinctly. The central contribution of the present research is to focus on what may be viewed as the primary target criterion in intercultural competence research, quality in the intercultural relationship. Cultural intelligence can be distinguished from intercultural coworker interaction quality in three primary ways.

Cultural intelligence, as the name implies, was conceptualized as a form of intelligence (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). More recently, Mor, Morris, and Joh (2013) discussed *CQ* as an individual difference variable reflective of cognitive abilities, and noted that it is not a set of skills to be developed. Cultural intelligence is not synonymous with intercultural relationship quality, though it could be a predictor. Despite the emphasis on cognitive ability in the conceptualization of cultural intelligence, the knowledge dimension includes items such as, “I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures,” “I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages,” and “I know the arts and crafts of other cultures” (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2007). Clearly, endorsement of these items may change as an individual learns more about other cultures. While these items may assess general cultural knowledge, they are not relevant to assessing quality of intercultural interactions among coworkers in global business organizations. Pertaining to behavioral *CQ*, individuals are also able to make behavioral changes in adapting to cross-cultural scenarios (Rehg,

Gundlach, & Grigorian, 2012). For example, the book, *Global Dexterity* (Molinsky, 2004), provides numerous, detailed accounts of individuals' behavioral changes during expatriate assignments. Molinsky recounts others' abilities to operate outside their *typical* zones of behavior (i.e., what is normal within one's native culture) and flex to behavior that is within their *zone of authenticity* (i.e., behavior that is new to you, but still feels authentic to the individual). While not specific to intercultural interaction quality in the workplace, cultural intelligence research does suggest that individuals can adapt their behavior to differing cross-cultural situations.

Second, *CQ* is not specific to the interactions occurring in the workplace, but is instead broader in nature. The items "I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture," "I know the arts and crafts of other cultures," and "I know the marriage systems of other cultures," all assess an individual's self-assessment in response to other national cultures. While these may facilitate adjustment to living in a different culture, these do not define quality of intercultural interactions among coworkers in the workplace, or the behaviors that facilitate quality. Importantly, the quality of intercultural workplace interactions may be clearer with consideration given to the situations inherent to the workplace context, such as communicating performance feedback to peers, meeting etiquette, forms of address, and divvying up responsibility among coworkers in joint projects or teams.

Third, the outcomes and correlations of cultural intelligence may also relate to quality intercultural relationships in the workplace, but they do not serve to directly define relationship quality among intercultural coworkers. For example, research in single culture samples suggests the importance influence coworkers have on employee



perceptions of supportive workplace environments, experienced emotional exhaustion, and the negative impact of work stress outside of time spent at work (Thompson, Kirk, & Brown, 2005). Cultural intelligence is also negatively related to emotional exhaustion in in expatriate assignments (Tay, Westman, & Chia, 2008). In addition, findings relying on Western samples suggest the impact of “turnover contagion,” in which employees’ intentions to stay or leave the organization influence their coworkers’ intentions to stay or leave (Felps, Mitchell, Hekman, Lee, Holtom, & Harman, 2009). Similarly, cultural intelligence is positively related to expatriate intention to complete a foreign assignment (Wu & Ang 2011). Thus, quality intercultural interactions may be an important link to explaining these relationships, but what defines intercultural relationship quality among coworkers is yet to be understood.

### **Expatriate Adjustment**

Expatriate adjustment has been positively related to job performance, above and beyond the effect of job satisfaction (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005). Literature on cross-cultural adjustment has relied on a three-part framework consisting of general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment (Black, 1988; Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). General adjustment refers to the expatriate’s overall sense of comfort in his or her new cultural environment. Specifically, this reflects the expatriate’s level of comfort with respect to the host country’s weather, food, residential conditions, shopping, and healthcare (Black, 1988). Interaction adjustment is the degree to which an expatriate feels comfortable interacting with culturally different employees, both inside and outside of the workplace (Black, 1988). Lastly, work adjustment encapsulates an expatriate’s level of comfort with regard to work tasks, meeting others’

expectations, and general ability to perform in the role (Black, 1988; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, et al., 2005).

In contrast intercultural competence constructs just reviewed, expatriate adjustment is clearly defined as an outcome variable, and is not a set of individual characteristics. Expatriate adjustment's relevance to the present study is clear in discussion focused on two of its dimensions, work adjustment and interaction adjustment. A number of correlates influence work adjustment and interaction adjustment in unique, and at times unexpected, ways (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). For example, host country language fluency was not related to work adjustment, despite earlier assertions (e.g., Jordan & Cartwright, 1998) regarding the crucial nature of workplace communication skills for expatriate assignments. Upon further analysis, Bhaskar-Shrinivas and colleagues discovered that some countries were more accepting of language differences compared to other countries. A significant, positive effect was observed when a nonnative English speaker was an expatriate in the context of a native English-speaking country (e.g., U.S., U.K., Australia). In other words, expatriates may struggle in terms of work adjustment more when they are not a native English speaker in a native English-speaking country.

Another counterintuitive finding emerged with regard to previous expatriate assignment. Bhaskar-Shrinivas and colleagues (2005) found no meaningful relation between previous expatriate assignment and adjustment of any form (i.e., general, work, or interaction). In considering the typical measures for previous overseas experience, this finding becomes clearer. Previous expatriate assignments are typically only measured quantitatively (e.g., number of countries visited), and do little to account for

transferability from previous to current assignments. In other words, the context in which the experience is acquired may be a better determinant when considering adjustment in future assignments.

Personal characteristics were also examined. Relational skills (discussed in more detail below) had a substantial impact on interaction adjustment ( $\rho = .53$ ), as well as some effect on work adjustment ( $\rho = .15$ ). In addition, self-efficacy was related to work adjustment ( $\rho = .30$ ) and interaction adjustment ( $\rho = .21$ ).

Job factors that demonstrated substantial relations with expatriate adjustment included role clarity, role discretion, and role conflict. In the case of each job factor, the strongest relationship occurred with work adjustment ( $\rho = .57, .45, -.30$ ; respectively). In terms of interaction adjustment, role clarity ( $\rho = .24$ ), role discretion ( $\rho = .20$ ), and role conflict ( $\rho = -.14$ ) all had noteworthy effects.

Forms of social support had considerable effects for adjustment outcomes. Coworker support (i.e., social support from coworkers who provide information about cultural norms and behavior appropriate for their work context) was a substantial determinant of both interaction and work adjustment ( $\rho = .22$  in both cases). In addition, spouse adjustment had considerable influence on interaction adjustment ( $\rho = .43$ ) and on work adjustment ( $\rho = .26$ ).

Lastly, length of time for expatriate assignments was suggested to be an area for further research, based on the study's findings that expatriate adjustment tends to flux over time (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Specifically, because less than 5% of expatriate research has adopted a longitudinal model, we know little about the influence

that length of time may have on expatriate assignments. Assignments that are designed to be shorter in nature may dissuade expatriates from building social networks in the workplace, as these ties will be short-lived. This may stifle both adjustment and performance due to the underlying resistance to learn aspects of the host culture.

In addition, more research originating from work in educational psychology has investigated the role of goal orientation in expatriate adjustment. Adopting a learning goal orientation suggests that an individual is motivated to develop by overcoming challenges or by mastering difficult situations (Dweck, 1986). Also beneficial is the adoption of a proving goal orientation, in which an individual is motivated to gain favorable judgments from others by proving one's competence. In contrast, individuals exhibiting avoidance goal orientation seek to hide or evade situations in which one might be viewed as incompetent. Learning goal orientation as well as proving goal orientation have positively related to both work and interaction adjustment (Takeuchi, Lepak, Wang, & Takeuchi, 2007). Specifically, learning goal orientation had the strongest effects on both work adjustment ( $\beta = .28, p < .01$ ) and interaction adjustment ( $\beta = .27, p < .01$ ) compared to the relations observed between proving goal orientation and work adjustment ( $\beta = .23, p < .01$ ) and interaction adjustment ( $\beta = .20, p < .01$ ). Importantly, the adoption of a particular goal orientation is not reflected only by individual differences, but may also be influenced by a particular situation or set of circumstances (Chandler 2008; Duda & Nicholls, 1992; Dweck, 1989; Martocchio, 1994). In other words, the context in which the expatriate assignment takes place in combination with individual characteristics of the expatriate may interact to influence adoption of goal orientation type, and thus impact work and interaction adjustment. To date, however,

research has not considered the role of context in understanding expatriate work and interaction adjustment. Expatriate intentions in workplace intercultural interactions, as reflected by their goal orientation (e.g., to learn, to prove themselves, to avoid appearing incompetent), may have important influence on their successful work and interaction adjustment outcomes.

The present study is supported by calls in expatriate adjustment literature for qualitative research to better understand intercultural interactions. Throughout their meta-analysis on expatriate adjustment, Bhaskar-Shrinivas and colleagues (2005) repeatedly emphasized the need for research to supplement the prevalence of quantitative research with context-based, qualitative study regarding intercultural interactions. This is the result of several limitations in the current literature. First, the term “relational skills” is used frequently without clarity or unity in the meaning of this construct. Although a tripartite framework for expatriate adjustment has been suggested (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003), these meta-analytic findings suggest conceptual overlap among dimensions. Work adjustment (i.e., an expatriate’s level of comfort with regard to work tasks, meeting others’ expectations, and general ability to perform in the role) and interaction adjustment (i.e., the degree to which an expatriate feels comfortable interacting with culturally different employees, *both inside and outside of the workplace*) are not orthogonal dimensions, theoretically or empirically (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012). Ignoring the influence of workplace interactions in work adjustment is problematic, as the importance of relational skills in intercultural interactions for workplace outcomes has been emphasized in research and in practice (e.g., Makela, 2007). In addition, intercultural interactions in the workplace are

no longer exclusive to expatriate assignments. Adjustment to intercultural interactions is happening in new contexts, such as via communication mediums including Skype, email, phone, online trainings, and other forms of virtual work. Thus, increased theoretical precision and conceptual clarity might result from contextual, qualitative research in the area of workplace intercultural interactions.

In addition, the expatriate adjustment scale items may benefit from increased conceptual clarity, particularly in consideration of workplace interactions. Adjustment items are measured in a self-report format, with participants' level of agreement (5= *Very well adjusted*, 1= *Not at all adjusted*). Work adjustment is measured via the following items, "Performance standards and expectations," "General job responsibilities," and "Specific job responsibilities" (Black & Stevens, 1988, 1989; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). While intended to be broad in nature, the level of ambiguity present within these items lend themselves to be subject to a high degree of variance in interpretation. Interaction adjustment is measured in items such as, "Interacting with [cultural group, e.g., Japanese] outside of work," "Interacting with [cultural group, e.g., Japanese] on a day-to-day basis," and "Entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities." These items also leave a great deal of interpretation up to the participant. Most importantly, however, the two dimensions are not integrated and do not consider the influence of one another. As noted, coworkers may be an important component of expatriate adjustment. Clear understanding of quality intercultural relationships among coworkers therefore is warranted for continued theoretical and practical utility in the study of expatriate adjustment.

Previous research has viewed expatriate adjustment as an important precursor to expatriate performance. Indeed, research has demonstrated the positive relationships between work adjustment and overall performance ( $\rho = .39$ ) and interaction adjustment and performance ( $\rho = .22$ ; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). In their meta-analysis, Bhaskar-Shrinivas and colleagues attempted to further parse out relationships between (work and interaction) expatriate adjustment and relationship-based performance. Meta-analytic findings indicated positive relationships between work adjustment and relationship-based performance ( $\rho = .29$ ) and interaction adjustment and relationship-based performance ( $\rho = .33$ ). While these results may be interpreted as promising regarding the effect of adjustment on relationship-based performance, operationalization of relationship-based performance emerged as a prominent concern. The authors noted the “lack of consensus about the specific content of this construct,” and referred to relationship-based performance loosely by including studies that used a “somewhat broad characterization of relational skills,” concluding that future research should seek to supplement quantitative measures “with qualitative, context-based measures” (274; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Together, the implication is clear that research is needed to clarify the meaning of quality intercultural relations and better understand what may facilitate those interactions.

### **Comparison of Intercultural Competence and Other Constructs**

Intercultural competence constructs have been conceptually, and in many cases empirically, distinguished from similar constructs, including emotional intelligence (Lin, Chen, & Song, 2012; Rockstuhl, Seiler, Ang, Van Dyne, & Annen, 2010), self-efficacy (McNab & Worthley, 2010), and political skill (Leslie & Gelfand, 2012). While such

constructs have demonstrated meaningful connections with intercultural competence constructs (e.g., as antecedents, correlates, or proposed outcomes), previous research suggests discriminant validity (Rockstuhl et al., 2010). In each case, the primary differentiating factor is intercultural competency's specific focus on defining an individual's competence in a culture different from one's own. Previous research suggests that it is critical to acknowledge the distinct responsibilities employees have working in culturally diverse compared to native contexts. Specifically, previous research by Rockstuhl and colleagues (2010) suggests that employees working in culturally diverse work environments (as compared with those working culturally homogenous work environments) must, "(1) adopt a multicultural perspective rather than a country-specific perspective; (2) balance local and global demands which can be contradictory; and (3) work with multiple cultures simultaneously rather than working with one dominant culture" (p. 826). Empirical findings bolster the importance of these differences, suggesting that emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence are complementary, yet distinct. Rockstuhl and colleagues (2010) found that emotional intelligence predicted general leadership effectiveness, yet it did not predict cross-cultural leadership effectiveness. In addition, cultural intelligence predicted cross-cultural leadership effectiveness, yet it did not predict general leadership effectiveness. Concerning a comparison of self-efficacy and intercultural competence, previous research suggests that self-efficacy is distinct from, but an important predictor of, cultural intelligence development. Specifically, self-efficacy displayed a moderate correlation with cultural intelligence, indicating a meaningful but distinct relationship. Lastly, political skill has been offered as a potential outcome of higher intercultural competence,



though it has not yet been examined empirically. For example, a study of Japanese managers found that influence tactics (e.g., reason, authority, sanctions, and reciprocity) were used more frequently by the managers with their Canadian subordinates than with their fellow Japanese subordinates (Rao & Hashimoto, 1996). While this study offers insights regarding use of influence tactics, it does not offer information about their effectiveness in the given cultural context. Leslie and Gelfand have suggested that when influence tactics are attempted, cultural intelligence may be an important determinant of their success, particularly when cultural differences are great (2012). In sum, constructs such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and political skill are related to intercultural competence constructs (e.g., cultural intelligence), but remain distinct due to intercultural competency's emphasis on the unique challenges inherent in heterogeneous cultural contexts.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory may be considered the most foundational theory in the examination of workplace relationships. Social exchange theory asserts that interpersonal interactions among coworkers are interdependent, meaning that a target's actions are influenced by the behaviors of an actor (Blau, 1964). Importantly, these interactions do not occur in isolation from one another, but form the basis of workplace relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Specifically, the interdependent interactions between coworkers have the potential to result in high quality relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

At its core, social exchange theory explicates a process by which individuals form relationships. The first step in the social exchange process occurs when an actor, either a supervisor or coworker in the organizational setting, initiates exchange by treating a target in a positive or negative manner (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004; Farrell & Rusbult, 1981; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988). The second step is a response from the target. The target may choose to respond to the actor with good and/or bad behavior (Eisenberger, Cotterell, & Marvel, 1987; Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960). In addition, social exchange theory suggests that the target's actions will reciprocate the behavior of the actor, meaning that targets will reply in a like manner of either positive or negative treatment to "match" the behavior exhibited by the actor. While simple, the aforementioned process is the foundation for explaining the development of relationships (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017).

Social exchange theory has described relationships as economic and/or social in nature. Economic and social exchanges are high-level distinctions that research has

applied both as two opposing ends of the same spectrum (Lin, 1999), as well as two distinct types of relationships (e.g., Foa & Foa, 1974, 1980). Broadly, however, social exchange theory describes lower quality relationships as more economic in nature and higher quality relationships as more social in nature. Economic exchanges are described as short-term, quid pro quo, and impersonal. Social exchanges are described as long-term, loosely defined, and more personal. Relationships are further influenced by the kinds of resources that are exchanged. Early theorists suggested that resources shared in an exchange are considered along dimensions of particularism-universalism and concreteness-symbolism (Foa & Foa, 1974, 1980). Particularism-universalism refers to the source (i.e., the actor) of the resource in terms of its worth to the target. For example, love is highly particularistic, while money's value is equal regardless of the provider. Concreteness-symbolism suggests that resources differ in terms of how tangible or specific (i.e., concrete) the worth of a resource is to a target. Resources that are more symbolic in nature "convey a meaning that goes beyond objective worth" (Cropanzo & Mitchell, 2005, p. 880). Research suggests that resources exchanged in particularistic and symbolic ways are more likely to result in socioemotional exchanges, while economic exchanges are often more universal and concrete (Shore, Tetrick, & Barksdale, 2001).

Although social exchange theory is typified as a singular conceptual model, it may be more accurately described as a related collection of theories (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theories share many characteristics. As outlined above, social exchange theories describe interdependent interactions between two or more social actors (Mitchell, Cropanzano, & Quisenberry,

2012). These interactions involve a tangible or less intangible exchange of resources. The norm of reciprocity suggests that recipients (i.e., targets) of the actor's behavior will respond in a like manner by "repaying" good or bad deeds (Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960). The family of social exchange theories suggests that the quality of exchanges in aggregate define the relationship between the actor and the target (Blau, 1964). At a general level, economic (i.e., lower quality) exchanges tend to involve short-term quid pro quo exchanges, while social (i.e., higher quality) exchange tends to be more open-ended (Organ, 1988, 1990).

Two theories guided by the framework of social exchange theory serve to explain the quality of lateral workplace relationships in the United States. Coworker exchange quality (Sherony & Green, 2002) and high quality connections (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003) examine quality in coworker relationships. While neither of these theories have been considered in an intercultural relationship context, they may serve as theoretically interesting bases by which to compare how quality is defined by intercultural colleagues in lateral workplace relationships.

### **Coworker Exchange Quality**

Extant research on intercultural exchange has been largely confined to leader-subordinate relationships. While leader-member exchanges are critical to study for multinational business organizations (Pellegrini, 2015; Pellegrini, & Scandura, 2006; Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, & Shore, 2012), consideration of coworker relationships in their own right is warranted. Research suggests that "peers make the place," and coworkers have important impacts on work-related outcomes, such as effectiveness, role withdrawal, work attitudes, and role perceptions (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). While

there may be some overlap due to the dyadic nature of both relationships (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012; Tse & Ashkanasy, 2015, Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000), employees may value a different set of qualities or behaviors to facilitate peer-peer relationships compared to leader-member relationships. For example, subordinates may expect financial rewards (e.g., increased salary) or promotions from a leader as a result of a high quality leader exchange relationship. In contrast, coworkers may define quality relationships with collaboration (Kolfshoten, Niederman, Briggs, & De Vreede, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006) or knowledge-sharing (Sias, 2005) in high quality exchanges with other coworkers. In addition, the rise of interdependent, collaborative tasks (Kolfshoten, et al. 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006) and research suggesting effective partnerships among those of nationally diverse backgrounds may facilitate unique benefits (e.g., creativity; Homan et al., 2015) together emphasize the practical need to study lateral relationships within organizations. Researchers have also suggested that coworkers have substantial influence upon perceptions of workplace culture, and provide distinctive sources for social support and organizational commitment (e.g., Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002). Indeed, research recognizes the importance of studying lateral relationships as a prominent way in which individuals exchange workplace resources such as support, information, and guidance (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Schneider, 1987).

Despite the important impacts coworkers may have on a milieu of individual and organizational outcomes, our understanding of how quality exchange is defined or facilitated in intercultural workplace relationships remains unclear. For example, the coworker exchange scale has been tested exclusively using participants native to the U.S. (i.e., Chicago and Eastern Iowa; Sherony & Green, 2002). Extending beyond the

differences between coworker and leader exchanges, research needs to address the potential for additional variance due to the intercultural nature of coworker exchanges (i.e., exchanges between members of differing national cultural backgrounds).

Preliminary research suggests that consideration of intercultural exchange quality may be particularly important, as exchange quality may be defined differently depending partly upon cultural norms. For example, one study found variation in the norms adopted in coworker interactions based on a sample of U.S., Chinese, German, and Spanish employees of a multinational bank (Morris, Podolny, & Sullivan, 2008). The authors suggested that varying interpersonal norms among national cultures may result in different models by which coworker interactions are defined and facilitated. For example, German coworker relationships were characterized by higher levels of job-required communication as well as lower level of affective closeness compared to coworker relationships in other cultures studied. Relationships among Chinese coworkers were characterized as comparatively more filial for those who were in positions higher in the organization or higher tenure. In other words, the norm of filial responsibility was significantly more common in coworker relationships in China than in the U.S., Germany, or Spain (Morris et al., 2008). Although not considered in this study of Chinese coworkers, *guanxi* (i.e., “an informal, particularistic personal connection between two individuals who are bounded by an implicit psychological contract to follow the social norm of *guanxi*,” Chen & Chen, 2004: 306) may be an additional important element to consider relative to Chinese coworker relationships. While it is clear this study suggests notable differences in the characterization of monocultural coworker relationships, it does not address how the relationship may differ if coworkers belonged

to differing national backgrounds (e.g., a German coworker and a Chinese coworker).

While there are likely cultural moderators of relationship quality, the research does not speak to the commonality among cultural difference. In other words, the research has not examined how coworkers define quality of a relationship when cultural differences are present, or the behaviors individuals enact to promote relationship quality among these perceived differences.

### **High Quality Connections**

High quality connections (*HQCs*) research asserts that the increasingly interdependent nature of the workplace alters the ways in which work occurs. For example, due to the consistent rise of the protean career, employees are drawn more to relationships that serve to enhance their professional growth and development (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996; Ragins & Kram, 2003). Due to the importance of relationships in the workplace, organizational imperatives are “grounded more on social and relational rather than economic bases” (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003, p. 7). The importance of workplace relationships has important implications for achieving the individual development needed to sustain organizations, as well as how organizations elicit loyalty and commitment from employees (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

*HQCs* refer to positive relationships at work defined by three key dimensions of emotional carrying capacity, tensility, and connectivity. Emotional carrying capacity defines relationships that are able to endure the authentic expression of emotions of both positive and negative valence (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). An individual feels safe in displaying a range of emotions in a *HQC*, “I can say anything to Art and he will be understanding. I am able to get frustration and anger out in a more constructive fashion

with him. We do that for each other” (Kram & Isabella, 1985, p.121). Tensility references the intuitive, but also evidence-based notion that a relationship is critically defined by the individuals’ response, management, and resolution of conflict (Reis, 2001; Gottman, 2001). Specifically, tensility marks a relationship when the relationship is able to withstand difficult circumstances, such as work stress or emotional strain. The relationship is not only able to “bounce back” after encountering a setback, but during the difficulty, individuals adapt to accommodate one another. The last dimension, connectivity, is based in complex adaptive systems theory (Losada & Heaphy, 2004). Applied to an HQC, complex adaptive systems theory suggests that connections of higher quality tend to dissolve attractors that close possibilities, and evolve attractors that encourage new possibilities. In other words, connectivity marks *HQCs* as relationships that are open and accepting of ideas for suggestions and improvements generated by its members.

In addition to these characteristics exemplifying the relationship, *HQCs* are defined by each individual’s subjective experiences. Specifically, individuals in *HQCs* are more likely to experience vitality, felt mutuality, and positive regard at work. The vitality dimension suggests that individuals with *HQCs* are more likely to experience positive, energizing feelings at work (Quinn & Dutton, 2002). Felt mutuality is the individual’s perception of shared vulnerability, openness, and participation in the connection. Lastly, positive regard refers feeling known, respected, and cared for in a connection.

While the subjective experiences of vitality, felt mutuality, and positive regard rely on the individual’s perceptions, research suggests they have important organizational



implications, such as increase employees' capacity to think and create (Carmeli, Dutton, & Hardin, 2015) as well as increasing capacity to adapt and be resilient at work (Stephens, Carmeli, Heaphy, Spreitzer, & Dutton, 2013). Therefore, it is individual perceptions of relationship quality that are paramount for achieving desirable organizational outcomes. Because relationships are culturally embedded (Gergen, 1994), the way relationship quality is defined and what employees value is socially constructed (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). Intercultural relationships occur between individuals of differing national cultures, and may occur in a workplace context that hinders or helps the development of relationship quality. While innumerable combinations of these three culture variables (i.e., culture of coworker 1, culture of coworker 2, and culture of workplace context) is possible, the present study seeks to pioneer the collective effort for research to engage in a systematic investigation of intercultural relationship quality. The present study sets the groundwork to examine intercultural relationship quality with a focus on lateral relationships from the perspectives of employees.

### **Research Questions**

Constructs defining intercultural competence focus on individual knowledge, mindset, motivations, cognitive ability, and personality, among others, to account for individual effectiveness in intercultural pursuits. Effectiveness has been operationalized a number of ways, including psychological, behavioral, and performance outcomes. In some constructs, predictors and criterion have been combined into the same construct. While these constructs have been critical in intercultural competence research, there is significant theoretical as well as practical opportunity to understand coworker intercultural relationship quality (i.e., criterion) distinctly. Common among existing

frameworks, intercultural competence constructs do not consider the unique aspect of social exchange quality in the workplace, as its conceptualization may vary by members of different cultures and in the variety of workplace contexts in which intercultural interactions occur. Intercultural exchange quality is critical to understand, as an employee may be competent in terms of technical expertise, positively impacting outcomes such as job performance, but may not possess skills to facilitate intercultural interactions in a particular context. In other words, current constructs do not suitably define intercultural relational behavior or the quality of intercultural relationships, which may impact less tangible but equally important business outcomes, such as knowledge-sharing (Sias, 2005), creativity (Homan, Buengeler, Eckhoff, van Ginkel, & Voelpel, 2015), or organizational commitment of coworkers (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002). Thus, it is critical to tease apart relational skills and understand these separately from the rest of intercultural competence. Although particular dimensions (or in some cases, individual items) of the constructs discussed aim to measure relational skills that would enhance intercultural interactions, a definition of social exchange quality suitable for the workplace context is not provided. Thus, consideration of the literature on both intercultural competence as well as social exchange theory may provide a valuable framework to begin defining coworker intercultural exchange quality.

*Research Question 1.* What defines a high quality intercultural coworker relationship?

*Research Question 2.* What behaviors do individuals enact to facilitate quality in intercultural coworker relationships?

### Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, a mixed methods design with an emphasis on qualitative data will be presented as the appropriate approach to inform the research questions above. Second, the implementation of the methods (e.g., construction of interview protocol, use of scales developed in previous research) will be discussed. Principles of grounded theory methodology will guide collection of observations (e.g., participant and content sampling) as well as qualitative analyses (e.g., constant comparison, microanalysis, axial coding, selective coding). Lastly, integration of qualitative and quantitative data (e.g., triangulation) will be discussed. Through the accounts provided by individuals' experiences in intercultural interactions, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of intercultural exchanges among peers in the workplace.

#### Research Design

In the social sciences, researchers strive to understand the complexity of ideas, thoughts, and meanings of the individuals studied. Despite the complexity of human nature, the methods used to understand such phenomena are often criticized as only eliciting superficial data. One of the most commonly cited challenges in psychology research today is the overreliance upon Likert-based survey tools (Dunning, Heath, & Suls, 2005; Rogelberg, 2012, Spector, 1994; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) and underreliance on qualitative methodology, with calls for research to utilize mixed methods studies (e.g., Erez, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rogelberg, 2012). With technological advances such as Mechanical Turk, Survey Monkey Audience, and Qualtrics Panelists, participant data via online survey methods has become increasingly accessible to researchers. While survey methodology may be convenient for the

researcher, the quality of data gleaned from designs exclusively reliant upon Likert-based surveys can be compromised during data collection in several ways, such as distractions during participants' survey completion, failure to read directions carefully, and careless responding, among others (Huang, Curran, Keeney, Poposki, & DeShon, 2012; McGrath et al., 2010). Furthermore, it can be challenging for the researcher to assess the degree to which these extraneous variables impact the data (Huang et al., 2011; McGrath et al., 2010). Lastly, without the collection of qualitative data, the researcher faces hidden difficulty in interpretation of Likert-based survey data, due to its ordinal nature. For example, although the differences between the ratings of 1 and 2 and the ratings of 2 and 3 are equal numerically, there may be qualitatively meaningful differences not captured using numeric scales. Despite the known limitations of relying *exclusively* on such measures (Rogelberg, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 1986), Likert-based survey tools have been the norm for the measurement of relationship quality (Sherony & Green, 2002) and for the measurement of intercultural competence constructs. One innovative exception to the survey measurement in intercultural competence research is the development of a multimedia intercultural situational judgment test (iSJT) (see Rockstuhl, Ang, Ng, Lievens, Van Dyne, 2013a; Rockstuhl, Presbitero, Ng, 2013b; Rockstuhl et al., in press). In this measure, participants' performance is assessed after completing the iSJT. Using the iSJT, cultural intelligence predicted supervisor ratings of task performance three months after completing the iSJT in a sample of Filipino offshoring professionals (Rockstuhl et al., 2013b). Additionally, in two distinct samples (university seniors and employees in multicultural teams), iSJT measured cultural intelligence predicted both peer ratings of task performance and interpersonal helping (Rockstuhl et al., 2013a). In

these studies, self-reported cultural intelligence predicted outcomes over and above the iSJT (Rockstuhl et al., 2013a; 2013b). These findings suggest that using different measures to assess the same construct may provide both complementary as well as unique information, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the construct or theory. Numerous researchers have called for the collection of qualitative data to deepen our understanding of such complex phenomena as intercultural interactions in the workplace (e.g., Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Leung et al., 2014).

While all methods of data collection bring with them certain limitations, the use of multiple methods helps to alleviate some of the disadvantages associated with using only one type (Green & Caracelli, 1997). Use of mixed methods was helpful in light of the present study's goal to advance theory in both intercultural competence as well as in coworker relationship quality. Specifically, the present study relied upon a concurrent, mixed methods design with an emphasis on qualitative data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009). A concurrent triangulation design with an emphasis on the qualitative data collected was leveraged in the current study. A visual depiction of the study design is presented in Figure 1 (Creswell, Clark, Gutman, & Hanson, & 2003; Morse, 1991; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird, & McCormick, 1992).

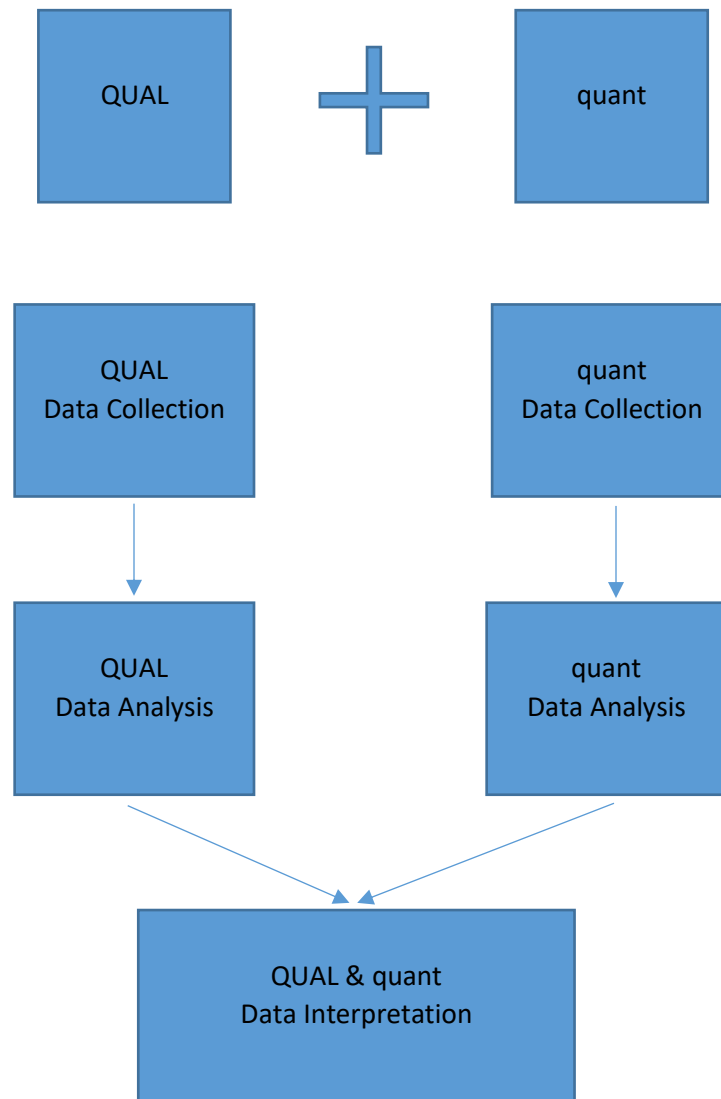


Figure 1: Concurrent Triangulated Design. (Adapted from Creswell et al., 2003)

Concurrent triangulation is appropriate when the study aligns with the following four criteria (Creswell et al., 2003): First, the qualitative and quantitative data are collected concurrently, or at about the same time during the research project. In other words, one set of data collection does not inform the other; they are used concurrently in addressing the study's research questions. Second, both qualitative and quantitative data are important for addressing the research questions in the study. Third, the qualitative and quantitative data are considered together in either the analysis phase or in the interpretation phase, but not in earlier phases such as data collection. Keeping the data collection separate enables true triangulation through two distinct methods addressing different components of the same research question. Finally, a grounded theory perspective informs the decisions made during data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell et al., 2003).

The goal of the present research was to develop a substantive theory to understand how participants define quality in intercultural coworker relationships by uncovering the meaning, process, and understanding according to participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009). Grounded theory was used to develop a substantive theory to provide theoretical explanation for a particular phenomenon (intercultural coworker relationship quality) within a defined context (the workplace; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Additionally, the study was well-suited to leverage a concurrent triangulation design, as the study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data. Grounded theory guided the methods by which qualitative data was collected, analyzed, and developed into substantive theory, supplemented by quantitative survey findings. Historically, there has been a lack of research integrating qualitative and quantitative data in grounded theory studies (Pratt &

Bonaccio, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1994), despite the complementary view originally touted by Glaser and Strauss in its conceptualization: “We believe that each form of data is useful for both verification and generation of theory, whatever the primacy of its emphasis...In many instances, both forms of data are necessary” (1967, p. 17-18). Given the purpose of the present study is to address open-ended research questions regarding how quality intercultural coworker relationships are defined and facilitated, qualitative data will be the primary way in which the research questions are addressed. Quantitative data supplemented understanding of the qualitative findings, and provided a way to compare the findings of the current study with previous research on coworker exchange quality.

An important component across types of qualitative designs is the use of a purposeful sample, in contrast with a random sample common in quantitative studies. To illuminate the research questions under investigation, the present study leveraged a purposeful sample to focus on participants with cross-cultural coworker relationships of high quality. Second, participants had to fulfill specific criteria to be considered appropriate for the study. Finally, in alignment with grounded theory methodology, theoretical sampling was used to inform data collection (see Participant Selection section).

Data collection methods in the present study leveraged one-on-one semi-structured interviews with a protocol developed for the current study as well as quantitative surveys comprised of scales developed in previous research (see Procedure & Data Collection section). A semi-structured interview approach was selected to allow for a method that retained a level of flexibility helpful for accommodating the variance in



depth as well as breadth participants may demonstrate in their initial responses (Scott & Garner, 2013). At the same time, the predetermined consideration of structure allows the researcher to assess the degree to which constructs and their related dimensions inform understanding of the research questions. It engenders comparability by ensuring interviewees answer a similar set of questions in each interview (Scott & Gardner, 2013). Thus, a semi-structured design permits the researcher to provide clear direction in the interview without constraining the information offered by the participant (Bryman, 2001). In the semi-structured interview approach, the researcher is able to determine categories addressing each research question through the answers provided by respondents (Scott & Gardner, 2013). This approach is ideal in the case of the present study, as it affords the opportunity for the researcher to falsify the relevance of current constructs and dimensions included in the quantitative surveys developed in previous research (i.e., intercultural competence and social exchange) as well as identify new categories as they emerge.

In qualitative studies that leverage grounded theory, data analysis is inductive as well as deductive and comparative (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009). Beginning phases of analysis are inductive and enable the researcher to understand in great detail the meaning participants ascribe to their experiences, how they interpret those experiences, and how their worlds are constructed (Chenail, Duffy, St. George, & Wulff, 2009). Preliminary concepts are deductively compared against new data (i.e., provided in additional interviews) to build out, modify, refine, or combine concepts. In addition, the present study's application of a concurrent design with both qualitative and quantitative data facilitated triangulation of categories developed in the present study in comparison with

previous research on coworker relationships (see Data Analysis section). Resultant findings are richly descriptive and presented as categories to address the research questions. Categories are defined by their properties (i.e., attributes that qualify subcategories and therefore categories and differentiate them from one another; Strauss & Corbin, 2015) and dimensions of those properties (i.e., the range of a property's variation; Strauss & Corbin, 2015).

### **Sampling Strategy and Participants**

The following section explains the rationale and strategy employed to initially select participants, outlines the sampling strategy to proceed on theoretical grounds (i.e., as appropriate for grounded theory), and describes the resultant sample.

**Participant selection.** In an effort to simultaneously produce transferable findings as well as isolate the phenomenon of interest (i.e., quality in intercultural coworker relationships) in the current study, certain participant characteristics were held constant to the degree that the researcher was able. Specifically, preferred participants were derived from multinational organizations within the technology industry. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the technology industry is used to describe organizations with “high concentrations of workers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) occupations” (Wolf & Terrell, 2016). Organizations in the technology industry are further defined as those whose profitability is driven by development of software, electronics manufacturing, or other services and manufactured goods powered by the field of information technology (Wolf & Terrell, 2016). An employee is almost certain to interact with coworkers within his or her own industry. Thus, industry may be practically useful characteristics to keep homogeneous

in the sample to achieve transferable findings. Purposeful limitation of the variance in this characteristic may also serve to reduce extraneous noise that could compromise the findings' ability to describe a quality intercultural relationship (i.e., through the identification of concepts in the data). The work context (i.e., technology industry) in which ICORs took place was specified with the goal of achieving clearer, more consistent findings to describe quality in intercultural relationships. In contrast, other participant characteristics were allowed to vary to increase external validity. Participant age, race, gender, and culture were allowed to vary freely across participants. Although these participant characteristics could moderate perceptions of relationship quality, some types of variation may be more desirable than others. An employee is almost certain to interact with both male and female coworkers of varying ages and with a plethora of cultural backgrounds in the global workforce. Efforts to reduce variation in these participant characteristics were not only unfeasible, but unhelpful to produce externally valid findings.

To illuminate the research questions of interest, the present study leveraged a purposeful sample. In contrast with random sampling, purposeful sampling was appropriate for the design of the present study for four reasons (Marshall, 1996). First, random sampling is inappropriate when the study involves (relative to most quantitative studies) a small number of participants. In small samples, the sampling error would likely be too large. Second, given the complex requirements of the study's participants (discussed later in this section), it would have been difficult to select a truly random sample based on these parameters. Third, "random sampling is likely to produce a representative sample only if the research characteristics are normally distributed within

the population” (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). Specifically, the present study leveraged the approach of intensity sampling (i.e., “information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely, but not extremely, such that they are common but intense experiences,” Patton, 2002, p. 234). As a form of purposeful sampling, intensity aims to address experiences of a phenomenon toward one end of the spectrum (e.g., high or low, good or bad, success or failure). Thus, intensity qualifies the phenomenon of interest by focusing specifically on understanding high quality ICORs (rather than ICORs of varying quality). This enabled the researcher to purposefully select an informative sample suited to address the research purpose. The present study sought to understand high quality intercultural coworker relationships. Therefore, the study purposefully aimed to study experiences that are “intense” as described here, and not expected to be normally distributed within the population of intercultural work relationships. Fourth, primarily qualitative research such as the present study recognizes that some informants are more helpful than others, and targeted participants who were recommended by Human Resources or colleagues to possess the insights and introspective nature of individuals with high quality ICORs.

To identify candidates for participation, two processes were leveraged. First, the initial pool of potential participants was identified. To generate the initial list of candidates for participation, several U.S. multinational organizations in the technology industry, their affiliates, and individual employees were consulted to provide access to potential participants. Using her personal and professional network, the researcher identified a target list of multinational organizations as well as internationally experienced individuals who were well-suited to offer voluntary participation to select

employees or associates. In this way, the initial pool of potential participants was generated. Second, in accordance with grounded theory methodology, the concepts (i.e., tentative theoretical categories) that emerged from initial interviews were used to inform subsequent data collection in a process called theoretical sampling. Described as the “most misunderstood strategy” in grounded theory, “theoretical sampling means sampling for development of a theoretical category, not sampling for population representation” (Charmaz, 2012, p. 3). Contrary to other sampling techniques, theoretical sampling occurs *after* the first stage of data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Theoretical sampling provides direction to data collection as data is collected. Theoretical sampling is used to guide data collection (i.e., content and/or participants) in such a way that enables the researcher to build dense categories that support the development of a substantive theory. For example, to better understand emerging concepts, the researcher added questions to learn more about these particular concepts. One particular example was the addition of questions regarding one’s work environment (e.g., presence of multicultural diversity). In addition, initial concepts were used to further pinpoint participants who could offer helpful insights to understand the topic under study (Charmaz, 2012; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Marshall, 1996). An example of this practice occurred with participant culture (i.e., in terms of individualism-collectivism) to understand the potential pattern with preferred closeness in the ICOR. Ultimately, the purpose of theoretical sampling in grounded theory is to systematically develop categories that are robust enough (i.e., theoretical saturation is reached) to explain the phenomena under investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Throughout data collection, the researcher asked for recommended interview candidates based upon past performance data relevant to ICORs. Specifically, the qualified interview participant met all of the following criteria:

- Employed at a multinational organization and/or its subsidiary
- Regarded as relationally culturally competent (i.e., individuals who establish and/or maintain quality intercultural relationships) according to one or more of the following sources:
  - Human Resources Department (e.g., personal recommendation, performance ratings, or other performance evaluation)
  - Professional colleague (e.g., coworker) in the organization
- Regular interaction with two or more colleagues of a different national origin
  - for an average of 10+ hours per week
  - for at least one year in duration
  - currently or in the last five years

Importantly, participants were regarded as relationally culturally competent within the context in which they work to appropriately address the research questions and study's goals. The present study aimed to define intercultural relational quality and the behaviors that employees exhibit to facilitate relational quality within the workplace context. Thus, targeting participants considered relationally culturally competent in the workplace context serves to further contextualize the data obtained from participants. Participants were thought to be more likely to appropriately define quality in ICORs and enact behaviors to facilitate quality for the work environment in which they operate.

Practically speaking, and as noted above, if relational cultural competence does differ in the eye of the beholder, those with whom the individual works may be most qualified to ascribe relational competence according to the organizational context in which the

employee is working. Because industry was predefined, findings are most transferable to organizations whose business is integrated with advanced forms of technology.

Second, qualified participants were those who could discuss the quality of coworker relationships with coworkers whose national culture(s) differ from the participant's own national culture(s). For example, if a participant was born in Turkey, but has lived and worked in the U.S. for many years, that individual may identify as *both* Turkish and American. Research in acculturation (Berry, 1997), bicultural identity formation (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005), and anthropological studies (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008), suggest a myriad of timeframes, processes, and approaches that individuals utilize to cope with living in a foreign national culture. Due to the preponderance of variance attributed to individual differences with respect to cultural identity, the present study elected to ask participants the culture(s) with which they identify. Consistent with previous research (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005), individuals may identify with more than one national culture, including both a native culture and the host culture, among others. To maximize the observable differences with regard to national culture, ICORs were operationalized as relationships comprised of individuals who do not overlap in the cultures with which they identify.

The third criterion was based on the notion that employees who regularly interact with nationally diverse colleagues were better equipped with the knowledge and experiences needed to inform the research questions. For the average employee, 10 hours constitutes approximately one-fourth of the workweek, and provided sufficient opportunity for the employee to gather the knowledge and experience necessary to answer the questions asked in this study. Ten hours of interaction could be achieved

during in-person interactions as well as outside of direct face-to-face interactions, such as writing or receiving emails and phone conversations. Although regular interaction was an additional requirement of the study, it may be superfluous to the first requirement, as individuals will be recommended based upon their relational cultural competence. Nevertheless, the third criterion was included as an additional precaution to ensure participants were equipped with the necessary experience. In this way, it was possible to learn which employees were regarded as having high quality ICORs by other members of the organization, and to target learning these employees' perspectives on how ICOR quality in the workplace is defined.

**Sample characteristics.** A total of 30 participants comprised the final sample in this study, yielding 30 qualitative interviews conducted. Of the 30 participants invited to complete the quantitative survey portion of the study, 23 participants responded, yielding a 77% response rate. Data collection was complete when theoretical saturation was determined (see pages 69-70). As a point of comparison, previous seminal research by Kram (1983), who originally conceptualized the mentoring relationship, was based on 18 interviews. Due to the similarities in the dyadic social exchange relationships in mentoring and between coworkers, 30 interviews may be considered sufficient in the initial conceptualization of intercultural relationship quality at work.

Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the participants in this study ( $N = 30$ ), and Table 3 provides an overview of the organizations represented by way of participants' employment ( $N = 13$ ). Aliases were given to participants and their employers by the researcher to protect individual and organizational identities. Because the present study focused on intercultural coworker relationships (ICORs) as the primary unit of analysis,



Table 4 is included to describe the nature of ICORs in the sample according to both participant and coworker national cultures, functions, and gender. National culture is used in the current study to define culture. In this regard, culture refers to “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 5). Altogether, participants provided explanations for relationship quality on 56 unique ICORs ( $N = 56$ ). Importantly, Table 4 notes each ICOR’s rating as provided by the participant in the study, the length of each relationship, and the location that serves as the cultural context for the ICOR. In addition to the 56 specific ICORs discussed, participants also engaged in broader discussion of what defines quality in ICORs during the interview (i.e., not referring to specific coworkers, but discussion of their experience in ICORs more generally).

**Table 1: Participant Basic Demographics (Excluding Culture)**

#	Name (Alias)	Gender	Age	Languages Spoken**	Organization (Alias)	Function/ Department	Position Level
1	Andrei	M	32	4	TechFin	Project Mgmt.	Mid-level
2	Fairuza	F	45	3	TechFin	Project Mgmt.	Mid-level
3	Venu	M	50	3	TechComm	Project Mgmt.	Mid-level
4	Nilesh	M	45	3	TechMed	Project Mgmt.	Mid-level
5	Dirim	F	47	2	TechBank	Finance	Mid-level
6	Saud	M	58	1	TechEng	Organizational Leadership	C-level
7	Kwai	M	57	2	TechManuf	Organizational Leadership	C-level
8	Geert	M	45	5	TechHealth	Tax/Organizational Leadership	C-level
9	Karen	F	67	1	TechInvest	HR	Mid-level
10	Parker	M	48	1	TechMeDevice	Research & Development	Mid-level
11	Marina	F	55	3	SmallTechChem	HR	Senior level
12	Whitney	F	51	1	TopUniversity	Psychology/Business	Senior level
13	Jessica	F	40	1	BigTechChem	HR	Mid-level
14	Kushal	M	40	3	MultiTech	HR	Mid-level
15	Vitoria	F	49	2	MultiTech	HR	Mid-level
16	Ping	F	45	2	MultiTech	HR	Senior level
17	Lauren	F	45	1	BigTechChem	IT	Mid-level
18	Isadora	F	28	2	MultiTech	Engineering	Mid-level
19	Cecilia	F	40	3	BigTechChem	HR	Mid-level
20	Clara	F	30	2	MultiTech	HR	Mid-level
21	Sanjana	F	45	4	MultiTech	HR	Senior level
22	Jaelyn	F	45	1	BigTechChem	IT	Mid-level
23	Sophie	F	49	2	BigTechChem	Legal	Senior level
24	Aruna	F	30	3	MultiTech	HR	Mid-level
25	Trang	F	34	2	MultiTech	Chemist	Mid-level
26	Phoebe	F	33	2	MultiTech	Engineering	Mid-level
27	Kait	F	50	3	MultiTech	HR	Mid-level
28	Inari	F	49	4	MultiTech	HR/Organizational Leadership	C-level
29	Samantha	F	45	1	BigTechChem	Sales	Mid-level
30	Lian	F	44	2	MultiTech	IT	Mid-level

**Table 2: Organizational Characteristics**

<b>Organization (Alias)</b>	<b>Industry/Subfield</b>	<b>Commercial Focus of Organization</b>	<b>Size of Organization</b>
TechFin	Technology/ Finance	B2C	10,001+ employees
TechComm	Technology/ Communications	B2C	10,001+ employees
TechMed	Technology/ Medical	B2C	10,001+ employees
TechBank	Technology/ Finance	B2M	10,001+ employees
TechEng	Technology/ Engineering	B2M	1,001-5,000 employees
TechManuf	Technology/ Manufacturing	B2B	5,001-10,000 employees
TechHealth	Technology/ Medical	B2C	5,001-10,000 employees
TechInvest	Technology/ Investment	B2M	10,001+ employees
TechMeDevice	Technology/ Medical	B2M	51-200 employees
SmallTechChem	Technology/ Chemical	B2B	501-1,000 employees
TopUniversity	University	B2C	5,001-10,000 employees
BigTechChem	Technology/ Chemical	B2B	5,001-10,000 employees
MultiTech	Technology/ Multi-industry	B2B	5,001-10,000 employees

**Table 3: Participant Cultural Characteristics**

<b>ID #</b>	<b>Name (Alias)</b>	<b>Cultures Worked</b>	<b>Cultural Identities</b>	<b>Cultural Identity 1</b>	<b>Cultural Identity 2</b>	<b>Other Cultural Identities</b>
1	Andrei	4	5	"Culturally undefined"	Romanian (Maldovan)	Russian, Armenian, Jewish
2	Fairuza	3	3	"Global Citizen"	Spanish	Iranian*
3	Venu	2	1	North Indian*		
4	Nilesh	3	1	Indian*		
5	Dirim	2	2	American	Turkish*	
6	Saud	5	3	American	Indian	Kuwaiti*
7	Kwai	5	4	"Global Citizen"	Hong Kong Chinese*	British, American
8	Geert	3	3	Dutch*	American	Swiss
9	Karen	2	2	American*	German	
10	Parker	2	2	Barbadian*	American	
11	Marina	4	3	Portuguese*	Mozambican	Brasilian
12	Whitney	3	1	American*		
13	Jessica	2	1	American*		
14	Kushal	2	1	Indian*		
15	Vitoria	2	2	Colombian*	Canadian	
16	Ping	4	3	Chinese*	U.S. American	Australian
17	Lauren	2	1	American*		
18	Isadora	2	1	Brasilian*		
19	Cecilia	3	3	Brasilian*	German	South African
20	Clara	1	1	Brasilian*		
21	Sanjana	2	1	Indian*		
22	Jaclyn	2	1	American*		
23	Sophie	2	2	German*	American	
24	Aruna	2	2	American	Omani	
25	Trang	2	2	Vietnamese*	American	
26	Phoebe	3	2	Greek*	British	
27	Kait	3	2	American*	French	
28	Inari	3	1	Finnish*		
29	Samantha	1	1	American*		
30	Lian	2	3	Chinese*	Canadian	Venezuelan

Note: \* indicates the participant's country of origin

**Table 4: ICOR Characteristics**

<b>ID #</b>	<b>ICOR #</b>	<b>Participant Alias</b>	<b>Coworker Country of Origin</b>	<b>Coworker Gender</b>	<b>Relationship Quality</b>	<b>Primary Location</b>	<b>Relationship Length</b>
1	1	Andrei	U.S.	Female	High	U.S.	0 - 1 year
1	2	Andrei	India	Female	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
2	3	Fairuza	Ireland	Male	High	Ireland	6 - 10 years
2	4	Fairuza	India	Female	Low	Virtual	1 - 5 years
3	5	Venu	U.S.	Male	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
3	6	Venu	South India	Female	High	U.S.	6 - 10 years
4	7	Nilesh	Ireland	Male	Grew from Low to High	Virtual	1 - 5 years
5	8	Dirim	U.S.	Female	High	U.S.	11 - 15 years
5	9	Dirim	U.S.	Male	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
6	10	Saud	Korea	Male	Grew from Low to High	Korea	1 - 5 years
6	11	Saud	Taiwan	Male	Low	Korea	6 - 10 years
7	12	Kwai	U.S.	Male	High	U.S.	6 - 10 years
8	13	Geert	UK	Male	High	Switzerland	1 - 5 years
8	14	Geert	U.S.	Female	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
9	15	Karen	India	Male	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
9	16	Karen	Mexico	Female	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
10	17	Parker	U.S.	Female	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
10	18	Parker	Chinese	Female	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
11	19	Marina	Guatemala, U.S.	Male	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
11	20	Marina	U.S.	Male	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
11	21	Marina	U.S.	Male	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
12	22	Whitney	India	Male	High	Spain, U.S.	11 - 15 years
12	23	Whitney	India	Male	Low	Spain, U.S.	11 - 15 years
13	24	Jessica	Germany	Female	High	Virtual	6 - 10 years
13	25	Jessica	Germany	Female	Low	Virtual	6 - 10 years
14	26	Kushal	U.S.	Female	Grew from Low to High	U.S.	6 - 10 years
15	27	Vitoria	Chinese	Female	High	Canada	11 - 15 years
15	28	Vitoria	Canadian, Chinese	Male	Low	Canada	6 - 10 years
16	29	Ping	U.S.	Female	High	Korea, Virtual	1 - 5 years
16	30	Ping	U.S.	Male	Low	Virtual	1 - 5 years
16	31	Ping	Germany	Male	Low	Australia	1 - 5 years

**Table 4: ICOR Characteristics (continued)**

<b>ID #</b>	<b>ICOR #</b>	<b>Participant Alias</b>	<b>Coworker Country of Origin</b>	<b>Coworker Gender</b>	<b>Relationship Quality</b>	<b>Primary Location</b>	<b>Relationship Length</b>
17	32	Lauren	Singapore	Male	High	Virtual	1 - 5 years
17	33	Lauren	Brasil	Male	Low	Virtual	0 - 1 year
17	34	Lauren	Germany	Male	Low	Virtual	6 - 10 years
18	35	Isadora	India	Male	Grew from Low to High	Virtual	1 - 5 years
18	36	Isadora	U.S.	Female	High	Virtual, U.S.	1 - 5 years
19	37	Cecilia	Germany	Female	High	Virtual	1 - 5 years
20	38	Clara	U.S.	Female	High	Brasil	1 - 5 years
21	39	Sajana	U.S.	Female	High	Virtual	0 - 1 year
22	40	Jaclyn	Germany	Female	High	Virtual	11 - 15 years
22	41	Jaclyn	India	Male	Low	U.S.	0 - 1 year
22	42	Jaclyn	Chinese	Male	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
22	43	Jaclyn	Chinese	Female	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
23	44	Sophie	U.S.	Male	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
24	45	Aruna	India	Female	High	India	1 - 5 years
24	46	Aruna	India	Male	Low	India	0 - 1 year
25	47	Trang	U.S.	Male	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
25	48	Trang	Germany	Female	Low	U.S.	1 - 5 years
26	49	Phoebe	New Zealand	Female	High	U.S.	1 - 5 years
27	50	Kait	India	Male	High	Virtual	1 - 5 years
27	51	Kait	Sweden	Female	Low	Virtual	0 - 1 year
28	52	Inari	Latin America (various countries)	Female	High	Latin America	6 - 10 years
29	53	Samantha	Netherlands, Germany	Male	High	Virtual	15 years or more
29	54	Samantha	Germany	Male	Low	Virtual	6 - 10 years
30	55	Lian	Philippines	Female	High	Canada	6 - 10 years
30	56	Lian	Armenian	Male	Low	Canada	1 - 5 years

Two additional participants (i.e., not included in the final  $N$ ) were deemed unsuitable for the study after conducting the interviews and were removed from the sample for data analysis. The first removed participant (a middle-aged U.S. American male working in a senior level role in a large U.S.-based manufacturing firm; alias of Fred) stated coworker relationships were not important at the outset of the interview. Fred was referred to the researcher by a colleague. However, Fred shared that he did not consider his coworkers to be involved with his work role or important for him to achieve the goals of his position. The second removed participant (a middle-aged Indian female working in a senior level role in a global financial services organization; alias of Anaya) was unable to provide meaningful responses with sufficient depth to the interview questions. This participant perceived a great degree of structure on her role, such that it limited her perceived personal choice in responding to coworkers. To Anaya, her responses to coworkers were completely dictated by her job description and the structure of her role. Thus, her responses did not reflect her personal choices or opinions regarding coworker relationships.

Ultimately, the final number of participants was determined in accordance with the need to sufficiently address the research questions in the study. Specifically, data collection finished when saturation was reached. Saturation occurs when new data no longer produce any novel, relevant information to address the research questions in the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When new data fails to reveal any new categories, sub-categories, or properties of these categories, saturation is reached (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Reaching saturation depends on several factors, including the breadth of what the study aims to address, the inherent

nature of the phenomena under study, the suitability of the data collected to address the phenomena under study, and the study design (e.g., the amount of data collected per participant; Morse, 2000). Most notable considerations for the present study were the homogeneity of the sample along the dimensions of interest and the selection criteria for participants (Dworkin, 2012). Higher levels of sample homogeneity (as discussed below) may reduce the variance in certain aspects represented in the sample, resulting in fewer participants necessary to reach saturation (relative to studying the same phenomenon in a heterogeneous sample). Stricter selection criteria was also utilized to reduce the amount of data needed to reach saturation, as the study is designed such that the findings will transfer to a defined group.

As discussed above, gender, cultural background, age, work function, and level in the organization were allowed to vary freely in the sample to maximize external validity to ICORs. Differences in gender, age, and level in the organization did not produce meaningful differences in participants' responses regarding ICOR quality (the impact of participants' personal characteristics on the study's findings are discussed in Chapter 4). While meaningful differences were not observed when comparing responses according to participant gender, it should be noted that the sample was comprised of twenty-two females (73%) and eight (27%) males. However, the lack of meaningful differences across genders in the presence of cultural difference is consistent with previous research, in which national culture explains more variance in ratings of expatriate effectiveness compared to gender, which explained less than 3% of rating variance (House et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the sample's gender imbalance is discussed in more detail in the limitations section of the study. Second, participant age did not have a discernable



influence on responses. Participant ages ranged from 32 to 67 years old ( $M = 44.24$ ), demonstrating a wide range in participant ages representative of the professional global workforce. Third, participant/coworker level in the organization did not appear to have an impact on responses. In other words, participants did not differ in their descriptions of high quality ICORs according to the position level, but instead discussed similar characteristics in their responses. This may not be surprising, as, by definition, one's coworker remains a peer irrespective of change in seniority.

One variation in participant responses may be attributed to a job function within the organization. Specifically, participants from Human Resources positions tended to provide their descriptions of quality in ICORs with greater ease and in more detail:

“Respecting each other. For example, because of the work she has, her challenge that we have is that she has her rules or process, and in China, we have different rules and regulations. So, for some things we just can't change it. For example, if we handle an employee dispute issue, we have to follow the law, right? We can't change it even when we are not happy about that. I think that's why respecting each other's cultural differences is very important. I need to know we can discuss and follow some agreed upon process to get things approved and in order.” (Interview #16, Ping, 179-184).

In contrast, participants working in more technical functions such as engineering, legal, and information technology described the quality of ICORs in less detail. While individuals in these roles provided information consistent with the content offered by HR, at times, responses had less specificity. Instead, individuals in non-HR functions best

conveyed their responses when asked multiple questions by the researcher to encourage sharing examples and stories to illustrate more abstract concepts. For example, when asked for clarity on the role of coworker respect in ICOR quality, the participant initially responded, “Respect would also be something in order for me to have a good relationship. I also need to feel that I can respect the person and have a feeling that the other person is respecting me” (Interview #23, Sophie, Lines 140-142). To gather further insight, the researcher used a higher number of follow-up questions to unpack words like “respect” that might be defined differently across participants. This distinction by function is likely due to the language learned by those in HR to discuss human behavior as part of prior coursework in social sciences and also in-role learning that enable them to articulate their thoughts in detail.

*Participant outlier.* Participants working in the technology industry were preferred in the present study, but an intentional exception was made for one participant. Twenty-nine of the thirty participants met this preference, while one was not employed in the technology industry (see Table 1). Whitney was included in the sample for a number of reasons. Whitney is a professor employed at a highly internationally diverse university in the U.S. (not affiliated with the researcher’s university). Not only did her professional work experiences provide exceptional insight to the study, but her expertise in the area of cross-cultural research allowed the researcher and participant to have rich discussion about her ICORs using familiar language. Specifically, due to Whitney’s research background, she was able to share her personal experiences using cross-cultural research terminology that was edifying for the researcher. Furthermore, being a researcher, Whitney was skilled at sharing examples that minimized extraneous noise and were

particularly helpful for isolating the construct of interest for the study (i.e., ICOR quality). For example, Whitney contrasted two ICORs, both with two Indian male colleagues of about the same age. Whitney considered one of these ICORs to be high quality, while the other she perceived to be low quality. In discussing the reasons for the respective ratings of relationship quality, Whitney explained:

“The difference is that even though they're both very high power distance, the one I don't like is high power in a distant way that he treats everyone like he's better than them and everybody is like his servant. Where the one that I like very much and that I have a very good close relationship with is also very high power distance, but in a very paternalistic way and a very caring way.” (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 142-147)

In her description of quality, Whitney used terms like “power distance” and “paternalistic” which have specific meaning and relevance in the cross-cultural research and leadership research contexts. Here, she describes both individuals as “very high power distance,” indicating that they are comfortable with hierarchy and expect individuals to hold varying levels of power (Hofstede, 1991; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). Whitney’s perception of her colleagues’ levels of power distance is consistent with previous cultural values research, in which India is considered to be a higher power distance culture compared to the U.S., which is Whitney’s cultural background (e.g., House et al., 2004). Second, Whitney describes one of her colleagues as “paternalistic.” While paternalistic has one connotation in common vernacular, the word has a different meaning in the context of cross-cultural leadership research (e.g., Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). In this context, paternalistic

leadership refers to a style in which the leader's "main focus is on employees' welfare; a leader's care and protection are genuine, and employees show loyalty out of respect and appreciation for the leader's benevolence" (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008, p. 5). This style of leadership is most commonly practiced and researched in higher power distance cultures, including India, Malaysia, Japan, Turkey, Mexico, Pakistan, and China (Farh, Cheng, Chou, & Chu, 2006; Martinez, 2003; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006; Uhl-Bien, Tierney, Graen, & Wakabayashi, 1990). Whitney's distinction between two styles of leadership (i.e., paternalistic leadership vs. authoritarian leadership) is insightful, as paternalistic leadership is often misconstrued as authoritarian leadership (i.e., "based on control and exploitation, and subordinates show conformity solely to avoid punishment," Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008, p. 5) by those in low power distance cultures (Aycan, 2006). As Whitney and her two colleagues are peers in leadership positions as professors, power distance would be observed most readily in the professors' interactions with and treatment of students. Thus, her understanding of paternalistic leadership behaviors in which her Indian colleague is "caring" rather than controlling are relevant to her perception of ICOR quality insofar as her positive assessment of his leadership style demonstrates shared work values. In other words, Whitney's perception of high quality is influenced by their shared work values, rather than shared cultural values. This is consistent with other views shared by participants, but due to her expertise, Whitney was able to convey greater depth and precision regarding the complex interplay of differing cultural values and shared work values. An additional example bolsters this point. In describing another ICOR, Whitney discusses differences in cultural communication by referencing "high context" and "low context" cultures (Lines 459-467). Context in cross-

cultural communication research refers to a cultural dimension that describes the ways in which individuals exchange information (Hall 1976). Individuals who identify with lower context cultures tend to communicate more directly (e.g., verbally), while individuals in higher context cultures tend to rely more heavily on using implicit cues (e.g., nonverbal behavior). While the implications for her observation are discussed in the category development of a shared understanding, it is noted here that Whitney was able to share this information with the researcher due to Whitney's research background.

In summary, participants' characteristics served to add variation and depth to the findings (e.g., professional background), while other individual differences did not demonstrate differences and yielded consistencies in the findings observed (e.g., level in the organization). Findings attributable to participants' personal characteristics are provided in Chapter 4 (i.e., Personal Characteristics category).

### **Procedure and Data Collection**

The research procedure occurred in three major phases: before the interview (prior to data collection), during the interview, and post-interview (which includes the quantitative component).

Prior to the interviews, companies and individuals in the initial list were asked to make a list of their recommendations based upon employees' performance with respect to relational cultural competence. As noted, relational cultural competence will be defined from the recommender's perspective (rather than a predefined conceptualization) and will therefore serve to offer further insight into the role of workplace context in each of the research questions. As the researcher received potential participant recommendations, the researcher reached out (or responded in cases that the potential participant reached

out first) via email to send the link to view the Consent to Participate form. When an employee agreed to participate, he or she read and electronically signed the Consent to Participate form. In the same link, the participant answered three simple questions to confirm their eligibility for the study (see *Appendix B*). The questions were an additional checkpoint to confirm that the participant has at least two intercultural coworker relationships and that he or she is considered skilled at building intercultural relationships. After participants completed the Consent to Participate and appropriately answered the eligibility questions, the researcher reached out via email to offer participants the opportunity to schedule an interview. Once an interview was scheduled, the researcher sent the participant two reflection questions to help him or her prepare for the interview (*See Appendix C*). Previous research has instructed participants to write narratives or record critical incidents prior to the interview, but these attempts have not been successful (Cooper, 2011; Killough, 2013). Researchers reported that in most cases, participants did not complete the request prior to the interview and/or cancelled the interview. These researchers surmised that this may have occurred for two primary reasons. First, the nature of the question content wa[[e that some kind of rapport with the interviewer would better facilitate responses to questions requiring participants to take an introspective lens. Second, participants were already volunteering their time to interview, and asking for additional effort may have overwhelmed participants. However, in cases where participants could begin thinking about their answers to interview questions, the preparation may have helped participants provide more thoughtful, well-considered responses. Therefore, in lieu of a formal task that may only serve to burden the participant or risk losing data, the researcher asked participants to reflect on relationships

with their colleagues from differing national cultures than their own (*See Appendix C*). The purpose of the reflection questions was to prepare participants for the interview by affording them the opportunity to begin thinking about their answers. At the same time, written formal responses to these questions were not demanded of participants by way of encouraging their participation.

The second major step of the research procedure was the interview. Whenever possible, interviews were conducted face-to-face and in-person. When interviews were conducted in-person, the researcher scheduled a time with participants at a time and public place (e.g., their office, local library) for their convenience. When this was not possible (e.g., due to distance limitations), interviews were conducted face-to-face using virtual communication (e.g., Google Hangouts) or via phone. One third of interviews were conducted in-person and two-thirds were conducted virtually. In advance of the interview, the researcher conducted a LinkedIn search of each participant. In doing so, the researcher reviewed information specific to each participant to both eliminate unnecessary questions (e.g., In what department do you work?) as well as offered opportunities to build rapport with the participant by knowing something about him or her prior to the interview (e.g., Tell me what it is like for you in your role as Chief Architect; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003; Patton, 2002). With each participant's permission, all interviews were audio recorded. The researcher also took notes during each interview.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher opened the conversation by building rapport and attempting to encourage open discourse by thanking the participants for their time, interest, and attention (Creswell, 2007; Feldman et al., 2003; Patton, 2002).

Next, the researcher provided participants with a brief summary of her professional background and the purpose of the interview. The researcher reminded them of her commitment to preserve their anonymity and the anonymity of the company. In addition, the researcher asked participants to refer to each coworker by “Coworker 1” or “Coworker 2” to help ensure anonymity of the coworkers discussed by the participant. The rest of the interview followed along with the interview protocol (*See Appendix D*). Notes were taken by the researcher to supplement audio recordings. The interviews concluded by offering to send the participants the final dissertation when it is completed, thanking them again for their time, and offering the option of a brief follow-up phone call. While no participants chose to have the follow-up call, one participant emailed a TEDx Talk video to further illustrate an example shared during the interview (TEDx, 2013).

In addition to the interview data collected, participants were asked to complete a quantitative survey (either via paper or online form). The researcher offered to provide the participant with a pre-paid, stamped envelope with the researcher’s mailing address as well as the link to the online form, so participants had the option to complete the survey as was convenient for them. All participants preferred to complete the survey electronically. Participants were emailed the link to complete the survey ten days after the interview. The survey was sent 10 days later in an effort to mitigate the potential for bias that is often noted in cross-sectional design studies in which data are collected at one time (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003).

The survey included the Cultural Intelligence Scale (*CQ*, Ang et al., 2007), the short form of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (*MPQ*, Van Der Zee et al.,



2013), the Coworker Exchange Scale (*CEQ*, Sherony & Green, 2002), the High Quality Connections Scale (*HQCs*, Carmeli, 2009), a theoretically unrelated scale to measure common method variance, Financial Interest (Goldberg, 2010) and a measure of social desirability (Reynolds, 1982). The Global Mindset Inventory (Javidan & Teagarden, 2012) is a proprietary research instrument (Global Mindset Institute, 2016) and scale items could not be disclosed to the researcher. While the theoretical contribution of the expatriate adjustment literature is helpful to inform the study, the scale items are specific to expatriates and therefore not appropriate to all participants in the present study. Completion of *CQ*, *MPQ*, *CEQ*, and *HQCs* questionnaires allowed the researcher to compare previous quantitative measures with the qualitative findings obtained in the current study (see Chapter 5). On the last page of the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide basic demographic information, including country of origin, languages spoken, job title, department, tenure, and job description. This information is included in Tables 1 and 2.

**Construction of the interview protocol.** To study the research questions, a semi-structured interview protocol was used (See *Appendix D*). As summarized by Lacity and colleagues (Iyer, 2011; Lacity, Iyer, & Rudramuniyaiah, 2008) as well as by Janesick (1994), interviews are an appropriate method for qualitative data collection when the study's goals align with several criteria. First, the study sought to address questions concerning quality, meaning and interpretation, or the social context (Janesick, 1994). Second, it aimed to learn concepts that emerge out of the lived experiences relying on the participant's point of view (Kvale, 1996). Third, the researcher wished to avoid restricting the findings to existing constructs or elements of constructs that are predefined

(Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Fourth, the researcher asked questions that address subject matter which may be considered personal or sensitive in nature (Mahoney, 1997). The study was focused on the quality, rather than the quantity of participants' answers (Fontana and Frey, 1994). Sixth, the study addressed the values held by respondents (Bourne and Jenkins, 2005; Gummesson, 2000). Lastly, the study sought answers to open-ended questions regarding ongoing occurrences outside of the researcher's control (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Yin, 2003)

Using the research questions proposed in this study as a guiding framework, an interview protocol was designed by drawing upon previous research. The interview protocol was formatted to illustrate the alignment between the study's central research questions and the interview questions asked of participants.

***Pilot interviews.*** Pilot interviews were conducted prior to data collection. Pilot testing relied on two interviews with individuals that suited the participant requirements. Thus, participants had the same qualifications as those that participated in the implemented study. Pilot testing helped to ensure questions were phrased in such a way that elicited responses relevant to the focal research questions and confirmed expected interview length and duration (i.e., to ensure 1 hour was sufficient to gather needed information from focal participants). Lastly, pilot interviews provided the opportunity for the researcher to refine interviewing skills, such as redirecting participants to the topic at hand. In essence, the pilot interviews helped uncover any opportunities to improve and revise the interview protocol and research design prior to the implementation of the study (Kvale, 2007).

**Quantitative measures.** The present study aimed to build upon previous research by bringing together work on intercultural competence and social exchange to study intercultural exchange quality in the workplace context. While the primary form of data collected in the present study was qualitative, quantitative data were also collected to facilitate more direct comparison and theoretical discussion resulting from the findings. Quantitative and qualitative data were compared to examine consistencies, inconsistencies, and the emergence of new information (as discussed in the Discussion chapter). To this end, participants completed survey measures (See *Appendix E*) of intercultural competence constructs (i.e., Cultural Intelligence Scale and Multicultural Personality Questionnaire) as well as social exchange in the workplace (i.e., High Quality Connections Scale and Coworker Exchange Scale). A social desirability scale was included to assess the degree of socially desirable responding in the survey. Finally, a theoretically unrelated scale (i.e., Financial Interest) was administered to participants to measure potential methods effects.

***Cultural Intelligence Scale – Short Form.*** Thomas and colleagues (2015) developed the short form of the Cultural Intelligence (*CQ*) Scale. An example item is, “I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.” Ten items are rated by participants on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely well*). Higher scores indicate stronger levels of agreement with the statements’ description of the participants, while lower scores indicate stronger levels of disagreement with the statements. Consistent with previous research, sound reliability in the current study was observed for *CQ* ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

***Multicultural Personality Questionnaire – Short Form.*** The short form of the *MPQ* was developed by Van Der Zee and colleagues, and shows improvements upon the reliability of the original scale (Van Der Zee et al., 2013). It is comprised of five subdimensions that align with its five personality traits: emotional stability, social initiative, open-mindedness, cultural empathy, and flexibility. In this 40-item scale, participants rate the extent to which statements apply to them using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally not applicable*) to 5 (*completely applicable*). A sample item of Social Initiative is, “Is often the driving force behind things.” Reliability for the *MPQ* was high ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

***Coworker Exchange Scale.*** Sherony and Green (2002) developed the 6-item Coworker Exchange Scale to measure coworker relationship quality. An example item is, “How well does your coworker understand your job problems and needs?” *CEQ* reliability was high ( $\alpha = .84$ ) and acceptable for low quality ICORs measured using *CEQ* ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

***High Quality Connections Scale.*** The 14-item scale by Carmeli (2009) was used to measure coworker relationship quality. An example item is, “My coworker and I do not have any difficulty expressing our feelings to one another.” Reliability for high quality ICORs measured with *HQCs* was high ( $\alpha = .89$ ), as was the reliability for low quality ICORs measured with *HQCs* ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

***Social Desirability Scale.*** The short form of the Social Desirability Scale is a 13-item scale by Reynolds (1982). An example item is, “No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.” The scale utilizes a true-false response format. Higher scores on

this scale indicated a tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner. This measure was used to determine the potential influence of social desirability in the case of higher scores on self-reported indicators of intercultural competence or relationship quality. Reliability on the social desirability scale was acceptable ( $\alpha = .71$ ).

***Financial Interest Scale.*** The 6-item scale by Goldberg (2010) was used as a marker variable to measure an individual's financial interest. The scale includes items such as, "Bought or sold stocks or bonds" and "Purchased a commodity as an investment." There is no known reason to believe this scale would correlate with the other constructs measured in the survey. Acceptable reliability was observed for the financial interest scale ( $\alpha = .78$ ).

### **Data Analysis**

The present study relied on grounded theory principles to analyze the qualitative data. Analysis according to grounded theory tenets includes constant comparison, microanalysis, axial coding, and selective coding to interpret the qualitative data collected. Basic quantitative analyses (e.g., means, correlations) were conducted for intercultural competence and coworker exchange quality scales, within and between participants (i.e., assessment of agreement between intercultural competence and coworker exchange quality ratings for the individual, and across the sample). After data analysis, quantitative results were integrated with qualitative findings to triangulate with and build upon previous research (See Discussion section).

In grounded theory (and in most qualitative research), analysis begins alongside data collection, rather than exclusively afterwards (i.e., using the constant comparison method; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Previous research recommends that analysis of

qualitative data occur in three concurrent analytic steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson 2002). According to Robson's recommended approach regarding data reduction, "The process starts before data are collected, during collection and analysis, and manageability of data is not a separate activity" (Robson, 2002, p. 475- 476). Adhering to this recommendation, the current study employed the constant comparison method to recognize and build out categories to address the research questions. Specifically, constant comparison refers to a systematic method for analyzing qualitative data in which items of data are assembled (and reassembled) together along a shared attribute to identify patterns. This process begins with preliminary codes developed in the first interviews, and continues throughout the data collection and analysis processes. The data are continually compared and re-organized until the final categories are formed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009). In the final phases of analysis, qualitative categories that emerge from the interview data were compared with the dimensions as well as individual items developed in previous research to assess overlap, novelty, or contradiction. Furthermore, direct comparison of participants' qualitative responses were compared with their indications of relationship quality using the previously developed quantitative scales. The foundation for the qualitative data analyses is coding, which was facilitated through the transcription of audio-recorded interviews.

**Theoretical memos.** Theoretical memos refer to written records of analysis, and their purpose differed depending in part on the stage of analysis. In earlier stages of analysis, memos included notes regarding preliminary patterns to explore further in subsequent interviews. Throughout data collection, summary memos were created by the

researcher to capture a high-level summary of the main points learned in each interview from each participant. In particular, notations were made describing similarities to concepts heard in previous interviews, novel points, and directions that may be useful to pursue (e.g., new question, certain participant demographic). Memos also reflected preliminary understanding of concepts under study, helping the researcher think through possible interpretations of patterns and making sense of the data.

**Transcription of interview data.** Each interview was transcribed as soon as possible from the time of its completion. Transcribing qualitative data collected during interviews may facilitate data analysis in a number of ways (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). Because the responses of one interview may prompt or shape questions in subsequent semi-structured interviews, preliminary analysis (as facilitated by transcription) is beneficial to complete after each interview in preparation for the next whenever possible. Transcription creates a written record of the data which may be more readily consulted than data stored in audio form, permitting a more thorough analysis of the interview data and one that is iterative. A written record additionally allows for secondary analysis by allowing other researchers to reanalyze the data. Lastly, transcription encourages future research by allowing for reanalysis to address the application of new or nuanced research questions, differing analytic strategies, and/or novel theoretical approaches.

The transcriptions of the interviews were arranged to correspond with the study's research questions. Instances in which a body of text is relevant to multiple research questions, the section will be cross-referenced. Attempts to manage the volume of data in this manner may enable the researcher to simultaneously examine all data relevant to each research question without consulting data pertinent to a separate research question.

The purpose of this approach is ultimately to achieve data reduction, interpret data, and justify conclusions from the data (Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson 2002).

**Open coding.** In qualitative data analysis, the data should be “the star” of the overall analysis process (Chenail et al., 1995; Sandelowski, 1998) and researchers should “stay as close as they can” with their words in describing, analyzing, and interpreting the words and actions of participants in the study. Microanalysis, a part of open coding, is particularly beneficial to conduct at the beginning stages of analysis because it provides the researcher with a sense of what is happening before becoming inundated with data (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Microanalysis refers to the process during open coding in which the researcher generates possibilities of meaning in the text, investigates those possibilities against additional data, discards meanings that prove to be irrelevant, and revises the interpretations as needed (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). In essence, in microanalysis the researcher asks herself, “What does this item of data mean, or what could it mean?” line-by-line in the transcript. The process of microanalysis helps the researcher to self-consciously recognize what they are sensitive to noticing in the data. Thus, the goal of microanalysis is to create "analytic distance" between the researcher and the participant. To promote "analytic distance," the researcher notes the multiple meanings possible in the text line-by-line by restating the phrase or line in descriptive terms only. This simultaneously prevents the researcher from preemptively assigning his or her own interpretation as well as checks the researcher's assumptions by closely aligning first-level descriptions with the data itself. Because microanalysis includes the first steps in coding, it begins by being overinclusive in considering what information



may be relevant to the research question(s) in the study. Codes of data are then carefully examined according to their theoretical and practical relevance through their significance to the research questions in the study, and either retained or moved to a separate list of preliminarily rejected codes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). After this was completed with multiple interview transcripts in the current study, the refined list of codes was compared within as well as across observations (i.e., interview transcripts) to assess their relevance and comprehensive ability to describe individual sets of data. At its core, the process enabled the researcher to focus closely on the data and provided a check to ensure codes were closely linked to the data. Individual codes (i.e., patterns) identified in open coding were then categorized into more and more abstractly defined concepts, and eventually in some cases, categories. As a first step, open coding supported the overall analytic process in which careful, gradual abstraction of the data can be categorized into concepts, with axial coding as the second step in this process.

**Axial coding.** Open coding served as the foundation for the next level of abstraction – axial coding. While the purpose of these two types of coding are different, and open coding generally occurs prior to axial coding, it is not a strict sequential process. This is because analysis occurs alongside data collection. During this process, the researcher considers concepts developed during open coding and asks herself, “What is this specific item (or pattern) an instance of? Does it belong to a more general class?” The goal in asking these questions is to link categories to their subcategories. This process is referred to as “axial” coding because “coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). Categories refer to phenomena cited by participants as important to

understanding the topic under investigation. In this way, categories in the present study were those phenomena central to explaining the quality of intercultural coworker relationships. A subcategory is an aspect of its category, as subcategories qualify categories in some way. As explained by Strauss and Corbin (1998), subcategories serve to further explicate versions of the phenomenon in terms of “when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences, thus giving the concept greater explanatory power” (p. 125).

During open coding, the link between a subcategory and category may not be readily apparent. In axial coding, the identification of this relationship is facilitated through the properties and dimensions associated with each category. Properties provide an additional layer of specificity to a subcategory, and therefore its category. Properties provide specificity and differentiation to each category, and may help clarify the relationships between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Dimensions work closely with properties, as they define the range along which properties vary (e.g., nominally, numerically, ordinally). Properties and dimensions identified during analysis are also critical to the data collection process, further supporting the need to conduct collection and analysis simultaneously. When meaningful variations (i.e., subcategories, properties, and dimensions) of categories are no longer found in the data, theoretical saturation is reached (Dworkin, 2012).

After the researcher formed categories from the data, the next step in axial coding was to begin exploration of the relationships among categories. This process was facilitated through consideration of the structure and process of phenomena, and the relationship between structure and process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Structure

articulates the why (e.g., why a category is central to the phenomena of quality intercultural coworker relationships), while process explains the how (e.g., how the category is manifested in individuals' interactions). To organize the relationship between structure and process, Strauss & Corbin (1998) recommend utilizing a three-part "paradigm" of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences. Conditions refer to "a conceptual way of grouping answers to the questions why, where, how come, and when" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 128). These form the context in which the phenomena occur. Conditions may be micro (i.e., having a more direct influence on subsequent actions/interactions) or macro (i.e., having a more indirect influence on subsequent actions/interactions). Furthermore, these conditions may interact with one another to influence subsequent actions/interactions. Actions/interactions are the "strategic or routine responses made by individuals or groups to issues, problems, happenings, or events that arise under these conditions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 128). Strategic responses are those made to address a problem. Routine responses are habitual reactions to common occurrences or issues. Finally, consequences refer to the outcome sustained by the individual as a result of the action/interaction within the situational context. These can be intended or unintended, and their scope of influence can be far-reaching or narrow in its impact. As the data reached higher levels of abstraction (e.g., categories), the findings were compared with previous research (e.g., dimensions of coworker exchange and high quality connections). In many instances, the data suggested a novel category not captured in previous research (see Findings and Discussion).

Critical to the process of abstracting categories using these practices were the methods by which decisions to note patterns were made. Evidence supporting the

inclusion of data as a pattern or concept is bolstered by conceptual and empirical testing (e.g., frequency, absence, density). Specifically, Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2015) recommend subjecting patterns to the following questions: “Does the pattern make conceptual sense? Do we find it elsewhere in the data, where it was expected? Are there counterexamples?” (p. 278). Then, categories can be subject to triangulation through elements such as data source (e.g., participant, organization), by theoretical framework (i.e., coworker exchange, high quality connections), and data type (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data). In the present study, consistent observation across these elements supported the presence of both new as well as previous patterns. However, novel or inconsistent findings also built upon existing knowledge to develop an intercultural perspective of the phenomenon of coworker exchange quality.

**Selective coding.** Selective coding is integral to grounded theory analysis because it is the process by which substantive theory is produced (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Substantive theory refers a theoretical model that provides an explanation for a phenomenon within a specific context (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). A substantive theory may therefore be transferred (i.e., in contrast with generalizability in formal or grand theories) to like contexts (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). As a crucial part of theory generation, selective coding involves integrating and refining categories to form a broader theoretical scheme that connects the categories developed during open and axial coding together (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A necessary requisite for selective coding is the presentation of categories as “a set of interrelated concepts, not just a listing of themes” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 145). Thus, underlying connections among categories must be made explicit to support the integration of categories into a theory,

held together by a core category (see Discussion). A core category refers to “the central defining aspect of the phenomenon” that relates all categories together (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 229). Because the central category relates all other categories together, it should stand true among the variation present across categories. It should be clear how the core category serves to connect all categories together in a holistic explanation of the substantive theory (i.e., quality intercultural coworker relationships).

After the core category has been outlined, the theory should be refined to ensure it accurately captures the phenomenon of interest. This is accomplished by checking for internal consistency and fully developed categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Specific properties and dimensions must be explicit to define the core category. The core category’s properties and dimensions can then be used to assess consistency with the remaining categories. To validate the theoretical scheme or core category, the researcher can use the theory to return to individual data sets and deduce how sufficiently the theory explains the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This will help determine applicability, thoroughness, and logic of the theory. If a case does not fit, the researcher should explain why this case is an outlier, or build the theory to include explanation for that case. A final criterion for a core category is that it sufficiently captures variation within and among categories, and is not superficial in nature (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This variation is reflected in the properties and dimensions of the core category, and clear explanation for their appearance within and across categories. In the current study, a core category is suggested to serve as the unifying framework by which high quality ICORs are developed (see Discussion section).

**Integration of qualitative and quantitative data.** First, the researcher assessed the alignment between scales developed in previous intercultural competence research (i.e., Cultural Intelligence Scale, Multicultural Personality Questionnaire) and appraisal in organizations. To identify participants, individuals were recommended by the organization or a professional colleague as someone who is competent in building cross-cultural coworker relationships. Alignment with previous research was assessed by comparing participant scores with previous research on intercultural competence scales (see Discussion section for the comparison).

In comparing the qualitative and quantitative social exchange data (i.e., High Quality Connections Scale, Coworker Exchange Scale), three general outcomes were possible. First, *consistency* with previous research was obtained in cases wherein the coworker social exchange construct (i.e., coworker exchange quality or high quality connections) fully captured the categories that emerged from the qualitative data. Second, *novelty*, or the introduction of new concepts, was the result when novel categories, subcategories, or properties emerged from qualitative data that were not captured in existing social exchange constructs. Third, *contradiction* with previous research occurred if qualitative findings opposed dimensions included in existing frameworks. Instances of all three of these outcomes were observed in the comparison of qualitative and quantitative findings in the current study (see Discussion section).

These three general conclusions (i.e., consistency, novelty, and contradiction) based upon the comparison of qualitative and quantitative data were used to provide a helpful method to articulate the theoretical contribution of the present study. In this way, it was possible to assess where qualitative data supports existing knowledge of coworker

relationship quality, the new information learned, as well as where additional consideration of previous research may be merited.

The aim of the present study was to develop employee-driven definitions of intercultural relational quality as well as the behaviors that employees exhibit to facilitate relational quality within the multinational workplace context. This section outlined the methods the researcher leveraged to collect, organize, code, analyze, and interpret the qualitative and quantitative data informing the study's research questions.

## Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the study are described. The present study sought to address two research questions:

1. What defines a high quality intercultural coworker relationship (ICOR)?
2. What behaviors do individuals enact to facilitate quality in ICORs?

Data collection to inform research questions took two forms. Qualitative data was collected in one-on-one interviews and analyzed via grounded theory methodology, with a complementary quantitative survey component. The qualitative findings are described first, followed by the quantitative results.

Six categories were developed from approximately 21,000 lines of qualitative data from thirty interviews. The six categories are labeled Workplace Context, Personal Characteristics, Interdependent Contribution, Investment, Development of a Shared Understanding, and Comfort. Each category is defined and described in detail with selected quotes from participant interviews. Each category is further defined by its subcategories, properties (i.e., attributes that qualify subcategories and differentiate categories from one another; Strauss & Corbin, 2015) and dimensions of those properties (i.e., the range of a property's variation; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). There is a simple but helpful analogy to illustrate the interrelation of categories, subcategories, properties, and dimensions in addressing qualitative research questions. Consider the arrangement of items in a grocery store (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). There are several sections (categories), such as produce, deli, dairy, canned goods, personal care, pet-related, and so on. Taking the category of produce as an example, items in this category are grouped together because of their shared properties (e.g., plant-based, edible, stored in cool or



refrigerated places). The properties of items in the produce section also serve to explain the variation present among produce items. For example, some produce items need to be stored in very cold temperatures while others need only be stored in somewhat cool temperatures. Furthermore, the properties of the items in the produce section allow them to be grouped into subcategories, and to further differentiate the types of items one might find in the produce section. For example, one might note fruits and vegetables as subcategories within the produce category. Fruits are grouped together because of their shared properties, such as containing seeds. Vegetables are also grouped together because of their shared properties (e.g., growing underground as a root). This analogy highlights another important characteristic of category formation in qualitative research: There are multiple ways in which the researcher can form categories and subcategories from the data. While the properties and dimensions themselves may not change, the ways in which the data is grouped can vary depending upon multiple factors, but particularly according to the purpose of the research. Returning to the grocery store example, one might group the items by a particular property, such as cost, color, number of calories, or expiration date. The categorization, therefore, is a reflection of the intended purpose of the research and the research questions. A summary table of the six categories and their subcategories developed to address the two primary research questions in the present study is provided below (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Overview of Categories**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>
<b>1. WORKPLACE CONTEXT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multicultural Work Environment</li> <li>• “FIT” Culture</li> </ul>
<b>2. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multicultural Connectedness</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Interpersonal Practices</li> </ul>
<b>3. INTERDEPENDENT CONTRIBUTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work-related Effort</li> <li>• Work-related Talent</li> <li>• Work Intersection</li> <li>• Work Value</li> </ul>
<b>4. INVESTMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affective Investment</li> <li>• Behavioral Investment</li> <li>• Cognitive Investment</li> </ul>
<b>5. DEVELOPMENT OF A SHARED UNDERSTANDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tabula Rasa (Level 0)</li> <li>• Authentic Interest in Coworker (Level 1)</li> <li>• Reconciliation of Differences (Level 2)</li> <li>• Norms for Interaction (Level 3)</li> </ul>
<b>6. COMFORT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness in Communication</li> <li>• Mutually Desired Closeness</li> <li>• Congeniality</li> <li>• Interpersonal Trust</li> </ul>

**Category 1: Workplace Context**

The category of workplace context refers to the organizational structure, policies, and practices that create an environment in which the development of high quality ICORs is facilitated. The category of workplace context is further specified by its subcategories of multicultural work environment and “FIT” culture, as seen in Table 6.

<b>Table 6: Workplace Context</b>				
<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Multicultural Work Environment</b>	Multicultural workforce	Dispersion of multicultural diversity		Low to High Dispersion
		Multicultural diversity of coworkers		Low to High Coworker Diversity
	Multicultural diversity of customers			Low to High Customer Diversity
	Multicultural diversity of organizational leadership			Low to High Diversity
<b>FIT Culture</b>	Fairness of work policies and procedures	Procedural justice		Low to High Justice
		Distributive justice		Low to High Justice
		Informational justice		Low to High Justice
		Interpersonal justice		Low to High Justice
	Inclusive workplace practices			Low to High Inclusion
	Transparency of organizational goals			Low to High Transparency

Workplace context refers to the environmental factors within the organization that create the conditions facilitating the development of ICORs into high quality relationships.

**Subcategory: Multicultural work environment.** Multicultural work environment is an organizational characteristic which refers to the types, levels, and locations of multicultural diversity present. Multicultural work environment was described by participants in terms of the cultural diversity of their colleagues, the cultural diversity of customers, and the cultural diversity of the organization's leadership. Given that to be eligible for the study, participants had to be considered culturally competent, it is perhaps unsurprising that participants expressed high levels of satisfaction working in multicultural work environments. Vitoria captured this sentiment when she said:

I think one of the biggest reasons why I moved here was exactly that, the multicultural aspect and the fact that I feel like I'm traveling every day. I feel like I'm traveling around the world. People bring food, they share things, ideas, ways of thinking, experiences from work, so many different places. To me, that's incredibly exciting. That's a gift. I love that. (Interview #15, Vitoria, Lines 465-469)

Multicultural work environment is further defined by its properties: multicultural workforce, multicultural diversity of customers, and multicultural diversity of organizational leadership. These properties delineate ways that participants discussed the diversity of the organization, and reflect ways in which multicultural diversity can be observed in an organization.

**Property: Multicultural workforce.** Multicultural workforce describes the work environment as experienced by participants in terms of the national cultures of coworkers in the organization. All organizations in the study were multinational firms, but the levels of coworker cultural diversity *experienced* by participants varied. The extent to

which participants experienced the multicultural nature of their organizations depended upon the level of employee national culture diversity in combination with the level of dispersion of cultures in the work environment.

Multicultural diversity of coworkers describes the level of diversity in the national cultures represented by colleagues in the organization. Multicultural diversity of coworkers describes the cultural diversity experienced by participants via the number of employee cultural backgrounds in the organization. Thus, lower levels of multicultural diversity refer to organizations in which there is a low ratio of cultures to employees (e.g., 5 cultures to 500 employees). Higher levels of multicultural diversity describe workforces in which there is a high ratio of cultures to employees (e.g., 50 cultures to 500 employees). The number of employee cultural backgrounds possible in an organization is unlimited, as employees may each identify with multiple cultures.

Dispersion of multicultural coworker diversity refers to the allocation of the diversity of cultures present within the organization. Lower levels of employee dispersion refer to work environments in which cultures are segmented (e.g., by function, position level, physical location), resulting in employee groups fractured by cultural group membership. In contrast, higher levels of employee dispersion refer to work environments in which employees of different national cultural backgrounds are integrated (e.g., throughout functions, position levels, physical locations).

As can be seen in their definitions above, the two second-level properties (i.e., multicultural diversity of coworkers and dispersion of multicultural coworker diversity) operate in tandem with one another to comprise the multicultural coworker diversity experienced by participants. Because of their integrated nature, the two second-level

properties (diversity and dispersion) are discussed together. A visual representation of the interrelated nature of diversity and dispersion is provided in Figure 2 below, with letters signifying national cultures.

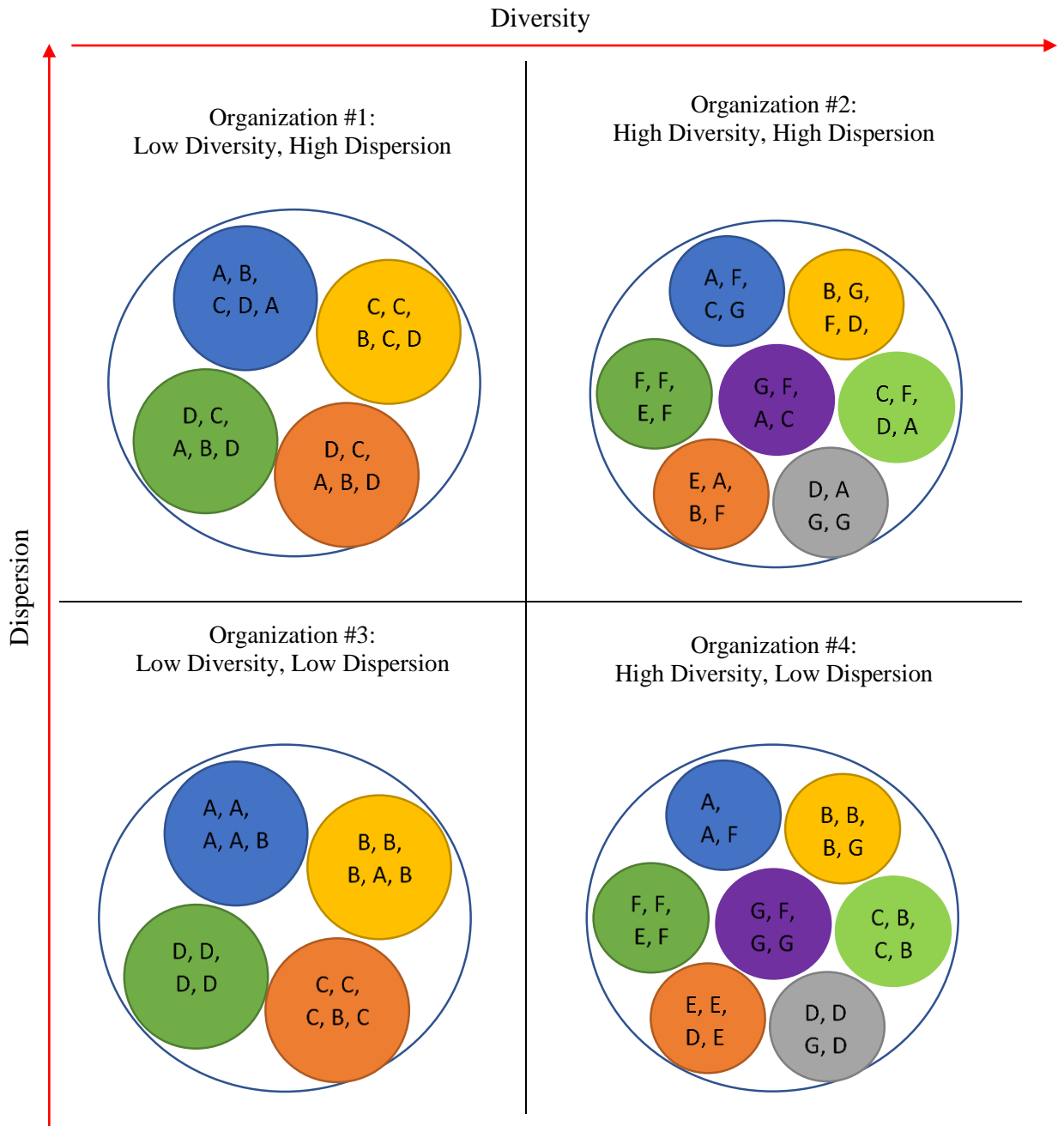


Figure 2: Multicultural Workforce Diversity and Dispersion.

This figure illustrates the interrelated nature of workforce diversity and dispersion.

As shown in Figure 2, the properties of multicultural diversity of coworkers and dispersion of multicultural coworker diversity are distinct, but they are closely linked. For example, it is possible for an organization to have a high level of diversity, yet have a low level of dispersion. In such cases, there may be a relatively high number of cultures represented by colleagues in the organization, but the interaction of cultures may be limited due to low dispersion. The reverse is also possible. An organization may have a low level of diversity, but have a high level of dispersion. In these cases, employees with a small number of differing cultural backgrounds are highly integrated throughout the organization. Similarly, diversity and dispersion both may be high or both may be low. The two properties are independent of one another, but they relate to influence the way participants experienced the multicultural nature of the workforce. While both diversity and dispersion occur along a continuum, they are discussed in this section in terms of “high” and “low” levels to illustrate the different influences on ICOR quality formation discussed by participants.

A large majority of the participants in the sample ( $N = 25$ ) described a high level of multicultural coworker diversity, and that the diversity was highly dispersed within the organization (i.e., falling into second quadrant in Figure 2). No participants described their work environments as low diversity, high dispersion (i.e., first quadrant). One participant (Karen) described her current organization as low dispersion, low diversity (i.e., third quadrant). Finally, two participants described their organizations as low dispersion and high diversity (fourth quadrant). It might be expected that the majority of participants worked in organizations characterized as having higher diversity and higher cultural dispersion, as individuals in these environments have increased opportunity to

develop ICORs. In other words, in more dispersed environments, there is a higher concentration of cultural diversity within one group (e.g., function, location). Dispersion of multicultural diversity may be important for the formation of high quality ICORs due to the different approaches employed by participants in high dispersion environments and those in low dispersion environments for developing ICOR quality, even when cultural diversity was high. Participants in work environments characterized by high cultural diversity and high multicultural dispersion tended to regard cultural differences in coworker relationships as the norm. Karen worked in high diversity, high dispersion organizations in the past, but was working in a low diversity, low dispersion organization at the time of data collection. In her interview, Karen discusses the influence of diversity and dispersion in the multicultural work environment on ICORs:

I got to work with some really big companies that were very much more global, multicultural. They were so used to being multicultural that it was different than it is here. Here, it's the exception; there, it was the rule. You interact with people differently when it's just the way you work. When it is a global company and you're on the phone with people from Dublin or Dubai or Germany or wherever else around the globe they are, those things are the way it is. Those are the people you needed and needed you, and those were the relationships that needed to be nurtured. You look to learn from people all over, like with COMPANY. I worked with someone who did a lot of work down in Mexico, but the reactions that they had to some of the practices we were bringing up [were that] they openly said,



‘How do we tweak that to make it work?’ It was normal to do; we don't have that as the norm here yet. (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 570-578)

As Karen notes in her comparison, many of her coworker relationships in previous, highly dispersed organizations were intercultural. In her current work environment representing the lower end of dispersion, ICORs are not the norm, but rather the exception. An associated implication of highly dispersed work environments is that employees regard ICORs as a norm. When ICORs are the norm, experiencing cultural differences among colleagues is a common, rather than a unique experience only encountered by foreign-born employees or select groups of employees who work cross-culturally (e.g., expatriates). Instead, most employees have opportunity to become comfortable experiencing cultural differences and it becomes a point of commonality with colleagues, or as Karen states “it's just the way you work.”

In another example, Andrei describes the high level of dispersion of the high level of diversity in his work environment:

I think at this point given how globalized we are it actually takes an effort not to have cross-cultural [relationships]. You actually have to make an effort to close yourself down... So, I think by simply being here and being open-minded and willing enough to simply talk to different people, you do tap into that cross-cultural experience without having to make an effort. As a matter of fact, it should take an effort to only choose to talk to people of your race, religion, your creed, or your cultural affiliation. That's hard to do. So the way... I'm not going to wake up and say, I'm going to have a

cross-cultural experience today. I'm just open to whatever happens.

(Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 63-71).

The high dispersion in Andrei's work environment affords ample opportunity to interact with others with a variety of backgrounds, such that intentional effort would be required to avoid having ICORs. Vitoria also describes her work environment as highly diverse and highly dispersed:

We have a very, very diverse office. We are 35 people. I think [we have] 12 nationalities and 17 languages that we speak, so this is the United Nations. It's very, very diverse. When we have lunch, it's a very special time. We get together around a table. It's usually the same 8 or 10 people, and we have very interesting discussions. (Interview #15, Vitoria, Lines 172-174)

Clearly, Vitoria's work environment is not only highly culturally diverse, but there is a high degree of interaction of cultural diversity. In a final example, Fairuza reiterates feeling more comfortable in a highly dispersed work environment in which ICORs are the norm:

I feel better with the people who have perhaps the kind of same background, and that doesn't mean the same culture. It means they are open to know about other countries or other cultures. I feel more comfortable around that, and I don't have the feeling that I have to impose my religion, my feelings, my point of view, etcetera. (Interview #2, Fairuza, Lines 73-77)

The prevalence of cultural differences in Fairuza's work environment create an atmosphere in which ICORs are normal. Fairuza feels a sense of comfort knowing that her colleagues share the mindset of being open to learn about other cultures.

In contrast to the descriptions above, two participants discussed work environments with lower levels of dispersion of national cultures, but high levels of diversity in the organizations overall. Because ICORs may not be the norm in environments with lower levels of dispersion, cultural differences may be experienced less frequently in comparison with work environments with higher dispersion. The practical impact of this difference was observed in participant descriptions of their response to cultural differences, wherein participants emphasized their role (as opposed to their colleagues' role) in adapting to their colleagues' work styles, which included a focus on minimizing differences (see the development of a shared understanding category for additional discussion on when participants emphasized similarities and differences).

Dirim's organization is a multinational firm, but the diversity of national cultures within the organization tends to be separated rather than integrated. The nature of the organization's work limits the business-related need for interaction of employees working in different countries. Due to the learning curve associated with country-specific regulations in this industry, it may be more difficult to be successful working at this organization in locations foreign to the individual. Due to these conditions, the work environment is characterized by lower levels of cultural dispersion. The majority of coworker relationships at the U.S. location of the company are same-culture. Dirim is Turkish, and the majority of Dirim's coworker relationships are with U.S. colleagues. While Dirim has a high number of ICORs, there is little diversity in terms of the national

cultures represented by colleagues in those relationships. In this work environment, cultural differences in coworker relationships are less common. One implication for ICOR quality in lower dispersion environments can be observed in the additional emphasis Dirim placed on similarities with colleagues:

That's the thing with them. The cultural background has nothing to do with those relationships; that's why they're good. Otherwise, you feel it, as a foreigner you feel it. (Interview #5, Dirim, Lines 475-476)

Because Dirim is one of few foreigners in her work environment, she emphasizes minimizing differences to fit into the more homogeneous work environment. In her explanation, feeling like a foreigner has a negative connotation. Elsewhere in her interview, Dirim discusses the only time that cultural differences impacted an ICOR, and it was a very negative experience:

We were talking about business. I was just asking him a question, 'How did you do this? I'm trying to understand what's happening.' He looks at me and says, 'Do you have the Middle Eastern anger in you?' abruptly. That has nothing to do with the business... If they let you know that they see you differently [that's bad]... if they see me differently and they don't let me know, I'm happy with that. I don't notice it, I don't-- I'm okay. Don't tell me anything I don't need to know. But if they let you know about that, like that, then that's not a good relationship.

(Interview #5, Dirim, Lines 174-182).

Dirim made it clear that this incident involving a culturally based insult was not the norm. However, she does discuss that the implication in this work environment is to avoid

discussion of cultural differences. This is in clear contradiction to participants working in work environments characterized by higher dispersion.

Another example of a participant working in an environment with lower cultural dispersion was in the case of Geert. Although Geert works in a multinational organization that with employees in more than 150 countries, there is a relatively low level of cultural dispersion. Geert describes his experience of the work environment below:

I'm the only non-American there, particularly in the office area where I'm at. There are locals, they're STATE people... and all of a sudden [they realize], 'I'm with this Dutch guy.' They never seemed to look at me [the same], like [they've] never seen it before and I'm working in that office, right?... The office culture, it's a position in a finance function, right? It had always been held by Americans, and all of a sudden, you start throwing a Dutch guy in the mix. Things are different, right? It's a different dynamic. (Interview #8, Geert, Lines 642-652)

Geert explains that he is the only non-American working in the office, and that the majority of his ICORs are with American colleagues; there is a low level of cultural diversity among his ICORs. As a result, Geert feels “a different dynamic” with his colleagues. The different dynamic may be that the work environment requires Geert to be more adaptable than his colleagues to align with the work environment.

You need to be very adaptable to work with these different styles people have. Kind of like, you don't need to go totally believe in and know all the

culture, but at least try to respect it...It means mostly holding back a little bit and I'm not saying I'm holding back in my job, but for an example: In the Dutch culture, people are very straight-forward, right? They tell you how it is. If I would do that in a meeting that I'm in with my colleagues, they would look at me like, 'Oh, what is this guy saying?' They will think that maybe [I'm being] offensive. You need to be adaptable how you communicate, watch your body language. They're all of our own, that's what I mean in terms of adaptability. (Interview #8, Geert, Lines 147-160).

In Geert's interview excerpt above, he discusses the way he has adapted his communication style to be less direct with his American colleagues. Throughout Geert's interview, he consistently focused more on the ways in which he has adapted to American culture than ways in which U.S. colleagues have adapted to his style. This pattern may be explained by the relatively few ICORs Geert's colleagues have, and thus have fewer opportunities to develop their skills (e.g., adaptability) to foster high quality ICOR relationships. Geert's responses also suggest that his colleagues have limited familiarity with Dutch culture in particular. In contrast, the majority of Geert's coworker relationships are ICORs with American colleagues, which provides him with ample opportunity to practice ICOR skills and to learn American colleagues' cultural tendencies in particular.

In both cases, Dirim and Geert describe work environments in which foreign-born individuals adapt to working in a low dispersion work environment in the U.S., with majority U.S. colleagues.

As illustrated in this section, multicultural diversity of coworkers and dispersion of multicultural coworker diversity are distinct but related factors that work in tandem to inform the ways participants experienced the multicultural workforce in their respective organizations. Dispersion moderates the influence of an organization's level of multicultural coworker diversity on ICORs, as employees only experience multicultural coworker diversity to the extent it is represented through interactions with their colleagues.

***Property: Multicultural diversity of customers.*** The multicultural diversity of customers further served to define the multicultural work environment. Higher levels of multicultural diversity of customers signify greater variety in terms of the cultural backgrounds of customers served by the organization. Participants noted that multicultural diversity of customers influenced the development of high quality ICORs:

So, in terms of the services that my company delivers or in terms of the contacts that we do with people, it is quite extensively a multicultural and multinational [company] in terms of the interactions. So, both how my company is organized and how our clients are organized, it's extremely important that we have strong relationships with coworkers. Just by nature of the organization, they [coworker relationships] are multicultural because of how the company is organized.

(Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 17-21)

As Nilesh explains above, the cultural diversity of customers necessitates cultural diversity in the company's workforce. Thus, the higher levels of customer cultural diversity appear to positively influence the number of ICORs in the organization overall. Nilesh goes on to suggest that it is "extremely important" for these relationships to be

strong, as colleagues must also work across cultures with customers to achieve business success. In another example, Saud echoes Nilesh's view that the higher level of customer diversity results in higher levels of coworker diversity:

I really got an opportunity to work in a multicultural environment more at COMPANY. We're a global company with operations in, obviously, the U.S., Italy, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia. We have customers all over. So, I got to work intimately with all these people from all these different countries. It was a very rewarding experience. (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 12-15)

Saud clearly connects the company's cultural diversity of customers with the opportunity to work with colleagues from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Because of the cultural diversity of customers, there is an interdependence for colleagues to work together to achieve organizational success (see interdependent contribution category). In both of these examples, participants draw a clear link between cultural diversity of customers and the opportunity to develop high quality ICORs.

***Property: Multicultural diversity of organizational leadership.*** Multicultural diversity of organizational leadership describes participant perceptions of the level of cultural diversity in the organization's leadership. As is commonly stated regarding organizational culture, "it starts at the top." Participants echoed this sentiment when discussing the impact of cultural diversity within the leadership team on their perceptions of the level of multicultural diversity in the work environment. For example, Marina (a Portuguese participant in a leadership role) discusses the impact of the increased cultural diversity in the organization's leadership team in recent years:



When I had a conversation with the CEO and the leadership team in terms of we have to be more reflective of what our employee and customer base is in terms of representation of diversity, especially at the corporate level. Of course, most of our employee population, 70% are outside the U.S. There's a lot of diversity there already, but that was not really represented so much in the corporate office... I think that actually has enabled better coworker relations, including individuals as part of the leadership team. We used to have a leadership team that was all white, U.S. men, no diversity. Today, we have actually a CEO who is French and another C-level leader is from India. I like to say that I contribute to that too, bringing more diversity into this office because we definitely cannot be US-centric. We have to have a global mindset on how we operate... [it has] such a big impact... That actually has contributed to enrich a lot of our culture here and is more representative of our employee and customer base. (Interview #11, Marina, Lines 75-84)

The increased diversity of the organization's leadership team has "such a big impact" on the culture of the organization, as it demonstrates alignment between the cultural diversity of leadership with the cultural diversity of employees. Kwai (a Hong Kong Chinese leader) reiterates that the diversity of an organization's leadership team influences employee perceptions of the work environment:

We are a global company. I'm sure you know we have different ethnicities here. You know we have vice presidents that are African American, we have Indian, one from China, of course Japanese... I think that it sends a message to the workplace. (Interview #7, Kwai, Lines 753-756)

As Kwai notes, the diversity present in the leadership team “sends a message” to employees that TechManuf is a global organization, rather than an organization based in one country (with leadership representing only that culture) operating in multiple locations. A final example from Andrei highlights the impact of diversity at the leadership level on ICORs. Andrei’s employer, TechFin, as described earlier, is characterized as a highly diverse and highly dispersed organization. The leadership team is highly diverse, with ten cultures represented in its 25-person leadership team. Andrei describes the implications of diversity at the leadership level for the workforce:

I'm going to steal shamelessly from our CEO but he says, something on the lines of, if you surround yourself with people who think the same way, you'd think the same way then you all have the same blind spots. It's like sitting in the same spot in the car, then expecting to have a 360 view. Now because of how the car is built, you're still going to have the same blind spot. To me, the understanding of the existence of blind spots has to come from the understanding of your own limitations. Once you become aware of your own limitations, you cannot imagine the functional working environment without colleagues. It's just not possible... my colleagues fill in the gaps. (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 174-182)

In the analogy used by Andrei, he summarizes why different perspectives presented by one’s colleagues are of great value and importance. As he states, Andrei originally learned the analogy from the CEO of Andrei’s organization, who serves on a highly diverse leadership team. In this way, the CEO models the benefits of high quality ICORs to the rest of the organization. Andrei’s use of the analogy makes it clear that the CEO’s

explanation of ICOR's importance has had a meaningful impact on employees' view of ICORs.

**Subcategory: FIT culture.** The subcategory of "FIT" (i.e., Fair, Inclusive, Transparent) culture describes perceptions that one's organization operates according to known policies and practices (whether formal or informal), clear goals, and inclusive workplace practices upheld by the organization. This definition also indicates a perception of a lack of politics in the organization.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
<b>FIT Culture</b>	Fairness of work policies and procedures	Procedural justice		Low to High Justice
		Distributive justice		Low to High Justice
		Informational justice		Low to High Justice
		Interpersonal justice		Low to High Justice
	Inclusive workplace practices			Low to High Inclusion
	Transparency of organizational goals			Low to High Transparency

As shown in Table 6.1, this subcategory is further defined by its properties, fairness of work policies and procedures as well as transparency of organizational goals. Parker sums up this subcategory in his description of what defines a good company for ICORs:

For me, it's what makes up the company. I mean, you can't have a company that's functional unless the relationships work. Even if there's still a little bit of

disagreement here and there, it's with the goal focused on achieving what the company wants you to do, so you know what has to happen. You have to have that in the company. (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 34-38)

In Parker's description, ICORs play a critical role in allowing a company to be functional, but the company also must clearly state the objectives in such a way that allows employees to carry out their work in support of the organization's goals.

***Property: Fairness of work policies and practices.*** Fairness of work policies and procedures refers to participants' perceptions of fairness concerning the ways in which the organizational environment promotes fair decisions, allocation of resources, information-sharing, and interpersonal interaction. Participants' descriptions of fair work policies and practices aligned closely with previous research in organizational justice, which supports a four-dimensional conceptualization of organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001). Due to the close alignment of participants' discussion of fair work policies and procedures that support the development of high quality ICORs, the same terminology is used to be consistent with previous research.

Procedural justice was described by participants as unbiased and objective decision making. In the first example, Kwai discusses his approach to maintaining impartiality through fair decision-making as a leader in the organization. As a C-level leader, Kwai plays a major role in organizational decisions. In his position, he makes decisions that represent the organization to employees, impacting their perceptions of fairness in the company. Kwai describes his approach to maintaining fairness in the workplace:

Any personal discussions I have are about family and all those are pretty superficial in a sense. That's actually that's how I've been keeping my relationships with all the people I work with because it is very difficult to mix the two in my experience, it could cloud your judgement and that it would be unfair to the other people who work for this company. I've seen that happen because people will make decisions based on personal emotions or non-business judgment, which is not good for business... In an environment like this, we're all professional managers. Some different levels, true, but we are all professional managers; we are not owners of the business. That's why I think it's unfair or that it's not good business practice to try to use personal preferences or prejudice to make business decisions. (Interview #5, Kwai, Lines 470-475)

As Kwai notes, he strives to maintain perceptions of fair workplace by making decisions without taking into account his personal preference. He believes that it is a good business practice to apply processes consistently across individuals.

Another example of procedural justice illustrates this point from the perspective of an employee in another organization. Nilesh describes the impact of a perceived lack of procedural justice in his role:

Many times, it happens that two salespeople or more salespeople end up on the same client and there is a perceived – it's not perceived, it's actually true – that the company only recognizes one person. People might resort to some mechanisms by which they would like to get recognized because of a financial incentive. But then again, it's a work process issue. Not necessarily a cultural issue because if it was anything to do with culture, I see everybody equally included in the incentives

and financial rewards. To that extent when I see those challenges, I see [them] more as an organizational process challenge rather than a cultural challenge.

(Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 122-129)

In Nilesh's example, he explains the negative impact of a work process issue. When multiple salespeople work together to support a client, the processes are arranged in such a way that only one person is recognized for their contribution. This system is problematic, as it ignores some salespeople and their contributions to serve the client. It results in unrewarded employee work that the company values. Perhaps most importantly, the lack of procedural justice can incentivize individuals to "resort to some mechanisms by which they would like to get recognized because of a financial incentive." The issue is then compounded by colleagues who observe this practice. As Nilesh suggests, some may attribute resorting to other mechanisms as a cultural issue or a process issue. In Nilesh's case, he observes this to be a process issue which results in perceptions of unfairness. Because some individuals view this problem as a cultural issue, it may lead to obstacles in developing high quality ICORS. Clearly, the process does not support the development of high quality ICORS, as it may result in difficult situations for sales colleagues, particularly for cases in which employees attribute a lack of fairness to a colleague's differing cultural background.

A second type of justice noted by participants was distributive justice, which describes perceptions of fairness regarding the allocation of resources in the organization. Parker describes the way he worked alongside his colleague to fairly divvy up their shared budget:

That's one of the key things, the budgets. Every year in October, we have to sit down and say, 'These are the things I want to do, this is the money we have to spend.' Then when he roles it all up with his, I think "wow." It's very fair. There are some things that I wanted to get, some things I didn't want, and some things that I couldn't afford but we worked together to divvy it up. I put together my spreadsheet, and then I would color code the things that were optional. He had a budget of his too. There were options there, too. We worked from that starting point. (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 541-548)

In this case, the organization provided Parker and his colleague with autonomy to allocate resources as they saw fit. As described by Parker, this was regarded as a fair process for distributing the available resources and coming to an agreement regarding their shared budget. In a second example, Marina describes how organizational leadership awarded her with additional resources in response to her exemplary performance:

There was one person when I started. and today in the talent management area, we have seven people. In four years, that's quite an accomplishment. The CEO was like "You're doing a job. I'll give you more resources." (Interview #11, Marina, Lines 55-57)

Marina regards the process by which resources were provided to her as fair. She expresses that the additional resources were sufficient and appropriate, commensurate with her contribution.

A third type of justice discussed by participants concerned the practices for sharing information within the organization, and aligns with informational justice in

previous research. An example of informational justice is communicating information to employees regarding their future with the company. With her position in HR, Marina expresses her perceptions of fairness regarding the timeliness with which information is shared with the candidate:

When it comes to people, either way, either if it's to recognize people and advance their capability in the company, or sometimes [to tell] people that [they] are just not a good fit. I don't think it's fair to that person, and that those conversations need to take place. You need to be honest and fair with people. (Interview #11, Marina, Lines 318-322)

The way information is shared in the organization and the practice supporting information sharing plays a key role in determining perceptions of fairness.

Finally, a fourth type of justice discussed by participants was interpersonal justice, which concerns the fair interpersonal treatment of employees. Fair interpersonal treatment refers to interactions characterized as respectful and polite. Fairuza describes a strained relationship her team has with another team within the organization. The leader of the partnering team allows team members to make requests in ways that are regarded as impolite and disrespectful by Fairuza:

They demand things that are not fair or they're not okay to do that and they don't do that in a good manner and they should do that in a good manner. It doesn't seem polite even the tone of talking the language. (Interview #2, Fairuza, Lines 526-528)



It is apparent from Fairuza's description that she perceives a lack of interpersonal fairness, and that this has a negative impact on the quality of the ICOR. In a second example, Ping describes the importance of interpersonal fairness from the perspective of HR:

I've been a HR for many, many years and I think being a professional HR, the first important thing with co-working with other people is no bias. We need to treat all fairly and consistently. (Interview #16, Ping, Lines 39-41)

Fair treatment is important for ICOR quality, particularly as enacted by HR, who may be viewed as a primary means for addressing interpersonal issues in the organization.

Considered together, the four areas of procedural, distributive, informational, and interpersonal justice form the basis for employee perceptions of fairness in the organization. Perceptions of fairness influence the behaviors employees choose to enact in the organization, and thereby affect the quality of relationships with coworkers. While all coworker relationships are impacted by perceptions of fairness, the presence of different cultures can add another layer to employee interpretation of fairness. This idea was discussed most clearly by Nilesh, who highlighted the possibility for employees to attribute "process issues" to "cultural issues," presenting impediments to the development of quality in ICORs.

***Property: Transparency of organizational goals.*** Transparency of organizational goals refers to employees' comprehension of the objectives assigned by the organization. Participants discussed the importance of organizational goal clarity for the development

of quality in ICORs, as it reduces political behavior emerging from selfish motives.

Parker explains his experience working in a highly political work environment:

If we've got a common goal, then these are things we know we need to do. For me, I just thought probably it was unfortunate because they had all of what I perceive as the qualities you need to get the job done and get it done right, but there was all of this other empire building, politics type of things getting in the way. (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 435-439)

In the political environment discussed by Parker, there was a lack of clarity regarding a common goal. The lack of transparency in the political environment resulted in “empire building” exhibited by colleagues that got “in the way” of an effective work relationship.

In a second example, Nilesh discusses a workplace environment without politics:

To that extent, I have approached all my coworker relationships with trying to establish a baseline of trust which is not very difficult because the organization is very professionally run so we don't have too much of office politics or people saying things in the background and so on, so we don't see much of that.

(Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 107-110)

Nilesh discusses the positive impact of a “professionally run” organization in which politics do not impede the development of trust in ICORs. Nilesh expands on the characteristics of a work environment in a “professionally run organization” in the following quote:

I think a professionally run organization which has good firm goals to accomplish helps. In the sense that we all are trying to get to the same goal here and to that

extent, some of the cultural aspects are more how should I say- tolerated? Say I'm talking to somebody of a different country and I say something which is considered offensive in that culture, but I think because of the nature of the organization and how it is run, they are able to understand that it's not meant to be offensive, it's meant to get to our goal. To that extent, people slow down, explain what is right, what is not right [in that culture]. There have been occasions where once I learn, I would apologize and so on but it's a mutually respectful learning process that we all go through, knowing very well that at the end of the day our goals are the same. (Nilesh, 47-56)

Nilesh explains that a professionally run organization is one that has clear goals that serve to align the efforts of employees. Nilesh also discusses the positive impact this environment has on the development of ICOR quality, particularly when cultural differences present a challenge in communicating. The relationship of organizational goal clarity and development of a shared understanding is discussed in the Chapter 5.

***Property: Inclusive workplace practices.*** Participants described inclusive workplace practices as those that foster a sense of belonging in the work environment. Participants noted the critical role of inclusive workplace practices in multiculturally diverse work environments. Inclusion was discussed by participants as a second and necessary step to experience the benefits of diversity. Because of this, only participants ( $N = 5$ ) who had previous work experience in multiple organizations with multicultural work environments (i.e., in addition to their current multicultural work environment) could observe this pattern and offer this comparison. It may be important to note that dispersion, as described earlier in this section, is distinct from inclusive workplace

practices. Dispersion refers to the allocation of the diversity of cultures present within the organization. Specifically, dispersion describes the level of structural integration of cultures (e.g., throughout functions, position levels, physical locations). In contrast, participants described inclusive workplace practices as the policies and practices upheld in the organization that foster perceptions of belonging. Because the study investigates the quality of cross-cultural relationships, descriptions of inclusion and belonging offered by participants focused on inclusion across cultures.

Although Karen's current work environment was lower in diversity compared to the rest of the sample, her experiences working in highly diverse work environments provided her with insights on the role of inclusive workplace practices:

You've got to have diversity to have inclusion, but inclusion is what makes the business better. There was a diversity workshop that had an analogy that I loved. If you're going to have a dance, and you want to have people just come to the dance, and you invite everybody and all kinds of people, you get diversity coming in the door. You don't get inclusion until you ask people to dance. It's that actually working together, contributing – that's where you get different thoughts. That's where you get innovation. That's where you get growth. You don't get growth from diversity; you get growth from inclusion. (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 464-471)

Karen is clear on the importance of inclusive workplace practices in highly diverse work environments. While diversity is a helpful prerequisite for business outcomes such as innovation and growth, inclusive workplace practices in which multiple perspectives are leveraged have the most impact on making the “business better.”

Marina's professional background afforded her experiences working in and with a number of multinational corporations. At her current organization, she notes the importance of inclusion in diverse work environments:

The diversity is one thing. Then, when you talk about inclusion and how actually people integrate and appreciate each other's cultures [that's another thing]. I think we have a lot that at SmallTechChem... We have the international days where everybody brings their food and you see people just mingling outside of work and just appreciating the cultures... That [is the] kind of integration and inclusiveness that I think is very important, and it's more than just diversity. (Interview #10, Marina, Lines 218-224)

It appears that inclusive workplace practices, such as "international days," allow for the potential benefits of diversity to be experienced by employees. As Marina notes, inclusive workplace practices give employees the opportunity to appreciate the cultures present inside the organization.

Lastly, Venu illustrates an example of an inclusive workplace practice in his organization based in the United States (abbreviated from full quote, which appears in multicultural connectedness):

The very first rule I heard is, if we are in the meeting environment, it doesn't matter. All 100% Indians or a mix, we are going to use the local language [English]. If we are in the break out room, having coffee, drinking chai outside, [then] it's fine [to speak Hindi]. But not in the

meeting environment...It's all about inclusiveness and I don't want them to be feeling that they are left out. (Interview #3, Venu, Lines 378-380)

Venu shares how a specific policy designed to facilitate inclusion impacts sense of belonging in the work environment.

**Summary of Workplace Context.** This category explained the workplace context that may serve to facilitate the development of high quality ICORs. Specifically, perceptions of the multicultural work environment as well as fair and clear workplace practices may create workplace context favorable for employees to develop high quality ICORs.

**Category 2: Personal Characteristics**

The category personal characteristics describes the individual differences that belong to members of the ICOR, which serve to promote the development of high quality ICORs. Personal characteristics of the individuals in the ICOR represent a condition that may give rise to the creation of high quality ICORs. While it does not directly address the definition of quality in ICORs, it provides explanatory power to specify when, how, and with whom high quality ICORs are likely to develop in organizations. Further, the category of personal characteristics in the present study may build upon the extensive body of previous research regarding cultural competency by focusing only on personal characteristics which foster coworker relationship quality, as discussed in Chapter 5. Personal characteristics that serve to promote quality in ICORs are further categorized into three subcategories, as outlined in Table 7.

<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Multicultural Connectedness</b>	Multicultural connectedness in personal life			Low to High Connectedness
	Multicultural connectedness in professional life			Low to High Connectedness
<b>Motivation</b>	Social connection			Low to High Motivation
	Achievement			Low to High Motivation
	Personal growth & development			Low to High Motivation
<b>Interpersonal Practices</b>	Cultural self-awareness			Low to High Awareness
	Empathy	Skill-based empathy		Low to High Empathy
		Personality-based empathy		Low to High Empathy
	Humility			Low to High Humility
Dependability			Low to High Dependability	

**Subcategory: Multicultural connectedness.** Multicultural connectedness refers to the extent to which participants described their own as well as colleagues' levels of connectedness with multiple cultures. Specifically, participants discussed low multicultural connectedness resulted in an inappropriate focus on one's own culture and a lack of awareness or exposure to other cultures. In contrast, higher multicultural connectedness referred to a sense of association with multiple cultures. At the highest level, multicultural connectedness was described as identification with multiple cultures. Cultural connectedness was described by participants in terms of their personal and their professional lives, as outlined in Table 7.1.



<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Multicultural Connectedness</b>	Multicultural connectedness in personal life			Low to High Connectedness
	Multicultural connectedness in professional life			Low to High Connectedness

**Property: Multicultural connectedness in personal life.** Participants discussed multicultural connectedness in their personal lives as an association or identification with multiple cultures. While multicultural identity was not required to develop high quality ICORS, exposure to multiple cultures appeared to facilitate a deeper understanding of culture’s influence on an individual’s (e.g., colleague’s) identity and perspective. Andrei shares his multicultural connectedness, and the its importance in shaping his multicultural identity:

“I was not told that we, that my mother was Jewish until she passed away, about 10 years ago. It was something that people didn't talk about. It was something that, you know, even though kids were mocking me at school for being Jewish, whatever they could associate with being Jewish. I never thought I was. I felt... there were, like, Orthodox Jews. I didn't know. I always knew my father was Romanian because of our last name, but my parents divorced when I was six, so I didn't have the luxury to tap into that culture either... I feel like I don't know any culture well enough to say, “I'm that one,” but that in turn sparked my curiosity. And I'm actually kind of at peace with it. In the

sense that it relieves me from some of the hooks that come with certain choices. For instance, this is going to seem silly, but a lot of Jews feel they have to form an opinion about the Palestinian state, or about Israel and its history, or they have very strong feelings about the genocide. I had grandparents that were in concentration camps, but I feel like my positions are less aggressive. Same thing with the Romanian side. There was a genocide in 1914, 1917 where Turks were killing Armenians allegedly in World War 1, but it was really a cleansing. And a lot of Armenians will say, "I'll never step foot in Turkey." There's a lot of aggression. My heritage doesn't account with that. So, I don't think that I ever connected with any culture strongly or intimately enough where it would take over everything else, because I feel that partially that takes away from my ability to objectively and freely explore everything else. I would love to go to Iran and I've spent about a year in Turkey. I love Turkish culture. I guess at some point, I made the conscious choice that I would rather be a little of everything than none of one thing because I think that is not as rich of an experience." (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 99-118)

Andrei's personal experiences throughout his life provided him with opportunities to form connections with multiple cultures. Due to his meaningful connections with multiple cultures, he described his cultural identity with the phrase "culturally undefined." Because Andrei felt as though his cultural identity was definitively

multicultural, he considered most of his interactions to be cross-cultural in nature, and approached them with this mindset.

In the case of Kwai, his experiences growing up in multiple cultures contributed to his cultural identity, which he describes below:

I was born in Hong Kong, and my parents immigrated to Malaysia when I was six years old. Then I went to a boarding school in England when I was 13. I spent my high school years and undergrad in England and came to the U.S. for my MBA when I was 21 years old. After I graduated in 1984, I joined TechManuf. From '84 to '87, I worked in St. Louis. Then they transferred me to Hong Kong for 10 years as Business Director... I spoke more languages when I was younger than now. When I lived in Malaysia, I spoke Malay. I learned a little bit French when I was at school in England, and then I was quite proficient in Japanese. I spent three, four months during my college days there as an exchange student. I also spoke three dialects in Chinese. Right now, it's just Chinese and English because those are the two that I use for business and also at home. The rest of them, I don't use them very frequently, in fact almost none at all, except maybe for Japanese, at a very simple level when I travel there. (Interview #6, Kwai, Lines 106-112)

Kwai's multicultural experiences during developmental phases of his life (e.g., childhood, college, early career) afforded him the opportunity to learn a number of

languages. Kwai describes how these experiences led to his description of his cultural identity as a “global citizen” below:

I really am connected with multiple cultures, and I don't like the idea of putting myself in one... One cultural norm is so different than the other, but if we have one global citizen, and one global norm – I just think there is just hope there. I understand that we'll never get there, but still because of my background essentially, it's just that because I grew up in England, and when I was 13 years old, I was thrown into a total reform, me and my family, so that I had to adapt to all of the different cultures. (Interview #6, Kwai, Lines 76-79)

In Kwai's description, he underscores his connection with multiple cultures. Kwai suggests that having exposure to multiple cultures early and often in his life contributed to his thoughts regarding the benefits of global citizens, who are connected to multiple cultures.

A final example illustrating multicultural connectedness in one's personal life is represented with the case of Fairuza. Fairuza discusses her previous and ongoing experiences in a variety of cultures, and the resultant impact on her cultural identity:

In Europe, we have something called the Erasmus programme. It's a scholarship you get to go on an exchange to another university in Europe. I did it in Belfast, Ireland, that was probably why I like Irish culture. I moved to work in Dublin; I lived there for 14 years. My kids were born there; my kids are growing up as Irish. My husband is from Iran. I met him in Gran Canarias. It's been four months since I moved

to London. I've lived in so many places...If I have to pick one [culture to identify with], I would say Spanish, or Madrid, because my teenage or formative years were spent there. I think it is the time of life that you define yourself or you pick things up, but honestly, it's very hard to say because I can't say where I am from. When I meet with my friends in Spain, I'm not totally like that person I was before, but kind of being a citizen of the world which is okay to carry [be], yes...there's no reason to have to pick just one. I like that term, citizen of the world...I think I have a bit of everywhere.

Like Andrei and Kwai, Fairuza feels a strong sense of connection with multiple cultures due to her experiences living in a variety of countries. The experiences she has appear to be linked to the way she identifies her cultural connections and in her description of herself as a “citizen of the world.”

***Property: Multicultural connectedness in professional life.*** Multicultural connectedness in one's professional life refers to the ways in which participants described forming connections with other cultures as part of their work life. Multicultural connectedness in professional life is distinguished from personal life, as approximately half of participants in the sample described their multicultural connectedness primarily in the work context, rather than as part of developmental or ongoing experiences in personal life. In professional life, a higher level of connectedness refers to an individual's association or identification with multiple cultures via adoption of or appreciation for work style influenced by culture. For example, Jessica described how her approach to work aligned with many of her German colleagues:

So, I'm American, but have been working in a German-owned company for the last 15 years. Stylistically, I really enjoy it. It felt comfortable to me... I identified with German culture. Yeah, I guess I realized that my personal or work style seemed to really align with the company and my German colleagues. The process and the structure, planning projects in a very advanced and detailed way. It was different at first, but then I came to really like it. I think I like knowing where things are at – with people and projects. We work well together that way. (Interview #13, Jessica, Lines 155-159).

Prior to working at BigTechChem, Jessica had limited exposure to German culture in her personal or professional life. Jessica describes the alignment between her approach to work and her German colleagues (e.g., project planning, process, structure). The appreciation for the work approach demonstrated by her German colleagues was evident in Jessica's response.

A second example illustrates the multicultural connectedness developed by Ping due to her multiple work experiences working in a variety of cultural work environments:

I never studied or lived overseas, but I have three working histories in being in HR, 15 years with a British company, then 3 years with a public listed China company, then in MultiTech for 5 years. My working background gave me a lot of opportunities to understand these international cultures. In my past working experience, I worked with people from different countries such as like US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, also other different countries. So, they helped me

to understand about the cultural things which is valuable to my work and also to my life. (Interview #16, Ping, Lines 88-94)

Ping's experiences working with a variety of cultural backgrounds, both in terms of her colleagues and the multinational work environments, fostered her multicultural connectedness.

A final example illustrates a case in which a participant exhibited multicultural connectedness in his professional life, but kept a clear separation from the influence of other cultures in his personal life:

Professionally, I think that I'm really connected with the American people and American culture, but after office hours, it's done.

(Interview #3, Venu, Lines 139-140)

In his interview, Venu discussed the ways in which he fostered meaningful and intentional connection with his colleagues, such as going to lunch frequently, "three days or four days a week you should try to eat lunch with your coworker" (Interview #3, Venu, Lines 108). He also noted his appreciation for the cultural diversity of the work environment, and its importance for leveraging different cultural viewpoints:

I think the coworkers and teamwork, and how you make the best out of each and every one is very important right now in the workforce I would say. Because the global workforce has changed, and all of the cultural backgrounds and religions and cultures, you have to make it work.

Furthermore, Venu discussed the ways in which he encourages others to develop multicultural connectedness in his work environment:

I love my people from India. But when it comes to work, eight to five, in a professional environment, I won't encourage [speaking in Hindi]. Even in the meeting that just passed, we had a group – 80% from India and Pakistan. From time to time, they would speak in Hindi. The very first rule I heard is, if we are in the meeting environment, it doesn't matter. All 100% Indians or mix, we are going to use the local language [English]. If we are in the break out room, having coffee, drinking chai outside, [then] it's fine [to speak Hindi]. But not in the meeting environment... It's all about inclusiveness and I don't want them to be feeling that they are left out because most of IT is dominated by people who are not Americans. [IT employees are] Indians, Pakistanis, and [they are from] other countries, and I don't want my American coworkers to feel like they're left out... No, as I said, I still love my people and everything is fine, but in a professional environment here it's different. (Interview #3, Venu, Lines 377-382)

Outside of the workplace, however, Venu is predominantly connected to his Indian culture, and “struggles” to connect with other cultures, such as the U.S., in his personal life:

I would say [I identify as] 70 to 80% Indian. And nothing against American culture or American people, but again I'm not from that background. If you look at most of the Indians, they still follow the Indian culture and Indian food and Indian way of living. This is my 18th year



here, both of my boys are born here...18 years is a lot. But if you look at me, you'll still find me an Indian. (Interview #3, Venu, Lines 120-126)

Altogether, Venu's responses suggest that he exhibits a high degree of multicultural connectedness in the workplace, but there is a distinct separation between his multicultural connectedness in professional life and his personal life. Therefore, the case of Venu also serves as an illustration of the two properties (i.e., professional life and personal life) of multicultural connectedness. Venu's responses suggest that it is possible to be high on one property, but low on the other.

**Subcategory: Motivation.** Motivation describes the sources of motivation for building high quality ICORs as exemplified by participants. As outlined in Table 7.2, motivation is comprised of social connection, achievement, and personal growth and development.

<b>Table 7.2: Motivation</b>				
<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Motivation</b>	Social connection			Low to High Motivation
	Achievement			Low to High Motivation
	Personal growth and development			Low to High Motivation

**Property: Social connection.** Social connection refers to a sense of enjoyment derived from working with other people and the relational aspect of work. Social connection as a motivator for building high quality relationships was clearly observed for all participants in the study. A few examples were selected to highlight the property.

The first example provided by Fairuza suggests that social connection, particularly connections within the domain of the workplace, is a source of satisfaction in her work:

I enjoy having a good conversation with people. Yes, I mean, we'd have to be maybe at work to be in a good form with colleagues, but I don't know, but either way, I think I enjoy having good conversation. For example, just this morning I was having my lunch in a canteen, and I was on my own. Another lady sat in front of me, and she asked me, "Are you enjoying your day?" We started to talk. And I asked just to start building the relationship, "Do you have any particular food here?" And she was recommending to me the, what is it, toasted raviolis? ... So I was like, "Okay, good." These are the flowing conversations. We were talking with our trays, having food and I told her, "Well, I'm coming from London, and I just flew in this morning from Miami, so I am jet lagged." And she says she's working in payroll and I was like, "Oh yes, our payroll is global for the U.K., so you might know my name then" [laughs]. So, we talked about the payroll, how it's worse in UK and about taxes. It was all good. [It was a] circumstantial conversation that I didn't plan, but you always can have those, you know? (Interview #2, Fairuza, Lines 728-742)

Fairuza seeks out opportunities to develop social connection in her work environment. She explains that developing a relationship is a source of enjoyment for her. A second example illustrating social connection comes from Lian, as is later mentioned in the

description of affective investment. Lian is responding to a question regarding the importance of ICORs:

Very important. We see these people every day. We spend more time with them than we do with our own family because we are in the office a lot of the time, so it's very important to have developed good relationships. They involve what you do mentally, emotionally, and professionally, and they affect you. It's really important to develop those relationships.

(Interview #30, Lian, Lines 79-82)

To enjoy her work, a place where she spends a great deal of time, Lian explains that it is very important to develop good relationships with her colleagues. Finally, Cecilia shares her motivation to build high quality ICORs due to a satisfaction from social connection:

Of course, I want to have friends at work, and have nice colleagues. I really enjoy that, and getting to know my colleagues. I also have developed another side – it's great if you can be friends, but if you cannot get to that level, make sure you try to build the relationship to work together well. (Interview #19, Cecilia, Lines 202-204)

Cecilia is motivated to build the relationship because of the social connection, and this sentiment is echoed by Jaclyn:

I'm definitely a people-person and I think, in my mind, knowing my personality, I feed off of other people. I enjoy making people happy, I enjoy working with people, just the whole collaborative atmosphere is something that really drives and motivates me personally. I would say that's extremely important as well. (Interview #22, Jaclyn, Lines 50-53)

Jaclyn makes it very clear that she is very motivated by the social connection offered by those with whom she works.

A final example highlights the low end of the social connection spectrum. Lauren expresses frustration that her colleague appears to lack motivation from interpersonal connection:

I get so frustrated that he wouldn't just pick up the phone and call me.

However, this might come back to personality. I have a lot of peers who are very frustrated with this person, and that he resists interpersonal relationships. (Interview #17, Lauren, Lines 331-336)

In this quote, Lauren is explaining the low quality rating she gave this ICOR. This colleague appears to avoid social connection, and this is a source of dissatisfaction in the ICOR for Lauren, as well as some of her peers.

***Property: Achievement.*** Motivation through achievement refers to a feeling of satisfaction from quality work performance, goal attainment, or achieving results. Higher levels of motivation via achievement would indicate that the individual is motivated to build high quality ICORs because of the perceived connection to work success. Lower levels of motivation via achievement may indicate that the individual does not view an association between the relationship and performance, or may indicate that the individual is not motivated by success in his or her work.

Karen uses the term “engaged” to signify an individual who is highly motivated via achievement, and contrasts that with someone who is “disengaged,” and lacking motivation to achieve:

An engaged person is here because they want to contribute; [they think] it is about what I can give to an organization. A person who is not engaged is here pretty much here for the paycheck, just like “I’m trying to do what I need to do.” Someone who is disengaged actually makes it known, and shares the disgruntledness, actively saying negative things. It becomes very difficult to work together if someone is actively disengaged. It takes a lot of fun out of people if they are just not engaged because you’re working for goals from a different point of view. (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 95-99)

In Karen’s view, a colleague who is engaged and has a desire to contribute may facilitate quality in the ICOR due to the influence on shared goals (see interdependent contribution). By contrast, the quality of the ICOR is limited in cases wherein a colleague is disengaged or lacks engagement, as it may make achievement of work results more difficult to attain.

In describing the low rating for one ICOR, Aruna discusses the impact of a low motivation from achieving work results:

It’s one thing to actually work on something that’s been given to you, but it’s also another...[our work] requires you to also initiate a lot of stuff on your own based on what you’re hearing, or listening, or feeling, about the people or the culture, and so, I think some of that is not there as well...he does not have a real drive to succeed. (Interview #24, Aruna, Lines 444-448)

Aruna’s colleague does not demonstrate a “drive to succeed,” which appears to impede the development of quality of the ICOR. Given that showing initiative is suggested to be

important to the quality of their shared work, it may be the case that the colleague's lack of motivation is particularly important to Aruna's perception of relationship quality in this ICOR. It appears that Aruna's colleague is not motivated by success in his or her work.

As described earlier, another form of low motivation via achievement may be reflected when an individual does not view an association between the quality of the ICOR and work success. This is illustrated in the example provided by Vitoria below:

He's very arrogant. He sends messages in email communication that are really poor. The communication is really poor in that he is very demanding. He asks for certain things to be done immediately. Of course, I don't report to him, so he shouldn't be giving me orders or say things like, "I need to know why you haven't answered this. What is your time allocation? What have you been doing?" (Interview #15, Vitoria, Lines 386-390)

In this example, Vitoria's coworker does not appear to demonstrate a friendly tone or use a respectful approach. Instead, he appears to be impolite in his communication and demanding in his approach to collaboration. It may be that Vitoria's colleague does not associate the quality of the ICOR with his own work success.

***Property: Personal growth and development.*** Motivation via personal growth and development describes a sense of satisfaction from self-improvement through personal development and learning. Participants who exemplified motivation via personal growth and development described themselves as energized by experiences that challenged their current abilities and resulted in new insights. Participants with high

motivation via personal growth and development also discussed seeking out opportunities to grow and develop, personally and professionally.

I talk with colleagues from different countries, and they tell me about their daily lives – what they do, what they talk about, and what they like. They also introduce some interesting books, novels, and movies to me, so it's keeping me learning new things. It makes me more and more curious and learning more and more different things. I think it helps me to stay open all the time... For my life, I think another thing my cross-cultural colleagues help with is we understand the different ways to, for example, to bring up the children. In China, we only have one child, so that the child is well looked after by the parents and the family. When I talk with the friends from the other countries or the colleagues from the other countries, they explain that they try to make their children very independent and so they know what to do after they go to the universities. Those things, they give me insights and I believe it helps me in my life. (Interview #16, Ping, Lines 119-124)

Ping lists a number of opportunities for learning provided through her ICORs both at work and in her personal life. Ping says that she enjoys the opportunity to gain insights from her colleagues because she finds learning about her colleagues (e.g., daily life, books) with other cultural backgrounds interesting, but also because of the impact it has in helping her to retain an open mindset.

Another participant described the positive impact a high quality ICOR has regarding her professional development:

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The person has sometimes challenging ideas that maybe I didn't think of, that are certainly worth pursuing. And so, sometimes this gives me pause as to "Oh, I didn't think of about X. Yes, I definitely need to work around that or think more about it." (Interview #23, Sophie, Lines 171-174)

Sophie's colleague challenges Sophie in a way that promotes her professional development, encouraging her to consider multiple viewpoints. In Sophie's role, she must consider the implications of law in international contexts. Because of this, colleagues who foster the skills needed to consider work from various angles may be particularly helpful in Sophie's professional development.

Saud explains the satisfaction gained from his experience working with colleagues who bring different perspectives to work and the impact on his personal and professional development:

It's made me a much better person overall. One, appreciating these different cultures, knowing how to work with them and realizing that there are so many strengths which I don't have. Forcing you to think from different perspectives. The same problem, we look at it from three, four, five different perspectives, it makes it for a richer decision-making process as opposed to looking at it from only one lens. You look at extremely successful companies, whether it's in Japan or Korea or even Europe, each one has a-- Or Germany-- Each one has a completely different way of how they think what is important to drive business success. If you can find a way to blend all of that and find an optimal way, you are that much richer



for that experience. I've learned a lot and I continually keep learning.

(Interview #6, Saud, Lines, 81-89)

Saud explains the personal significance of his cultural learning in terms of business development as well as personal growth. It is evident that Saud assigns great importance to the knowledge gained from his ICORs.

Finally, Vitoria explains her experience with personal growth as a result of learning from the culturally diverse group of colleagues with whom she works (also referenced in workplace context):

We have a very, very diverse office. We are 35 people. I think [we have] 12 nationalities and 17 languages that we speak, so this is the United Nations. It's very, very diverse. When we have lunch, it's a very special time. We get together around a table. It's usually the same 8 or 10 people, and we have very interesting discussions... We include politics of different countries. We have a coworker that is from China and we're talking about that culture, about the president being the president for a lifetime, and hearing her perspectives. Very interesting. Like we were saying to her, "It's not good because of democracy." She says, "Who says that democracy is good?" She was bringing a lot of examples. I really enjoyed that conversation because it showed me that we have very specific mindset about things in the West, and they don't necessarily represent the values of some people, and they have their reasons to have those beliefs. She's a very smart person, a person that I really look up to. It's very interesting to hear that. You have your values and you think that, of course, democracy

is the prime and the best model for societies, but somebody is saying, "No, I don't think so. I think that maybe a monarchy or maybe one person leading the country, a dictator in some places may be good." That's very interesting to hear that. The thing that I like about that conversation, as an example, is that everybody is safe to speak and nobody felt like, "I shouldn't say this because I should be very careful or cautious about crossing lines or being politically correct." Another person felt like they could share that. I like that. We had a very interesting discussion about all of our countries and why we came here [Canada] because [each said] my country had "this" situation. Some people ask and I really like that, that people feel free to ask questions. (Interview #15, Vitoria, Lines 172-191)

The cultural diversity of Vitoria's colleagues affords her with an array of cultural perspectives that facilitate learning and reflection on her own views. Her remarks indicate that she is energized by conversations that challenge her current opinions and cause her to gain insights offered by others.

**Subcategory: Interpersonal practices.** Interpersonal practices refer to the behaviors enacted by participants and/or their colleagues to facilitate quality in the ICOR. Interpersonal practices may be considered the combined observable outcome of an individual's personality traits and skills regarding the particular interpersonal practice. For example, previous research has studied empathy both as a personality trait and a skill (Batson, Batson, Slingsby, Harrell, Peekna, & Todd, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). From the participants' point of view, this distinction was not as relevant as the interpersonal practice and its impact on the ICOR's quality.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
<b>Interpersonal Practices</b>	Cultural self-awareness			Low to High Awareness
	Empathy	Skill-based empathy		Low to High Empathy
		Personality-based empathy		Low to High Empathy
	Humility			Low to High Humility
	Dependability			Low to High Dependability

**Property: Cultural self-awareness.** Cultural self-awareness was described by participants as the mindfulness of one’s style and its alignment (or lack thereof) with others’ styles. Cultural self-awareness was also described as a recognition of how one’s culture may be perceived by others. Higher levels of cultural self-awareness exhibited by participants’ colleagues were suggested to associate with better quality ICORs, while participants viewed colleagues’ lower levels of cultural self-awareness as a defining aspect of lower quality ICORs.

A high degree of cultural self-awareness was described by Jessica as having a positive impact on the quality of an ICOR:

I would say the other party is very aware of her style. She knows how her culture is perceived, good and bad, and she is thoughtful about how she approaches things. I think it also helps because it helps her not take things personally. It has made me try to be more alert to my style as well.

(Interview #13, Jessica, Lines 117-120)

The cultural self-awareness demonstrated by Jessica's colleague included an awareness of her own style and the perceptions others may hold regarding tendencies associated with her cultural background. Due to her cultural self-awareness, Jessica's colleague is better able to avoid making inaccurate attributions of others, or "taking things personally." While Jessica does not explain this association in detail, it may be that her colleague's heightened cultural self-awareness facilitates recognition of others' unique styles that are not intended to be taken personally.

A second example illustrates the influence of a colleague's lack of cultural self-awareness on ICOR quality. When Andrei was asked if his colleague representing the low quality ICOR would provide a similar rating, he responded:

I don't know, to be quite honest with you. I don't know that she has a cultural self-awareness, or thinks it doesn't work. I think as long as she gets what she wants out of it, she thinks it's working... For instance, if she needs help, she won't say, "When can I have it?" She would say, "I want this in two weeks." I think, "well, all right, but that's not possible. And so she's like, "You know there's not a lot of work to do. So, I think you can have it done in two weeks," or, "I'll have it in two weeks." And that's in a public forum. Then I would say, "It's not reasonable; let's just take this offline and then discuss a different time." It's like, "No, no, I expect it in two weeks." That kind of thing. Or things like, "Well, here's what we have." I was like, "Well, I don't think that will work, what I need is this [amount of time]." It's like, "Well, okay, but what we are putting together here is something that we need. If you want to take something from it and

make it your own, feel free, but we can be building something else." And there's this, "But I need this." (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 1033-1041)

The colleague's lack of cultural self-awareness appears to impact the quality of the relationship in multiple ways. First, the lack of awareness regarding her personal style has a direct and negative impact on the ICOR's quality. The repetitive and insistent requests to accommodate the colleague's timeline is described elsewhere in Andrei's interview as "pushy" and "demanding." Andrei's attributes his colleague's behavior to a lack of cultural self-awareness that impedes productive discussion of work outcomes, such as project deliverables and timelines. The lack of cultural self-awareness exhibited by his colleague is suggested by Andrei to perpetuate the low quality of the relationship, as she may be unmotivated to change behavior without awareness that it is perceived as problematic.

***Property: Humility.*** Humility refers to a self-imposed modesty regarding one's personal and cultural characteristics. Humility regarding one's personal characteristics may refer to one's social status, economic status, appearance, work contribution, accomplishment, or level of education. Humility regarding one's cultural characteristics may refer to one's ability to communicate in a particular language, country of origin, or membership to a particular cultural group. The definition of humility in the present study was informed largely by Saud, who articulated humility in the following way:

Humility is being comfortable that you don't know everything. Everybody has something to contribute. Status is not defined by money or education and other things. There are people who have, in many ways, a high quality-- They're a high-quality person because of so many other traits.

Actually, confidence is different. You have to be confident in who you are, but also have the humility to know that you are not the super-being who's accomplished something great which you think in your mind you have accomplished. But really, people are doing great things in so many different spheres of life that, for them, it gives a high quality of satisfaction from what they do. So, being able to look at that and understand that, learn from everybody what they have to teach you, always knowing that you can learn something. Be open to failure and all of that. It doesn't come easy, though." (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 199-208)

Saud juxtaposes humility and confidence, as the two may be considered opposites in some cases. However, Saud describes confidence as a form of self-acceptance. Humility may be considered to build upon the notion of self-acceptance by turning the focus outward, acknowledging the valuable contributions and teaching offered by others.

Andrei provides additional insight on humility with the following comments (as is also referenced in acknowledgment of a shared humanity):

It's odd because I'm saying what I need is to be humble, is not humble [laughs]. So, listening in humility is one thing, but there has to be an inherent appreciation in your value as a fellow human that makes you equal. Like if I have to peel enough layers, we have to assume that at its core, we are brothers. Someone poor someone richer and we're slowly moving to the hippy land – at its core, the common understanding of humanity is that you're just as good as I am. Old,

young, skinny, fat, dark, white, they're just noise. I think there might be a sequence, when you understand that everybody is equal, I may not be able to do this, when you understand that everybody at their core as a species of humanity, whether your source of morality is from God or whether it's from some sort of humanistic understanding. At that core if we're equal, that brings you humility because you understand we're all here. If you understand that, then you have humility, and then you have the willingness and the patience to listen. I think this is where they come together. (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 280-292)

The first several lines of the quote from Andrei above are later discussed in the development of a shared understanding, as part of acknowledgment of shared humanity. In the full quote, Andrei builds out his explanation to explain that shared humanity is fostered by one's humility. In describing another ICOR, Andrei contrasts humility with insecurity and arrogance and its impact on the determining the quality of the ICOR:

It's very interesting and it's very odd to me, because she's also a multinational, multicultural person. I hate to say this, but it maybe comes from insecurity, maybe it comes from arrogance, I don't know, but the result is the same, is that people who deal with her feeling they're being treated [really poorly].

As noted in the description of cultural self-awareness, this ICOR was rated poorly by Andrei because of the colleague's poor treatment of others (e.g., demanding and uncompromising). Here, Andrei suggests that his colleague exhibits two traits in conflict

with the definition of humility as described above, insecurity and arrogance, and that these negatively impact the quality of the ICOR.

***Property: Empathy.*** Participants described empathy in terms of understanding and relating to the feelings of another. Previous research in individual differences has noted the multidimensional nature of empathy (Batson, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Specifically, an individual's empathy is considered both a personality trait as well as a skill. Personality-based empathy is defined as "an emotional reaction that is based on the apprehension of another's emotional state or condition and that involves feelings of concern and sorrow for the other person (rather than merely a reflection of the other person's emotional state)" (Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Karbon, Maszk, Smith, & Suh, 1994). Higher empathy as a personality trait suggests that individuals may be more likely to feel empathetic to others by relating to their emotional experiences. Skills-based empathy corresponds with effective perspective-taking. Individuals who are more skilled in empathy may be better at perspective taking and accurately identifying the emotional experiences of others. While empathy as a skill and as a personality trait are conceptually (and empirically; Batson, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987) related, they are distinct. For example, it is possible for an individual to *feel* empathy for others (i.e., due to their personality), and at the same time, the individual may not accurately *identify* the emotions experienced by the other (i.e., low skill-based empathy). Conversely, an individual may be skilled at identifying and understanding another's emotions (i.e., high skill-based empathy), but may not react with personal emotional concern (i.e., low personality-based empathy). While this distinction was not discussed in terms of personality and skills by participants explicitly,



there are examples in which empathy and the distinction between personality and skill-based empathy may be observed.

When asked what defines a high quality ICOR, Ping responded by saying:

I think staying open also will help you understand each other. Some people are not open, so they do not know the [cultural] difference, then when the difference comes out, it surprises them and makes them feel upset. **For some people, they know there is a difference but they don't care.** We can also hear if people care through words, like saying, "Why do I need to understand him? It's none of my business; this is U.S. or this is China. So, if he's in China he needs to follow the China way, and if he is in U.S. he needs to follow U.S. way." So, some people understand the different perspectives, but they don't care or respect them. (Interview #16, Ping, Lines 293-299)

In Ping's description, she describes individuals who recognize a different perspective (e.g., perspective-taking, skill-based empathy), but who may not feel concern regarding the difference (personality-based empathy). The lack of empathy in terms of concern shown for the perspective of the other is suggested to be a detriment to the ICOR's quality.

In a second example, Lauren explains her observation of fellow U.S. colleagues who lack an empathic response to German colleagues in a conference setting:

I've had some American colleagues, when we have attended international meetings, I've been a little disappointed with their attitude, that they're less

sympathetic. I'll put it that way. There is this one guy that we would, we'd go into the international meeting, we'd meet all day long in English, PowerPoints in English, we get on the bus we go to some dinner spot and we're having dinner and after dinner in the bar the Germans all lapse into German and start talking to each other in German. I didn't have a problem with that, I'm sure they were mentally exhausted from the whole day. But he [this colleague] always sounded very insulting and he would get angry about it, and it was just not productive. I would just put us in their shoes. I tried to tell him, I said, "Can you imagine going through the entire day having to talk in a different language, and finally you're having a few drinks at the end of the day with your colleagues... Wouldn't you want to lapse into English? (Interview #17, Lauren, Lines 171-181)

In her description, Lauren describes a situation in which her fellow American colleagues did not demonstrate empathy, either in their "attitude" or via perspective taking. She explains her own empathy in the situation, imagining herself in the shoes of her colleagues.

In a third example, Andrei explains both components of empathy:

I think if you are humble enough and you're curious enough to try to understand what another person is going through, you might be missing some tones, you might be missing some spices of the experience. But if you're willing, I do believe you can gain an understanding of what the person is going through. And to me that is empathy. Most people think that empathy is, "I empathize with what you are going through." But I

think empathy starts earlier. I think [empathy is] having the humanity, the love, or the curiosity to try to understand what goes into someone feeling a certain way, at a later point represents itself by you feeling sympathy or empathy for them. You don't just feel empathy all of a sudden. (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 817-833)

Andrei provides his perspective on the process by which empathy occurs, including understanding the other's experience to enable personally relating via a similar previous experience. He discusses both feeling concern, as well as understanding the other's perspective. Both personality and skill-based empathy of an individual may facilitate higher quality ICORs, particularly via respectful empathy, as discussed at the end of this category (see the development of a shared understanding category).

***Property: Dependability.*** Dependability refers to the degree to which an individual can be counted upon for help and support. Participants portrayed highly dependable individuals as those who are trustworthy, reliable, and true to their word. In contrast, a low degree of dependability refers to individuals who display erratic or unsupportive behaviors.

Whitney described the dependability of her colleague in the following response to a question asking what qualified the ICOR as high quality:

That he is a very supportive person, I genuinely feel like he is a friend, and I feel that [he is someone] I could count on for help. He would try and act in my interest, that he is the person that I trust his intent is a good one, even if I don't always understand some things he does. I trust that the

intent is prosocial and not something Machiavellian. The reason that is, is it's largely, I've had a lot of opportunity to interact and spend a lot of time with him through the program and I've just gotten to know who he is.

(Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 231-236)

Whitney describes the dependable nature of her colleague as someone that can be counted on for help, support, and to act in her best interest. When ambiguous interactions occur, potentially due to differences in cultural norms, it is easier for Whitney to assume positive intent due to the dependable nature of her colleague.

In a second example, Kwai reiterates the importance of dependability in high quality ICORs:

One is the person doesn't lie. The other thing is that the person is dependable and that if he says he'll to do something, he'll do something. So really there are two areas, dependability and the trustworthiness of his words. That's an essential thing in a relationship. (Interview #6, Kwai, Lines 685-689)

In Kwai's example, he explains that dependability involves two parts: words and actions. There is a verbal component in which a dependable colleague is forthright and honest. There is also a behavioral component in which a dependable colleague's actions align with his or her words.

Third, Isadora focuses on dependability from the perspective of an expatriate:

Living in a different country, everything is different here. You're driving in a place where it's just snowing and you don't know how to react to snow.

Everything is different. The driving rules are different from Brazil. There are some things that are the same but everything is different. You don't feel safe in the beginning. You're lucky to have someone there that you know you can count on, and I travel alone a lot. In the beginning, it was hard because I didn't have these kinds of relationships. I was like, "Oh my God, if something happens to me, what should I do?" It's good to have a colleague you can count on. (Interview #18, Isadora, Lines 439-445)

Isadora considers dependability and being able to count on one's colleague outside of the workplace. As she discusses, this may be particularly important for expatriates, who may travel to an area with which they are unfamiliar. Aspects of life that may seem trivial or common to local colleagues may present unique challenges to those less familiar with the area, including considerations such as terrain or weather. Colleagues may be the only individuals known by the expatriate in the area, and thus may serve as the primary source of help and support to expatriates. Clearly, the ability to count on one's colleague in such situations has the potential to foster quality in those relationships.

Finally, Parker provides an example of the interactive effect of an ICOR with two highly dependable colleagues:

When it came to budgeting, when it came to my expenses or my group's expenses, or any purchase orders that were put out, they question, "Did you think about this? Did you see if there were alternatives?" If I could consistently show that I thought about those things and my team investigated those things, then he'd think, "Hey, he's on the up and up. At least we can start to trust him." That's the

way I built some trust with him with regard to working through what I think was a high quality, productive relationship.

He trusted me, I trusted him.

He was generally just a straight-shooter in terms of the things he said and his thought processes. I knew he would try to be supportive if there was something that really wouldn't work, [saying] "That's not in your budget. Here's the alternatives." There was that collaborative relationship with him. (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 450-459)

In the first segment of the excerpt above, Parker describes the ways in which he demonstrates his dependability in the ICOR. By consistently sharing information needed to show he was “on the up and up,” Parker demonstrated his dependable nature to his colleague. In the second segment, Parker states clearly the reciprocal nature of the dependability in the relationship. In the third segment, Parker describes the ways in which his coworker demonstrates dependability, such as by being forthright and honest in communication and being supportive.

**Summary of Personal Characteristics.** Personal characteristics is a set of conditions that may give rise to high quality ICORs. The category refers to particular individual characteristics exhibited by ICOR members which serve to promote the development of high quality ICORs. Thus, personal characteristics are suggested to provide explanatory power to illustrate when, how, and with whom high quality ICORs may be likely to arise between individuals.

### Category 3: Interdependent Contribution

The category interdependent contribution refers to an intercultural coworker relationship in which coworkers perceive one another's work contribution as having a positive and meaningful impact toward achieving shared work outcomes. The category of interdependent contribution is summarized in Table 8.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Work-related Effort	Intentionality			Low to High Intentionality
	Tenacity			Low to High Tenacity
Work-related Talent	Skills			Low to Highly Skilled
	Knowledge			Low to High Knowledge
Work Intersection	Goal support			Low to High Level of Support
	Role clarity			Low to High Clarity
	Work success			Low to High Success
Work Value	Organizational value			Low to High Value
	Personal value			Low to High Value

All participants in the sample discussed interdependent contribution as important for the determination of quality in ICORs. This is perhaps unsurprising, as the primary context in which ICORs are initiated and continue to take shape and develop is the workplace. In other words, the preconceived purpose of ICORs is work-related. Thus, the workplace context necessitates colleagues' perceptions of interdependent contribution for ideations of relationship quality to develop. As stated earlier, the workplace context specifically

refers to those in multinational organizations. Multinational organizations are those whose operations (e.g., physical buildings, customer base, talent) exist in multiple countries. Multinational organizations therefore have a vested interest in understanding the cultures (i.e., workplace contexts) in which they operate. From a business perspective, understanding the workplace context(s) may refer to cultural considerations such as country-specific laws (e.g., for hiring and terminating employees; Interview #16, Ping, Lines 402-416), customer preferences (e.g., explaining service limitations to maintain credibility; Interview #25, Trang, Lines 27-34), and ways to foster effective working relationships among colleagues of different cultural backgrounds (e.g., approach to building trust, Interview #6, Saud, Lines 92-101). Thus, multinational organizational success is impacted by the organization's level of cultural understanding. The critical role of cultural understanding in determining success at the organizational level trickles down to influence how success is defined within individual roles, and therefore coworker relationships. Perceptions of intercultural contribution are influenced by coworkers' cultural understanding because it is directly related to performance on the job. In other words, individuals in multinational organizations may value their colleagues' cultural understanding because of its potential to positively influence their ability to perform effectively.

As described, interdependent contribution is conceptualized in terms of perception, rather than explicit structural conditions put in place by the organization regarding the interdependency of colleagues' roles. While it is likely that the organization's structure may position colleagues' roles to be more or less interdependent, the perceptions



colleagues hold regarding their interdependency may be a more direct explanation regarding the behaviors and perceptions pertaining to ICOR quality.

**Subcategory: Work-related effort.** Work-related effort refers to employee perceptions regarding the effort exhibited to make a contribution to the work. Work-related effort reflects one's own as well as one's colleague's willingness to exert energy toward shared work. Because the nature of the work contribution involves effort put forth by both colleagues in the ICOR, perceptions of both self (i.e., one's own) as well as other (i.e., one's colleague) work-related effort are considered. Work-related effort was most frequently discussed by participants in terms of the work-related effort put forth by one's colleague, rather than how their own work-related effort impacted the quality of the ICOR. Work-related effort was discussed most frequently in terms of the impact a lack of effort has on ICOR quality (i.e., lack of effort hinders quality). This pattern may be due to the expectation for colleagues to demonstrate work-related effort. In other words, the finding suggests that work-related effort may not be a differentiator of quality unless it is noticeably absent in an ICOR. As outlined in Table 8.1 below, work-related effort is further defined by two properties: intentionality and tenacity.

<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Work-related Effort</b>	Intentionality			Low to High Intentionality
	Tenacity			Low to High Tenacity

**Property: Intentionality.** Intentionality describes the degree to which work-related effort is perceived to be *directed* at making a contribution to shared work.

Intentionality qualifies work-related effort in specifying the aim behind work-related effort. Specifically, intentionality describes the degree to which the coworker's effort was intended positively impact interdependent contribution. Higher intentionality would describe perceptions of coworker's efforts knowingly aimed at contributing to shared work. A lower degree of intentionality may describe a lack of effort due to a careless or lackadaisical approach to shared work. A useful illustration is provided by Trang, who compares work-related effort in a high quality and low quality ICOR. In the high quality ICOR, Trang's colleague offers to put forth additional work-related effort to ensure their project is completed on time:

That would look like I got a project and then I got another project and then I got another project, when I only have 40 hours a week. People are leaving at 5:00, but I'm staying until 7:00, and then I have to come in on Saturday. My coworker would give me a hand and nicely asking, "Hey, do you need help? Maybe I can work on that Excel sheet for you. Maybe I can put our report together for you while you're doing the other one so that you can go home at 6:00 or 5:00 with us, so you don't have to stay too long, but you have to buy me a [bag of] M&Ms." For example, those I consider a supportive coworker. I do have those people around in my team and I love it. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 189-196)

Trang's effort is apparent with her willingness to stay late several days and intention to work on the weekend. In addition, the effort exhibited by Trang's colleague in the high quality ICOR is intentional in supporting their interdependent work. At the same time, there is a clear connection between the work-related effort exerted by her colleague and

concern about Trang's well-being. Because the ICOR operates within the workplace context, relationship quality may be integrated with the support of work-related contributions through work-related effort. Trang contrasts her example of high intentionality of work-related effort in a high quality ICOR with low intentionality and low work-related effort exhibited in a low quality ICOR:

There was one time when I asked her something, and she said, "Why don't you just go to Google and find out?" Then I said, "Okay." What can I do when someone says that? [laughs] It's clear that I could never go back and ask her a question ever again, because there we go, there's Google, they have everything. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 469-472)

In the second example, Trang's colleague dismisses a question posed by Trang regarding a task for which they were jointly responsible. Her colleague's response emphasizes the individual aspects of their work and ignores the shared nature of their work. In contrast to the lack of effort exhibited regarding interdependent work, Trang describes this colleague as exerting high levels of effort and focus on individual work, even to the point of scolding colleagues for engaging in nonwork-related discussion in the company's break room. In this case, it is not that the colleague neglects to put forth effort in her role, but instead demonstrates a careless or lackadaisical approach to shared work. In this case, the colleague may inadvertently inhibit her own as well as her colleagues' work performance by placing an undue focus on individual work while undervaluing her impact on and contribution to shared work.

A third example provided by Aruna reiterates the impact of a lack of work-related effort on interdependent contribution:

It's one thing to actually work on something that's been given to you, but it's also another...[our work] requires you to also initiate a lot of stuff on your own based on what you're hearing, or listening, or feeling, about the people or the culture, and so, I think some of that is not there as well...he does not have a real drive to succeed. (Interview #24, Aruna, Lines 444-448)

Aruna notes a lack of work-related effort put forth by her colleague. Working in HR, she notes that the nature of their work requires self-initiated tasks in response to observations and comments made by employees. Only working on tasks directly assigned indicates a lack of intentionality in the effort applied by her colleague to make their joint work in HR successful.

***Property: Tenacity.*** Tenacity refers to the degree to which work-related effort is perceived to continue in the face of obstacles. Tenacity perceptions concern both one's own behavior and one's colleague's behavior in the face of obstacles. Because work often involves complications that must be overcome to succeed, an important component of work-related effort is tenacity. To the extent that colleagues consider their work to be interdependent, perceptions of coworker tenacity were suggested to inform work-related effort and ICOR quality. Isadora discusses an experience that highlights her persistence in the face of obstacles originating from a mistake she made during a project:

That person wrote in the contract that we should donate the money to ORGANIZATION. I was the one who was supposed to look at the contract and see if there's anything wrong in there, and I didn't see it. I wasn't doing a lot of tasks and I was not paying enough attention. The contract was signed,

and then I saw the contract again and I was freaking out, "Oh no; we are not supposed to do that, and I didn't know that was there. I was like, "Oh my gosh, she's going to be very angry with me." This is the number one rule. I was like, "Okay." I scheduled a call with her, only the two of us. I didn't involve everyone in the project. I told her it was my mistake because I didn't pay attention to the contract and now there is nothing more we could do about this. She was like, "Okay, this is not the best option, but since there isn't much we can do, we can just move forward." She was supportive, trying to find a way and to tell the rest of the team without making me look bad. I was upset because I saw that I let her down, and I know it was a mistake that I should not have made. I told her that, and I thanked her for helping me and being supportive even though I was wrong. After the call, I started thinking of the options that I could take, so I spoke to my manager and told him the situation. I asked him if they could try to do another contract or something like this. Then, I spoke to our lawyers to see if I could change the contract. I spoke to the ORGANIZATION and we had a very good conversation. I said that we could not donate because MultiTech does not allow it. We changed the contract! It was last week actually. Then yesterday, I told her that we could change the contract, and she was so happy because she wasn't expecting that I would do something different than our last call about this. (Interview #18, Isadora, Lines 460-482)

In this example, Isadora outlines the steps she took to remedy a difficult situation. She took ownership of her mistake and addressed the situation with her colleague directly.

Although it may have been considered resolved at that point, Isadora considered what other actions she might take to seek a better outcome for their work. The tenacity exhibited by Isadora led to an improved resolution for her and her colleague, as well as for the organization overall. In a second example, Aruna explains her rationale for why a particular ICOR is low quality:

So, even though something may be difficult or challenging, having the willingness to try or...having that attitude to just try and do it even though it might be difficult or you might not get quite as far as you want, you know, would like to go, but just making some type of impact, and being willing to put forth some effort. (Interview #24, Aruna, Lines 172-176)

In this example, Aruna describes tenacity as being willing to try even in the face of a difficult or challenging situation. She notes that a lack of tenacity, as she expounds here, contributes to her perception that her colleague is not willing to put forth work-related effort, signifying a low quality ICOR.

**Subcategory: Work-related talent.** Work-related talent refers to the abilities, skills, and knowledge exhibited by individuals in the ICOR serving to positively impact their work contribution. Perceptions of work-related talent were discussed by participants both in terms of participants' view of their colleagues' work-related talent as well as how participants felt their talent was viewed by their colleagues. Participants often discussed the positive impact of the mutual nature of their respect for one another's work-related talent in terms of skills and knowledge, and noted the negative impact when perceptions of work-related talent were only one-sided. Lauren discusses one-sided

perceptions of work-related talent in her definition of what constitutes a low quality ICOR:

For me, one part might be the communication is rare or one way. It's like the opposite of what we talked about, that I perceive there is a lack of respect, that I will communicate my expertise through thoughts or opinions on something and I feel disregarded, or vice versa. (Interview #17, Lauren, Lines 318-323)

As Lauren mentions, one-way communication and/or receptivity to a colleague's contribution may result in a lack of respect regarding one's work-related ability or knowledge. Talent in this regard may also contain a cultural component, as discussed in the introduction to the category. Specifically, cultural understanding may be reflected in skills and/or knowledge relevant to the work, thus positively impacting the quality of the joint work contribution. As specified in Table 8.2, work-related talent is described in terms of its two properties: skills and knowledge.

<b>Table 8.2: Work-related Talent</b>				
<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Work-related Talent</b>	Skills			Low to Highly Skilled
	Knowledge			Low to High Knowledge

**Property: Skills.** Skills refer to the work-related abilities and talents individuals leverage as part of their work contribution. Skills are specific to the role held by the individual, such as technical skills necessary to perform the job. Due to the nature of the workplace context, individuals must be able to rely on their colleagues for achieving

work performance outcomes by leveraging their skills. The following quote is taken from a list of reasons provided by Saud regarding why he considers the ICOR being discussed to be high quality, “Also, I feel that they have the technical skills to follow through and do what they’re doing” (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 192). Saud does not spend much time discussing the importance of his colleague’s technical ability in determining quality, as it may be that this is an afterthought for describing what defines *high* quality in an ICOR. In other words, while technical skills are important, they may be a necessary but insufficient characteristic of high quality ICORs. In another quote, there is clear interdependency of the participant and her colleague regarding the technical skills each leverages to complete their work:

I have to be able to trust my coworker on his or her technical skills and vice versa. He has to trust me, too, because sometimes, we don't have enough time to just figure out everything by ourselves. When he says that it's not going to work, I trust him [that] it's not going to work because he has expertise, or he's done it before. When I say, another part is going to work, then he's going to trust me that it's going to work. With our technical skills on something that is high level and something difficult, we need to trust each other to make decisions together. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 204-210)

The colleagues’ ability to rely on one another’s technical skills lays a foundation for their relationship. Confidence in each other’s technical abilities creates a pathway for a sense of trust to develop, enabling them to make decisions together effectively.

***Property: Knowledge.*** Work-related talent also encompasses perceptions of one’s own knowledge and the knowledge of one’s colleague. Knowledge refers to the



knowledge and understanding pertaining to the work. While skills may refer to the behavioral aspect of work-related talent, knowledge comprises the cognitive component of work-related talent. Karen elucidates the role of knowledge in determining quality, first in describing a high quality ICOR and then by describing a low quality ICOR:

There have been a few times where we've had doubts about a software we're talking about [using] where his input was to me was important. When he gave his opinion, it was exceedingly well-founded. It was not a shooting off the cuff. He made sure that what he said was really well-grounded and it was an opinion that deserved respect and some attention. (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 199-203)

It is clear in Karen's description of the high quality ICOR that she appreciated the expertise offered by her colleague. In a separate discussion during the interview, Karen discusses the low level of knowledge offered by a different colleague:

I don't think she has the depth that a lot of other people do, or she isn't able to present that. I haven't seen a lot of the depth of thinking that I'm used to within TechInvest. She's just more scattered. She is very sweet personally and would do anything for people. I don't see in her as discerning I guess... I guess this will maybe show a little bit about how I see her. She would say things that would just reinforce others, but she wasn't adding to the conversation. It was like, "No, come on. What do *you* think about it? It's nice that you're supporting that person, but what do you have to add?" (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 442-447; 488-493)

The lack of expertise offered by the colleague in the low quality ICOR appears to frustrate Karen, as it reflects a missed opportunity to improve the quality of the work contribution. In another example, Sophie illustrates the impact of sharing her own legal expertise with colleagues confused about the recently established General Data Protection Regulation:

You mentioned the new European data law that just was implemented. It can be frustrating for U.S. folks because everything was done in Europe and there really was no thought to, okay, what do people here in the U.S. need to know? Does this even impact people in the U.S.? I even heard some asking, "Well, does that affect us?" The short answer is, yes; it does. Because you will be sending emails to people in Europe, you will be sharing newsletters et cetera. You now need to make sure that people, that you're sending it to actually say it's okay for you to send it. That's the direct result of this law. It took a while to have Germany understand that even though it's a European law, this may indeed impact people elsewhere as well. You have this instance of euro-centric vision – which is understandable because a lot is going on in Europe – without really thinking 'How is that going to impact people elsewhere as well?' That's where I had to talk to the people who were writing everything up and get more information, so then I was able to advise on that... I in particular was working with the compliance person in Germany. He had material that he sent me so that I could look at it as well. That way, I could explain to others where it will impact people in the U.S. as well. (Interview #23, Sophie, Lines 343-354)

Sophie outlines how she gathered more information about the General Data Protection Regulation to ensure she could provide necessary and accurate information as well as explain the implications of the law to her colleagues in the U.S. and Europe. In a final example, Marina discusses the impact of her colleague's appreciation for her perspective:

He's an individual that absolutely values the HR perspective, and the human aspect and the people aspect of things. He understands that the people are the most important asset that we have in the company. HR bringing that perspective in terms of how you develop people, how we train people, how we identify capability to put people in the right places so they fulfill whatever their mission is in life. (Marina, Lines 287-292)

Marina's perception that her colleague appreciates the perspective she offers via her knowledge in HR positively impacts the quality of their relationship.

**Subcategory: Work intersection.** The subcategory of work intersection refers to perceptions regarding the degree to which work performed by coworkers in the ICOR is interdependent. Work intersection was discussed by approximately half of participants in determining ICOR quality (see discussion chapter). While coworkers work together by definition, participant responses suggest variability in terms of the extent to which coworker's roles are inter-reliant. Thus, higher levels of work intersection describe ICORs in which execution of one's work depends directly on work performed by one's colleague.

He's very thorough. Sometimes, I talk a lot and he's just not a talker so that compensate each other. We will divide the work together. He's very smart, too. He would say, "Okay. I'll take this part, you take this part." Then, we

get the data and we get the work done with it together. We'd share what we got. Then, we'll call our customer together. For the communication part, maybe I can take the communication part. Then, he will write a report, for example. Then, for another difficult customer, maybe he'll jump in and he'll talk to them instead of me. We work together like that.

Whatever will benefit the team the most is what we do. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 259-266)

Work within one shared project is divvied between Trang and her colleague. Their criteria for allocating work is what works best for the team to complete their work successfully. It is apparent from Trang's description that there are different components of the work (e.g., data analysis, written report, communication with the customer) that must be done by members of the team to consider the work complete. In contrast to this example, lower levels of work intersection refer to ICORs in which a colleague's work performance has a more indirect effect on one's own work. As shared by Nilesh,

The reason for me to rate this relationship low is because our lives are connected in strange ways, which is the following. Although I'm in the front talking to the client, and let's say I worked with them, I identified a particular need that the client has, I identified what would be a solution to the problem, we did a contract and then I handed over to person B, to execute the work and go on, but when I go to the client next time, and I want to talk about a new opportunity or a new problem that they might have, how person B is doing his job makes a lot of difference in that new conversation. Very often the client says, "You know that last thing that I

did with you guys, it's not going very well, and therefore, I'm hesitant to talk to you about the new contract. I can't give you new business until those things are taken care of." It just goes a different direction. In a way, our lives are joined in that manner that they are not disconnected. If I were to go back to person B and say, "Hey, I met the client. Unfortunately, I'm not able to make headway here because something is not working in the last one that you guys are working on. What's going on?" Person B feels very defensive that here's the sales person who's coming into his area trying to point blame, or trying to put holes in what they're doing. Therefore, it becomes a non-productive situation where we are not able to collaborate to solve problems and move forward. Essentially, that's the [reason for the] poor rating... Yes, in many of the situations I am put in, the sense is that for me to do my job, is just necessary to win another contract. However, I have to pick up some of things that he has on his plate for the clients to trust me. So, in a way, it's a circular problem that the client won't trust me because he [the client] said, "You sold me this and you said this and this and this, but I don't see it on the ground."

(Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 427-488)

In Nilesh's description, it appears that the colleagues originally viewed their roles as related, but not interdependent. The work was considered to be completed as in a relay race, in which one person passes the baton (work) off to the other. Nilesh has made the sale, and now his colleague is responsible for delivering the service. However, Nilesh goes on to share that their roles are in fact more cyclical, rather than work that is

performed in a relay fashion. Specifically, his colleague's performance regarding service delivery impacts Nilesh's sales performance, which then promotes or impedes the opportunity for his colleague to deliver a new service. This case is of particular interest to interdependent contribution, as the structure of the roles remained the same, but the perceptions regarding interdependency changed. This is also a case in which the participant's perceptions the quality of the relationship grew from low quality to high quality.

While the ways in which roles are structured within the organization and the responsibilities assigned to each position may certainly impact work intersection, employees' perceptions of the degree to which work is integrated may have a greater influence on their views of interdependent contribution and thus ICOR quality. Work intersection is further defined by its properties, as outlined in Table 8.3 below.

<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Work Intersection</b>	Work success			Low to High Success
	Role clarity			Low to High Clarity
	Shared goals			Low to High Extent

**Property: Work success.** Work success reflects an important aspect of work intersection. Work success refers to the extent to which success in one's individual role depends upon the work completed by one's colleague. In Nilesh's case, and as described above, the structure of his role and his coworker's role, though both impacting the customer experience, may not be ideally suited for establishing perceptions of work

intersection. Instead, the structure of their roles is set up in such a way that may serve to adversely separate the sale from service delivery in the eyes of the customer.

Specifically, Nilesh is responsible for the sale, while his colleague is active in delivering the service after the sale is complete. Despite this obstacle to building ICOR quality that is inherent to the organization's structure, this ICOR was described by Nilesh as one that changed from low quality to high quality. One aspect of this change is described by Nilesh:

Establishing a level of trust that we are individually successful when we work as a team and are successful together... make it a very high quality [relationship] for us and we are able to move much faster on many of the things that we're working on. (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 218-220)

While the sense of separate work roles appeared to hinder a sense of interdependent work success, Nilesh and his colleague realized that they would be more successful individually when they focused on the inter-reliant aspects of their roles. In another example, Trang explains the need to work as a team with her colleagues to be successful:

We have to work as a team, because we have different expertise, like I am very good at marine and protective coatings, but my coworker is very good at paint for houses, and someone else is really good at paint for cars. We have to work together as a team to resolve the problems. I would say that's very important... We have to communicate really effectively with sales to get the problems resolved, because the salesperson is the point of contact. The salesperson has to have a really good relationship with the customer to begin the project, and we have to have good relationships with

sales and communicate effectively to resolve their problem for the customer. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 74-78)

Trang's explanation reveals a strong sense of interdependency with multiple colleagues in order to achieve success within their respective roles.

***Property: Role clarity.*** Role clarity refers to the extent to which employees understand the responsibilities associated with their roles, which informs their understanding of their colleagues' roles. In this way, role clarity facilitates work intersection, as it helps employees understand the interdependency of their work contribution. Continued from the example used to illustrate work success, Nilesh explains the transformation of an ICOR from low quality to high quality and the utility of role clarity to foster perceptions of work intersection:

In these last two years, I think because of how we understand our roles, there is a very strong understanding of what we expect from each other, in the sense that if I am to sell and he is to manage the customer relationships, we both have to be successful in our own jobs and in helping each other to close a sale successfully. (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 213-216)

Clearly, understanding the interdependency of work roles adds clarity concerning the integrated nature of the two colleagues' work. However, while role clarity is important, it is an insufficient condition in and of itself. Individuals may recognize their interdependency, but experience frustration if work is not completed successfully. An example from Geert expounds on this point, as he describes the role of a colleague with whom he has a low quality relationship:



She's the treasurer of our company. I need to work with her. I'm working with her on some initiatives on cash management and the tax impact thereof and that kind of stuff. What she does is she's managing all the bank relationships and looking at how much cash is in the bank account. Can we pay the payroll? Can we pay the vendors? Obviously, tax is a big driver on how much cash you have or project that you will have, then that cash needs to move from, for example, if the cash is sitting in the Netherlands, back to the U.S. What does that mean? How do you do that?

(Interview #8, Geert, Lines 495-499)

In Geert's case, he has an understanding of his colleague's role and the "need to work with her," and explains that the interdependence of their roles is obvious. Despite the role clarity and apparent interdependence of their roles, it is not characterized as a high quality ICOR. Thus, while role clarity may aid in the facilitation of quality via work intersection, the property considered on its own is insufficient to explain the importance of work intersection.

***Property: Shared goals.*** Shared goals refer to the extent to which colleagues in the ICOR share work-related goals. Goals can be those explicitly defined as part of the positions held by colleagues, or other goals that support work-related outcomes. In explaining the nature of a high quality ICOR, Marina said, "I think we have a lot of shared goals... We're both very customer-centric, customer-oriented" (Interview #11, Marina, Lines 286-287). Both Marina and her colleague shared goals that are service-oriented, and that appears to increase perceptions of interdependency within their work. Another example of shared goals is provided by Ping in the following quote:

At the time, we had designers from all kinds of countries – U.S., China, Japan and others – they were working on the product design. There were several very different cultures, but once all of them were focusing on the design of the product, they felt it was easy to get along with each other... When people found what they were working together on, since most of them were professional in one area, they could easily get along with each other, even if there was a big difference in culture. (Interview #16, Ping, Lines 334-342)

When colleagues identified their shared goals, it facilitated quality in the ICOR. The focus shifted onto how to support one another's shared work goals to achieve the deliverable. The commonality brought about by shared work goals fostered a sense of unity, even when there were perceptions of large cultural differences.

Lastly, Isadora explains that low quality ICORS involve a lack of clarity regarding shared goals:

I think that when people don't open themselves with me, that's when I see that things are not going very well. It's not personal, but when it's not very clear what the purpose of the project is, or I don't feel confident that they are telling me everything I need to know for the project. (Interview #18, Isadora, Lines 240-245)

In this case, Isadora explains the difficulty associated with inadequate understanding of her colleague's work-related goals. When she does not understand the purpose of the project and she lacks information regarding her colleague's work goals, it becomes difficult to understand how she and her colleague will collaborate effectively.

**Subcategory: Work value.** Work value describes perceptions regarding the importance or impact of colleagues' interdependent work contribution. It addresses the question of "so what?" concerning the work generated by the colleagues' partnership. Approximately one-third of participants discussed the importance of work value on the development of quality in ICORs. Work value is further defined by its properties, organizational value and personal value, as noted in Table 8.4.

<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Work Value</b>	Organizational value			Low to High Value
	Personal value			Low to High Value

**Property: Organizational value.** One way participants described perceptions of the work's value is via its impact on the organization. Thus, organizational value refers to the perception of the work's value to the success of the organization. Higher organizational value indicates that the individual assigns a high level of importance to the work, while lower organizational value indicates that the individual assigns a low level of importance to the work. Nilesh describes the impact of performing interdependent work that has high organizational value:

A part of teamwork and relationships in this environment is how we work together to share with the client what we can do and how we can help them. But when we actually close contracts and close deals and do those together, it is really the success of those relationships. Those successes, I

believe, make the relationship stronger. (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 264-267)

Nilesh values the organizational impact of working with his colleagues to successfully close contracts. He also notes that successful interdependent work in this regard serves to further strengthen the relationship. In contrast, a lack of attention given by one's colleague to the value work can bring to the organization was described as a frustrating experience by Sanjana:

Some of my relationships are, "What needs to be done?" and not *why* it needs to be done. Also, maybe it's my personality where I always think that, if you need a stamp [of approval from someone in HR], I am not the rubber stamp that you get. Let's talk about *why* would you want this person to be involved, and what the value-add is that the person can bring to it. (Interview #21, Sanjana, Lines 348-352)

In this case, the lower value assigned by some colleagues regarding their interdependent work with Sanjana may contribute to her perceptions of a low quality ICOR.

***Property: Personal value.*** A second way that participants described perceptions of their interdependent work's value is its personal importance. In these cases, the work itself has inherent purpose and/or value. Participants described work as having personal value when it was of personal significance. For example, Saud describes working with his colleagues at TechEng as a personally gratifying experience:

It was a very rewarding experience. I enjoyed my stay with TechEng. My colleagues in the company were very good to me

and I was able to contribute a lot. (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 15-16)

As can be seen in Saud's description, he experienced the value of the work personally. He felt that his contribution to the work was meaningful. In a second example, Aruna describes keeping the bigger picture in mind regarding the purpose of the work:

In the end, like, keeping that end goal in mind, right, like, it is very easy, like I said, to get lost in the nitty gritty of the details but, trying to have that bigger perspective of things is important. Sometimes it does get lost in all of the conversations and on all the differences that you have with the other person, but it's nice when you and the other person are aligned on that piece and you can come back to it. (Interview #24, Aruna, Lines 178-183)

Although it can be easy to get lost in the details of the work, Aruna derives personal satisfaction from working with colleagues who share the view that the work is personally meaningful.

**Summary of Interdependent Contribution.** Interdependent contribution describes the perceptions ICOR coworkers hold regarding one another's work contributions.

Specifically, participants noted that perceptions of a positive and meaningful impact toward achieving shared work outcomes were characteristic of higher quality intercultural coworker relationships.

#### Category 4: Investment

The category of investment refers to an ICOR characterized by an attitude of commitment to expend personal resources in the relationship. Investment includes three subcategories of affective, behavioral, and cognitive investment, as outlined in Table 9.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Affective Investment				Low to High Investment
Behavioral Investment				Low to High Investment
Cognitive Investment				Low to High Investment

All participants in the sample discussed effort as a critical component to high quality ICORs. Arguably, all relationships require effort to maintain; however, the intercultural nature of ICORs adds a layer of complexity due to the differing cultural schemas, norms, and values coworkers bring with them to the relationship. As one participant explained:

There is a tendency to aggregate and congregate with people that you're comfortable with, from where you've come, and it takes a conscious effort to want to not go towards your comfort zone, because it naturally gravitates you towards who you're comfortable with because they understand you much easier. [In same-culture coworker relationships] you can let your guard down completely. I think it takes work [in intercultural coworker relationships]. For you, that openness to say, 'I want to experience this, and I want to be a Roman in Rome.' It takes effort. (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 296-301)

In his explanation, Saud illustrates the challenges inherent in intercultural relationships, and that additional work may be required to enjoy the benefits of ICORs. Saud's observation aligns with previous research regarding the similarity-attraction paradigm, which suggests that individuals tend to feel most comfortable around those perceived to be most similar to themselves (Byrne, 1971). Cultural differences in coworker relationships can certainly be a major advantage (as discussed extensively by participants; see discussion under the property leveraging differences for a purpose in the development of a shared understanding category), but extra effort may be the "grease" to the proverbial wheel of ICOR functioning.

The willingness to exert additional effort in ICORs discussed by participants is labeled investment. The word investment was chosen by the researcher to represent participant descriptions because it signifies the ongoing nature of the effort exerted into the relationship. Because the present study focuses on intercultural relationships (i.e., ongoing) rather than interactions (i.e., time-bound), there is an implied expectation of multiple, future interactions. Thus, effort exerted into the relationship may be expected to yield a future return on investment, rather than (or in addition to) the pursuit of immediate gain. Implications (e.g., transformation of relationship quality) of the ongoing nature are discussed in the summary of this category.

As the subcategory names imply, participants' collective descriptions of investment resulted in consideration of the category as an attitude. The structure of attitudes is often considered to be a tripartite model, comprised of affective, behavioral, and cognitive components (Breckler, 1984). Affect describes one's emotional response to the attitude object; behavior refers to the actions and reactions directed toward the attitude object;

and cognition signifies the thoughts, cognitive processes, perceptions, and mental activities regarding the attitude object (Breckler, 1984). In application to the current study, investment represents the attitude individuals have towards the ICOR regarding commitment to expend personal resources in the relationship. Affective, behavioral, and cognitive investment are described within each subcategory description. Investment is considered to be an attitude because it contains these three building blocks. One participant illustrates this point below, in her response to a question asking about the perceived importance of her ICORs:

Very important. We see these people every day. We spend more time with them than we do with our own family because we are in the office a lot of the time, so it's very important to have developed good relationships. They involve what you do mentally, emotionally, and professionally, and they affect you. It's really important to develop those relationships. (Interview #57, Lian, Lines 79-82)

As summarized by Lian, ICOR quality involves personal investment of individuals “mentally, emotionally, and professionally.” While not every participant was as explicit in the description of investment as an attitude, each participant discussed aspects (i.e., affective, behavioral, cognitive) of investment in their responses. The three attitudinal components of affective, behavioral & cognitive investment are interdependent, and thus do not lend themselves to purely orthogonal discussion; however, examples highlighting each component are provided. In addition, there were three cases in which participants demonstrated a reliance on one component over the others in their descriptions. Each case is presented at the end of its respective subcategory.



**Subcategory: Affective investment.** Affective investment is used to describe the emotional resources an individual devotes to the relationship. In this way, affective investment may refer to affect, liking, or feelings of emotional attachment in the ICOR. Invariably, participants indicated that coworker relationships were important to them on a personal level. While these relationships varied in closeness (e.g., integration with nonwork life vs. interacting at work only; see comfort category), the personal importance of ICOR quality was consistent across participants. Specifically, when participants were asked about the importance of ICOR quality, respondents invariably indicated the elevated personal significance of coworker relationships (i.e., even when the context of these relationships was restricted to the workplace).

Affective investment describes the willingness to invest emotional resources into the relationship. One example of such resources is empathy. In the following quote, Kushal describes the positive impact of a willingness to devote affective resources (via empathy) on the quality of the ICOR:

There was a lot more empathy from Coworker to me... I was really struggling, playing a bigger role and struggling with my team... It was way bigger than my previous role.... Coworker came back to me and said, "Kushal, in our culture, we don't volunteer to help you. If you need anything, you should come to us." Then I started telling all my stories, the struggle I was going through. She said, "I am so sorry that we didn't realize that you're going through all this. We didn't even know that you're going through all this. We should've-- being someone like me who has traveled a lot, I should've been more cognizant about the culture and the

difficulty you went through. I should've stayed in touch with you more and I should've helped you in the process. I am sorry that I am only [just now] talking to you after one year of you coming here. We have not been nice. But I also want you to understand that it is not that we don't want to help you. In our culture, without you asking, we will not help, because we are also busy with our own jobs. If you want anything, we will always be available to help if you ask.' All of that effort to understand my culture, to empathize, to help. That is what made this [relationship] stronger, much stronger. (Interview #14, Kushal, Lines 143-164)

As Kushal describes above, the coworker's effort put forth to empathize with his experience made a powerful impact on the quality of the ICOR. While empathy was the specific type of affective resource invested in this case, the first step was a willingness to put forth the effort necessary to demonstrate empathy.

In a second example of affective investment, Fairuza provides additional explanation as to why ICORs are personally important:

It's very important being in a team where you feel you are being valued, you feel you are being heard, and you are important. And you feel also that you are helping others. It's an important feeling, yes. (Interview #2, Fairuza, Lines 27-31)

Fairuza elaborates on the feelings she invests into the relationship to explain why ICOR quality is important to her. In her response, Fairuza states that her feelings of attachment to her colleagues are facilitated by feeling valued, heard, and important. In saying this, Fairuza indicates that not only does she invest emotional resources into her relationships,

but that her investment is further facilitated by the perceived reciprocal nature of the emotional investment.

***Emphasis on affective investment.*** In one case, a participant emphasized affective investment in her description of the effort put forth into the ICOR. Whitney emphasized the affective component more than behavioral or cognitive components:

When you develop a really good co-worker relationship -- I think that this is true across cultures, but it's particularly true in cross-cultural settings -- the best ones, you develop a sense of affection for the person as a human being. You respect and value them as a person that you can collaborate with and get things done in a productive way, but you also like them as the person. (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 111-115)

Clearly, coworker relationships are of great importance to Whitney. She states that the best relationships are those in which coworkers care a lot about one another. In her response, she also indicates the importance of collaborating in a productive way, but there is a clear emphasis on the affective component of the relationship. Consideration of Whitney's role may shed light on why she emphasized the affective component over others. As a professor and researcher, Whitney's role involves less interdependency in terms of job-specific goals than other participants in the sample. Her judgments of ICOR quality may be less influenced by others' behavioral investment, as these behaviors may have less impact on her overall work success. Additionally, Whitney's background in cross-cultural research affords her with a relatively high level of knowledge regarding cultural tendencies. Colleagues' levels of cognitive investment may be less impactful for her experience of ICOR quality, as she may instead take greater cognitive ownership in

her ICORs, reducing the efforts needed from colleagues to exert cognitive resources to understand the cultural differences present within the ICOR.

**Subcategory: Behavioral investment.** In behavioral investment, individuals engage in behaviors and exert effort to promote quality in the ICOR. While participants were directly asked about the behaviors that facilitate quality, participants also described the additional effort required to facilitate ICOR quality due to the intercultural nature of the relationship. This included making behavioral adjustments, exercising flexibility, and overcoming obstacles to quality in the relationship.

In the following example, Ping describes the impact of a lack of behavioral investment in a low-quality ICOR:

I had a coworker; he was in Australia, but he was from Germany. When we talked with him about some things, he was just writing back saying, "I couldn't understand your English." That's all [laughs]. I would say that's poor co-working and communication. He gives people the impression that he's not a cooperative person. He could criticize, but he didn't show the intention that he wanted to try again and have further communication. It seems that [to him] talking with other people is wasting time. He was not that patient or willing to try. (Interview 16, Ping, Lines 427-430)

As illustrated above, the language barrier in the ICOR presented an obstacle to quality in the relationship, specifically in their ability to effectively communicate. Given the cultural backgrounds represented in the ICOR (i.e., Chinese and German), both were using a secondary language (i.e., English) to communicate with one another. When faced

with the communication difficulty, the coworker's response was to state a lack of understanding. This response necessitates additional effort *from* one's colleague, rather than putting forth effort *to* facilitate understanding.

A second example, shared by Lauren, serves as a helpful contrast to the first example. In her explanation, Lauren describes the behaviors in which she engages to overcome obstacles to facilitate understanding in the ICOR:

For language challenges, I find reinforcing communication with a verbal call or with an email, or doing both to confirm everyone's on the same page, that you have that layering of a verbal discussion and of written discussion. Pictures as well, illustrating what is intended. Recently I had a design change request with a German colleague and he wrote back, and I kind of thought I knew where he was going but I wasn't sure so I kind of mocked up a picture of what the resulting design would look like, based on what he was telling me. I sent it back and I said, "Can you confirm that this is what you have in mind?" He wrote back and he was like, "Yes, this is perfect, that's exactly what I mean." Using tools, like pictures, verbal and written communication to layer and reinforce what you're saying, that can help you get past the language challenges. (Interview #17, Lauren, Lines 421-431)

In the second example, the participant takes the onus upon herself to ensure clarity and shared meaning, rather than placing the responsibility to clarify on her colleague. In this way, Lauren engages in particular behaviors to address language challenges. She exerts additional effort to overcome obstacles in the ICOR, and the result is increased clarity with her colleague.

*Emphasis on behavioral investment.* Phoebe tended to emphasize the behavioral aspect of investing in the relationship. Prior to the excerpt below, Phoebe discusses the cultural differences that can occur due to different orientations to time and complications due to time zone differences. Here, Phoebe describes the importance of behavioral effort, emphasizing reciprocity in terms of the responsiveness one demonstrates:

For example, if I'm responding to a coworker's emails in my personal time, then I would wish that the coworker would do the same. If I'm taking a couple of hours to respond, but the other takes a couple of weeks, then that is frustrating. I would say [doing] that would go under the low-quality aspects of a relationship. (Interview 26, Phoebe, Lines 161-164)

In interpreting Phoebe's response, it is helpful to note Phoebe's professional background, in which she is in a highly technical role, has received an advanced degree from a prestigious educational institution, and is very early in her career. Given the nature of her work and requirements of her position, it may be that the responsiveness Phoebe describes represents more than she explicitly states. As discussed in the description of the study's participants, individuals with more technical backgrounds (e.g., engineers, IT professionals) may not always be equipped with the vocabulary helpful for discussing interpersonal dynamics. Analogous to gears working in tandem as part of a harmonized process, Phoebe's role may be seen as serving in an intermediary position in an overall line of work. Because of this, the timeliness of her work is directly impactful to her coworkers' ability to perform effectively in their roles. Responsiveness may be considered to be a form of support for coworkers to achieve the goals of their respective positions. Lastly, given that Phoebe is very junior in her tenure, it may be that she is

exerting particular effort to prove herself in terms of her technical abilities and contributions through tangible behaviors, more than through emotional connections that may require additional time to facilitate.

**Subcategory: Cognitive investment.** Cognitive investment refers to the willingness to exert cognitive effort (i.e., as part of mental activities) in the interest of promoting ICOR quality. Specifically, mental activities that constitute cognitive investment are the thought processes and idea generation intended to inform the actions that may then facilitate quality. Karen portrays the willingness to invest cognitive resources in the following quote:

I think it's knowing that there is, to an extent, a better chance not to understand. I don't want to risk not trying to understand because I really do appreciate what he has to offer. I want to make sure I get it. I think that I will-- You only honor another person by working to understand them. (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 256-259)

In this example, Karen describes the way she “honors” her colleague by “working to understand” him. She invests cognitive resources (likely in addition to affective investment as denoted by the word “honor,” suggesting that she holds this colleague in high esteem) by ensuring that she understands her colleague’s opinion and what he has to offer. Karen states that she is willing to put forth this extra cognitive effort to understand, because she does not want to risk missing the important information.

In a second example of cognitive investment, Phoebe explains the importance of putting forth effort to think through how individuals express themselves:

I have seen such situations that a non-native speaker said something that wasn't very polite, but they didn't mean it the way it came out. Somebody native was very offended. Then the non-native speaker tried to explain themselves more and it was a little bit harder for the native speaker to understand it. But there are native speakers who would understand. The same goes for non-native speakers that well. If we're working in an English-speaking office, [then] we need to put more effort into thinking about how we are expressing ourselves and what we are doing, as well. (Interview 26, Phoebe, Lines 407-414)

As Phoebe depicts, there is a level of cognitive effort involved to articulate oneself in a foreign context. Phoebe also emphasizes the dual nature of cognitive effort to result in higher quality ICORs.

*Emphasis on cognitive investment.* Nilesh represents a case in which the cognitive component of investment was pronounced. In a richly descriptive example, Nilesh discusses some unique practices in his culture that are sometimes a point of curiosity,

You would know that people from India or people from the Hindu religion don't eat beef. There's always this question, 'Why do you eat chicken, why do you eat goat and lamb, but you can't eat beef?' It's a very obvious and curious question...And not many people from India themselves understand this aspect of it as to the reason why beef is not eaten but other meats are acceptable. (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 318-324)



In response to this commonly asked question, Nilesh sought to learn and reflect on the origination for this cultural practice. The cognitive effort put forth to gain this understanding subsequently allows him to provide others with the story and background behind the cultural practices:

In my research and understanding, I found out that...from ancient times, thousands of years back, every family would have a cow in their house. A cow gave them the milk, and milk was used for different food purposes. Cow dung was mixed with straw and would be a good fuel, and is still used in many parts of India. Some wise people at that time so many thousands of years ago realized that if families take care of their cows, chances are that they will never go hungry because they'll always have food and fuel. But then if they choose to kill the cow and eat it, they'll probably eat for 10 days and that's it. It's all gone...the concept of the cow is like your mother. It feeds your children and you use every part of the cow, so 'take care of the cow and the cow will take care of you,' was really the message they were giving to society. (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 325-334)

In using this information to craft his explanation, Nilesh describes his thought process intended to explain and share his culture in such a way that is relatable and easy to understand:

People are able to understand that and are able to [hear it] explained. This is really, really appreciated when they hear the story. They say, 'yes I get it; it makes so much sense.' Whereas if you don't know and we say, 'yes in

our religion, the cow is like my mother and I don't eat my mother,' it comes across as, you know, people don't really understand that, and it's like are you accusing [them] of eating my mother kind-of-a-thing. That cultural nuance often comes in to play at meal times...I explain it to them. I am very happy at the end of it because they feel they have understood a part of the culture. They understand the reason and the logic behind it and that also makes a relationship stronger...It all works out pretty well.

(Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 341-352)

In Nilesh's narrative, he describes the cognitive resources invested in his ICORs by way of explaining the logic and reason behind his cultural practices. He also notes the satisfaction he feels when his colleagues have understood a part of his culture. It appears that Nilesh exerts additional cognitive resources to permit increased connection (i.e., an affective resource) in his ICORs. In Nilesh's full interview, he discusses the increased familiarity his colleagues have with Indian culture compared to early in his tenure, and the appreciation he has for their understanding. Nilesh appears to enjoy investing cognitive resources, as doing so facilitates understanding of matters personal to him, and thus results in a higher ICOR quality. As illustrated in these three cases, some participants emphasized one aspect of investment more heavily compared to the others, but there is continued integration of the three components under the category of investment.

**Exemplary cases of Investment.** As discussed in the introduction of the category, the word investment was selected by the researcher to characterize participant descriptions because it is indicative of the ongoing nature of the effort put forth in

ICORs. This research studies intercultural relationships (i.e., ongoing) rather than interactions (time-bound). Due to this focus, future interactions are anticipated in each coworker relationship. As stated earlier, effort exerted into the relationship may be expected to yield a future return on investment, rather than (or in addition to) the pursuit of immediate gain. This can be most clearly seen in relationships wherein participants exerted high levels of effort to transform a low quality ICOR into a high quality ICOR. The first quality transformation was discussed by Nilesh. Because of his example, the researcher began asking participants in each interview about their experiences with ICORs in which the quality of the relationship changed over time. In total, five participants described five unique ICORs in which the relationship changed. Each of the five times, the direction of the relationship quality grew from lower quality towards higher quality (i.e., rather than higher quality to lower quality). Three of the five relationships are discussed in detail to illuminate the role of investment in the changes experienced in ICOR quality.

In the ICOR discussed by Trang, the ICOR quality increased, but was still considered to be a low quality relationship. As Trang states in her explanation of the rating she gave the relationship on a scale of 1-10, “It has gotten better. That's why I rated it four, because, if [I considered it] from the beginning, then I would rate it two” (Interview #25, Lines 521-522). Trang describes the role of investment in bringing about the positive change in what remains to be a challenging ICOR:

She's more informal now because if I treat her the way she treats me, things get worse... If she's being angry and cranky, then I'm [still] happy and I'm being tolerant. I just walk away when she's being too cranky to

deal with, and then come back when she's normal, to talk to her, to open up to her, and to ask her, 'Is there anything I can do to help?' I see that it helps... I thought about how to change the relationship into a better relationship rather than to have to deal with it every day, because I spent 8 hours a day at work, and I want to be happy. [laughs] I noticed lately, she's also go out of her comfort zone, because I know her comfort zone. It's just her desk and her bench, and she doesn't want to interact. But lately, she does try to go out of her comfort zone and talk to all the coworkers. I've seen that she talks to other girls about things [that are] not work-related, about gardening, about cooking, about hair. It's interesting. She's really go out of her way, she's trying hard to interact with other coworkers, and with me. I always smile, and I always try be friendly with her. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 526-541)

In this example, Trang discusses the results of putting forth extra effort into a low quality ICOR. Not only did her coworker not invest in the relationship, but in some cases, her coworker was actively hostile towards Trang. Despite this, Trang continued to invest in the relationship, devoting affective (e.g., emotion regulation), behavioral (e.g., offering to help), and cognitive (e.g., thinking about how to change the quality) resources to facilitate quality. The return on investment in this case was an improvement (albeit small thus far) in ICOR quality.

In a second example, Nilesh's ICOR began with a coworker who was suspicious due to differences in cultural backgrounds. In Nilesh's case, his British colleague (alias: Colin) was close to retirement. Despite Nilesh's investment, his efforts were not readily

reciprocated by Colin. After Colin received negative performance feedback, Nilesh offered technical help to aid his coworker by reviewing Colin's work. Colin responded by sending convoluted information that made it very difficult for Nilesh to see potential mistakes in the technical aspects of the work. In response, Nilesh invested more into the ICOR by openly sharing his own mistakes, sending over documentation to demonstrate how he had made similar mistakes but improved. Over time, the relationship improved, transforming from a low quality ICOR to a high quality ICOR.

In a third exemplary case, Saud was an Indian American representing an American company. Saud considered the cultural background of his Korean coworker and tried to understand why the relationship had started with a lack of trust (cognitive investment). Saud learned that his Korean colleague (alias: Jang) had recently experienced difficulty working with American colleagues. Saud intentionally tried to transform the relationship by taking ownership for the quality in the relationship. Saud spent ample time with Jang outside of work to allow his coworker to get to know him well (affective and behavioral investment), and display that he "was not somebody afraid of spending a lot of time being part of local culture...That made him comfortable that, 'Saud really wants to be part of the culture, he wants me to feel comfortable with who he is,' and that really made him feel comfortable that this is a very different relationship" (Interview #6, Lines 437-442). In addition, Saud discovered what had caused the lack of trust with the previous American holding his own position. Success in Jang's role necessitated that the primary client contact with which Saud and Jang worked was satisfied with the services their company provided. To accomplish that end within the cultural context, Saud needed to speak with the primary client contact outside of work

and in one-on-one settings to build trust. Investing the affective and cognitive resources to understand his colleague's perspective, and then investing behavioral resources to interact with the primary client contact outside of work and according to the cultural context, allowed Saud to transform the ICOR from a low quality into a high quality ICOR.

**Summary of Investment.** Investment describes the attitude of commitment to expend personal resources exhibited by colleagues in a high quality ICOR. Due to the intercultural makeup of ICORs, participant responses suggested that an attitude of investment facilitates the development of high quality ICOR. Specifically, the additional level of intricacy attributable to colleagues' differing cultural schemas, norms, and values is best leveraged when coworkers are invested in the relationship's quality.

**Category 5: Development of a Shared Understanding**

The category development of a shared understanding refers to a relationship that is characterized by the creation of norms outlining ways in which coworkers work with, interact with, and understand each other; they establish a way to “speak the same language” (Interview #18, Isadora, Line 195). Table 10 provides an overview of development of a shared understanding, noting the subcategories, properties and dimensions of this category.

<b>Table 10: Development of a Shared Understanding</b>				
Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Tabula Rasa (Level 0)	Assumption of unfamiliarity			Low to High Unfamiliarity
	Willingness to delay drawing conclusions			Low to High Willingness
	Acknowledgment of potential cultural differences			Low to High Acknowledgement
	Acknowledgement of shared humanity			Low to High Acknowledgement
Authentic Interest in Coworker (Level 1)	Cultural learning	Learning strategy		Simple to Advanced
		Learning motivation	Curiosity	Low to High Curiosity
			Challenge	Low to High Challenge
	Respectful empathy	Perspective taking	Consideration of culture	Low to High Consideration
			Consideration of individual differences	Low to High Consideration
		Concern		Low to High Concern
Reconciliation of Differences (Level 2)	Respectful discussion of differences			Low to High Respect
	Leveraging differences for a purpose			Low to High Leveraging
	Mutual flexibility			Low to High Flexibility
Norms for Interaction (Level 3)	Communication style	Clarity		Low to High Clarity
		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence
	Use of language	Clarity		Low to High Clarity



		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence
	Behavioral norms	Clarity		Low to High Clarity
		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence

The importance of the development of a shared understanding was discussed by participants as a critical component for high quality ICORs. While not every ICOR prompted participants to discuss all aspects of the category, the building blocks (i.e., aspects of the subcategories) were discussed by every participant, either in describing a specific ICOR or in discussion of ICORs generally. For example, approximately two-thirds of ICORs discussed by participants involved multiple demographic differences (i.e., in addition to culture, differences in coworker gender, age, function). In these ICORs, participants tended to emphasize acknowledgment of a shared humanity more than in discussion of other ICORs. However, in ICORs with fewer demographic differences (i.e., about one-third of the sample), acknowledgement of shared humanity was more prominent in the discussion. One participant shared her thoughts in a way that illustrates the general nature of this category well:

“One of the things that I think that helps to increase the intercultural relationship is trying to speak in the same language. I don't know if I've made myself clear, but it's like you just break this barrier...I learned to deal with this because every time that I write an email, I try to be friendlier and more polite, but I know that sometimes that's not the way you should

talk because people are not used to it. I try to speak the same language they do, in a sense, and I am very happy when I talk to persons of another culture and they try to speak my language by being friendlier in email as well. It's a really good thing. For example, sometimes a person writes and puts a smile just to make sure it's not like that I'm angry, and I was like, 'This is cute. This is nice.' I'm happy with this too." (Interview #18, Isadora, Lines 195-197; 203-209)

The participant discusses speaking in the same language, but this is not intended to be understood literally. Speaking the same language refers to coworkers who are able to coordinate their interactions in ways that facilitate clarity and alignment through established ways of communicating, both verbally and nonverbally. Development of a shared understanding represents the solution to an inherent challenge experienced in many ICORs due to colleagues' differing cultural schemas, behavioral norms, and native languages.

As the category name implies, *development* of a shared understanding refers to a sequence of levels in which coworkers form habitual patterns of interacting. The levels occur in a logical model, each building upon the last. Specifically, participant data revealed a framework in which four levels facilitate the development of a shared understanding. These four levels comprise the subcategories. The development of a shared understanding begins with Level 0: "Tabula Rasa," progresses to Level 1: Authentic Interest in Coworker, then Level 2: Reconciliation of Differences, and rests in Level 3: Norms for Interaction. The levels begin with zero (rather than one) to indicate the lack of progression at the initial stage and to signify its focus as an introductory phase

in the development of shared understanding. Additionally, the language used by the researcher to describe “resting” in Level 3 is intentional, as the levels are not suggested to “end,” and there is not an optimum stopping point in which participants finish developing a shared understanding. The empirical claims associated with this sequential model will be discussed at the end of the section, in particular concerning potential regressions (iterative character of the sequence), the duration of levels, and factors promoting or hindering the development of shared understanding.

The subcategories that serve to delineate the levels in development of a shared understanding are discussed in the order presented in Table 10: Tabula Rasa (Level 0), Authentic Interest in Coworker (Level 1), Reconciliation of Differences (Level 2), and Norms for Interaction (Level 3).

**Subcategory: “Tabula rasa” (Level 0).** “Tabula Rasa” was a term used by one participant to describe what almost all thirty participants discussed as important, particularly when beginning an ICOR: Expecting potential differences without judging those differences as good or bad, and entering the relationship as a “blank slate” to define the relationship norms or rules of conduct. Table 10.1 outlines the subcategory of Tabula Rasa, including the properties and dimensions that serve to define it in more detail.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Tabula Rasa (Level 0)	Assumption of unfamiliarity			Low to High Assumption of Unfamiliarity
	Willingness to delay drawing conclusions			Low to High Willingness

	Acknowledgment of potential cultural differences			Low to High Acknowledgement
	Acknowledgement of shared humanity			Low to High Acknowledgement

As noted by the participant who provided the term “tabula rasa” to the researcher, beginning the relationship as a blank slate allows each coworker to stay open to learning the information needed to facilitate quality, and specifically understanding, in the ICOR:

“Starting out yourself... as a blank slate, like tabula rasa, to take in all the information you need to understand... how the relationship can work.”

(Interview #13, Jessica, Lines 537-539)

Tabula rasa was discussed as especially critical for the beginning of ICORs because it describes the starting point helpful for cultivating a shared understanding. Saud emphasizes the importance of beginning an ICOR without incorrect assumptions:

“The more you’re able to walk into a relationship without those preconceived notions, or saying, ‘I am open to changing all of my preconceived notions,’ and being curious to change your outlook is, I think, the biggest thing that you could do to have a very strong cross-cultural, intercultural relationship.” (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 599-602).

As this quote illustrates, tabula rasa also implies that it is helpful not to start the relationship with a misunderstanding, or preconceived notions that are inaccurate, to facilitate the development of shared understanding.

***Property: Assumption of unfamiliarity.*** This property of tabula rasa refers to an assumption of a colleague's unfamiliarity regarding one's cultural background. It is an expectation that one's colleague will have limited exposure to or knowledge of one's cultural tendencies, preferences, or work style. It is another way in which the beginning of the relationship is considered to be a blank slate that can be explored and understood by the individual coworkers in the relationship. For example, one participant described the assumption of unfamiliarity this way,

“In the beginning, it really helps to ask a lot of questions. It helps to do a lot of explaining and double-checking, even if they don't ask you... Don't assume the other person will necessarily be familiar with your culture and understand your work style.” (Interview #13, Jessica, Lines 534-536)

As Jessica noted, the assumption of unfamiliarity orients the individual to consider what his or her coworker knows (and does not know) regarding the individual's typical cultural practices. Assuming unfamiliarity at the beginning of the relationship is suggested to facilitate cultural information sharing by acknowledging the potential gap in cultural learning.

***Property: Willingness to delay drawing conclusions.*** Critical to the definition of tabula rasa is a nonjudgmental state in which information is received about one's coworker without hastily drawing conclusions. Thus, coworkers must be willing to delay forming opinions regarding the meaning of coworker interactions, use of language, and nonverbal behaviors. Due to the intercultural nature of the relationship, the ways in which each individual interacts, speaks, and communicates may differ from the other. Furthermore, each individual may differ in terms of the *expected* ways the coworker will

interact, speak, or communicate. The process of observation to interpretation can differ according to a willingness to delay drawing conclusions, as discussed by Nilesh:

“For example, if somebody said something which I perceived to be threatening or offensive or insensitive, I would stop to ask questions to clarify what was said or what was meant rather than make assumptions for what that person might be thinking.” (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 103-105)

Nilesh delays drawing conclusions by interrupting the process of observation to interpretation by asking questions to gain additional clarity. In contrast, Geert talks about a low quality ICOR, and provides details as to what makes the ICOR low quality:

“Yes, this person is somebody who is quick in judgments and bullying, playing the blame game and also talked bad about the tax function. ‘They didn't do this, they didn't do that,’ ... without talking to me about it.” (Interview #8, Geert, Lines 520-522)

Geert explains the impact of drawing conclusions hastily on the quality of ICORs. Being quick to judge without gaining clarity can lead to “playing the blame game” due to misunderstanding. Participants, such as Geert, who described examples involving coworker cultural backgrounds with which the “receiver” was less familiar (e.g., often at the beginning of the ICOR) tended to emphasize the importance of a willingness to delay conclusions more often than those who were already familiar with the coworker’s cultural background. In Nilesh’s case, he was discussing helpful practices for building ICOR

quality. In Geert's case, it is evident that his colleague's lack of willingness to delay drawing conclusions caused difficulty in the ICOR.

As illustrated in these two examples, the differences that can occur in ICORs can result in instances in which words and behaviors differ in the mind of the communicator and in the mind of the receiver. Responses to this occurrence can vary from a low to high willingness to delay drawing conclusions.

***Property: Acknowledgment of potential cultural differences.*** A property of tabula rasa is the nonjudgmental awareness of the potential influence of cultural differences on how the relationship functions. At this level, these differences are potential, rather than assumed. However, this orientation toward the potential for cultural differences sensitizes coworkers in the relationship to respond to the differences that emerge, rather than judging them as positive or negative. One participant, discussed earlier as a scholar of cross-cultural research, shared her experience of a time when she did not give sufficient acknowledgement to potential cultural differences:

“Honestly, there was a part of me that somehow didn't connect that the culture was high context; that's why I had this experience in Cyprus...they're actually really different. I always got that it was a high context culture when I was interacting with Asians, but it never actually occurred to me that Cypriots were so high context because they have these characteristics you might see in Greece or Italy; they talk a lot, they're loud, they're expressive. But they're also high context, and for some reason, that did not add up in my mind. It was really confusing because they didn't match with my Japanese, Chinese, not-very-emotionally-

expressive kind of stereotype of that high context culture.” (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 459-467)

As can be seen in the description above, lack of acknowledgement of potential differences (i.e., assuming similarity on characteristics that may be influenced by culture) can hinder the development of a shared understanding. The participant, with her unique background in cross-cultural research compared to other participants in the sample, references the cultural dimension of context, which refers to a cultural dimension describing the ways in which individuals exchange information (Hall, 1976; Liu, Chua & Stahl, 2010). Specifically, individuals in higher context cultures tend to share information implicitly, relying more on contextual information (e.g., nonverbal behavior, situational factors, personal experiences) to communicate as compared with those in lower context cultures. For example, individuals in high context cultures are more likely to consider situational factors (e.g., having a bad day) when interpreting individual behavior (e.g., a rude comment). Research has noted these cultural tendencies in personal versus situational attribution, pointing out that those in higher context (which are also collectivistic) cultures are less likely to commit the fundamental attribution error (i.e., overattributing the cause of individual behavior to personal factors, such as disposition, while underestimating the influence of contextual circumstances on individual behavior) compared to those in lower context (which are also individualistic) cultures (Krull, Loy, Lin, Wang, Chen, & Zhao, 1999; Ross, 1977). Instead, individuals in lower context cultures tend to share information in a more direct and explicit manner (e.g., through verbal and written communication), and pay less attention to contextual information when interpreting others’ communication as compared with those in higher



context cultures (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hall, 1976; Liu, Chua & Stahl, 2010; Trubinsky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991; Von Glinow et al., 2004). Referring to the earlier example, individuals in lower context cultures are more likely to expect individuals to “say what they mean, and mean what they say,” and thus would be more likely to attribute a rude comment to the nature of the individual, rather than considering potential situational factors (e.g., having a bad day). Thus, the lack of acknowledgment of potential cultural differences led to miscommunication in the ICOR.

***Property: Acknowledgement of shared humanity.*** This property refers to the mindful recognition that the coworker has inherent worth and value as a fellow human being. It involves an acknowledgement of the shared characteristics that the two share as human beings. Importantly, acknowledgement of shared humanity does not depend on any individual differences, but it is a constant regardless of unique aspects of one’s physical or psychological make-up. One participant conveys the meaning of acknowledgment of shared humanity by saying:

“...there has to be an inherent appreciation in your value as a fellow human that makes you equal. Like if I have to peel enough layers, we have to assume that at its core, we are brothers. Someone poor or someone richer...at its core, the common understanding of humanity is that you're just as good as I am. Old, young, skinny, fat, dark, white; they're just noise.” (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 288-293).

As noted above, acknowledgment of shared humanity does not refer to equality in terms of qualifications, power, or other physical characteristics, but emphasizes the view of individuals’ inherent value and worth by virtue of being human.

There is a clear connection between acknowledgement of cultural differences and acknowledgement of shared humanity. At first, these two properties may sound paradoxical, as one advocates for a focus on *differences* between coworkers and the other elevates the importance of *shared* humanity. However, simultaneous recognition of both potential differences and shared humanity is critical for tabula rasa. As noted by one participant,

“There is a certain art to it. You have to go into the situation with this view of the other person as a human. When we expect that the other person is exactly like us, it’s going to be trouble. But it’s also important to assume that the other is human in terms of having people they care about like a family, having dreams, and other important things in life like that. You have to have both.” (Interview #29, Kait, Lines 88-92).

As described by Kait, there is “an art” to balancing the concurrent recognition of shared humanity and acknowledgement of potential cultural differences. There are core elements that serve to unite individuals as a part of humanity, while also important are cultural differences that one cannot expect to be the same.

While both properties are critical to tabula rasa, some participants emphasized one of these properties more than the other when discussing the initial phase of developing a shared understanding in high quality ICORs. This depended largely on the extent of cultural differences in the relationship. Specifically, when cultural differences were more obvious and explicit to the participant (e.g., Karen, who worked with a younger, male Indian technical colleague), it became more important to emphasize shared humanity. In other words, there was less of a need to focus on acknowledging potential differences,

and more emphasis placed on shared humanity to promote quality in the ICOR. In contrast, when cultural differences were less readily apparent (e.g., Isadora, who worked with another female HR American manager of similar age), more of the participant's description focused on exploring potential differences. Considering the four demographic variables of culture, gender, function, and age on which coworkers could differ, approximately two-thirds of the 56 ICORs reflected those in which two or more of these variables differed for coworkers in the ICOR (the variable of culture was different consistently, due to the study's focus on intercultural relationships; data on coworker age was not collected intentionally). Though the relative focus of shared humanity to acknowledgement of potential differences does not appear to be an intentional practice by participants, the change in focus is logical to achieve the simultaneous need to acknowledge potential differences as well as shared human characteristics.

The assumption of unfamiliarity, acknowledgment of potential cultural differences, and acknowledgement of shared humanity all share an important characteristic in terms of their dimensionality. These properties highlight a key aspect of dimensionality, as higher does not necessarily mean better in the form of extremes. Specifically, one may anticipate a curvilinear relationship when any one of the properties or subcategories reaches extremes. This point is easily observed in the present combination, so it will be used to serve as an illustration. If individuals have an inappropriate focus on potential cultural differences, shared humanity, and unfamiliarity, this could be problematic for developing high quality ICORs, and particularly to reaching the point of a shared understanding. An undue focus on shared humanity (i.e., extending the concept in such a way that minimizes individual uniqueness) may result in the cross-

cultural equivalent of colorblindness; in other words, ignoring meaningful cultural or individual differences. As one participant shared,

“One thing I never realized before I got to live in Korea was I just clumped everybody in that region with just one categorization, Southeast Asia. When I got to live in Korea, I got to really see that the South Koreans were very, very different. As I continued to work in that region-- Between the people in Taiwan, China, Japan, Malaysia, everybody's their own unique culture, a blending of, definitely, the history that goes into those countries and also the geography. South Korea has been invaded many times by different countries including Japan. Then, Taiwan just has never been invaded, or Malaysia. I realized that people were really very different. Had completely different outlooks on life. That really made it that much more enriching, and I enjoyed it even more.” (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 20-27)

Too much emphasis on the potential of cultural differences may result in cultural misattributions, or stereotyping individuals. For example, one participant cautioned that this balance was important in her team:

“I hate generalizing and I hate stereotyping but in some cases, it can be true that generally there's a handful of some things about different cultures that you might discover are common. It's something to think about when you're talking to those people. Again, I hate to generalize, but we've had a variety of Dutch colleagues come to my company and work in different areas of the business, on loan from the sister company in the Netherlands.

They are frequently perceived as being arrogant when really it's this directness that if they come in and they think your business process is inefficient or poor, they will tell you.

They don't think that's bad. It's not even crossing their mind that they might hurt someone's feelings or offend someone. It's just business. It's just, "Hey, you're walking from A to C, you get to B. Why don't you just walk from A to B, that's silly." Sometimes, the experience is perceived by the American side as someone being very arrogant and telling them what to do. It helps if people can generally be aware of this possibility of cultural differences." (Interview #17, Lauren, 290-302)

As described by Lauren above, noting potential individual differences based upon cultural tendencies, and doing so without stereotyping individuals based upon their cultural background, is important for developing high quality ICORs.

**Subcategory: Authentic interest in coworker (Level 1).** Authentic interest in one's coworker refers to a genuine curiosity to learn about and understand one's coworker as an individual. Authentic interest is a logical progression from tabula rasa, which acknowledges one's lack of understanding at the outset of the relationship. One participant described the next step from tabula rasa to authentic interest this way:

"I think it just gives me the curiosity. I love open ended questions about cultures and people which opens the door for me to learn something from everyone. Sometimes learning by questioning why people do things... But it's not just that I don't understand what they did, but I really want to

understand what are the strings that were pulled in the background to make them want to do this. To make them do certain things.” (Andrei, Interview #1, Lines 630-634).

Authentic interest is further defined by two properties, cultural learning and respectful empathy, as detailed in Table 10.2.

**Table 10.2: Authentic Interest, Level 1**

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Authentic Interest in Coworker (Level 1)	Cultural learning	Learning strategy		Simple to Advanced
		Learning motivation	Curiosity	Low to High Curiosity
			Challenge	Low to High Challenge
	Respectful empathy	Perspective taking	Consideration of culture	Low to High Consideration
			Consideration of individual differences	Low to High Consideration
		Concern		Low to High Concern

**Property: Cultural learning.** Subsumed in the subcategory of authentic interest in coworker, cultural learning refers to the intentional practice of discovering information about one’s coworker for the purpose of fostering relationship quality (i.e., in terms of work quality and interpersonal dynamics) through the development of a shared understanding. Every participant included in the study referred to the importance of cultural learning. Learning information about one’s coworker took many forms in participants’ responses. Due to the intercultural nature of the relationships in the study, learning in this context most often centered on learning about a coworker’s cultural

background (i.e., in comparison to one's own). Two properties serve to define cultural learning further: learning strategies and learning motivation. The learning strategies participants described ranged from simple to more complex and effortful in nature. Simpler strategies to learn about one's coworker included asking open-ended questions, individual reflection, and observation. One participant recounted his experience with learning about colleagues through observation:

“Then just through observation, through seeing what people do, learning how they think. Understanding what makes them-- This is going to make me sound like a robot really. Even understanding, "Hey what kind of humor do you like, what goes in, so that this comes out?" They will tell me about Friends and John Oliver show. All these things that they watch, which indirectly inform and create connections. I would tap into that world of information. I think I learned it because I'm curious but I think once I learn it, it also feeds a lot of other information as well.” (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 654-659).

Observing one's coworkers, as described by Andrei above, was one type of learning strategy discussed by participants. Other learning strategies required higher levels of effort, such as seeking information online about the coworker's culture:

“At first, it was really intense, it's very difficult, but I tried to understand the culture difference. I actually went online and researched the German culture and tendencies so I can work better with her... I learned something about the ways, their way of dealing things and how they manage the

timetable, even little things like how they eat and stuff like that.”

(Interview #25, Trang, Lines 553-559).

Conducting an online search to learn more detail about a coworker’s cultural background was considered to be a more effortful strategy due to the action (i.e., online search) taking place outside the ICOR. Instead, an online search required that the individual remember or plan to conduct a search at a time separate from the regular coworker interaction.

Another more effortful strategy for cultural learning was to seek help from the coworker or others with a similar background to better understand the culture. Continued from a participant’s example discussed earlier, Whitney shared the following strategy:

“The place where it's most difficult and I honestly still struggle here a lot, the big challenge I still have is interpreting cultures that are very high context. Being able to really get it because we're such a low context culture in the US. I'm used to being blunt and explicit. Once you grow into a culture that is high context - and I have this experience when I started working in Cyprus - that I couldn't read the signals because they're much higher context. I was lucky that I made friends with a colleague who is a Cypriot over there, and that she had lived in the U.S. for 10 years. She was almost like my cultural coach. I'd be like, ‘Okay, they're doing this, what does that mean?’” (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 435-443)

The commonality in the use of both of these more effortful strategies was the increased level of perceived difficulty in building the relationship quality. This pattern led to the development of another property of cultural learning, learning motivation.



The second property of cultural learning is titled learning motivation. Learning motivation refers to the types of underlying motivations, and their apparent correspondence with the variation in specific content participants aimed to learn from their coworkers. Specifically, the two types of learning motivation are included as 3<sup>rd</sup> level properties: curiosity and challenge. Each explains the source of one's motivation to learn about culture. Curiosity can be characterized as a positive inclination to learn about the coworker's cultural background. Simpler learning strategies (e.g., observing colleagues, asking open-ended questions as part of regular interactions) tended to be used by participants when the motivation was curiosity about the coworker's culture. Challenge can be described as a response to learn about a coworker's culture when something has gone awry. Participants tended to use more advanced learning strategies when cultural differences presented a challenge or an obstacle in the ICOR. Thus, there appeared to be a progression to utilize more advanced strategies for learning in accordance with the source of participants' motivation for learning about the coworker's culture.

In addition, the content participants wanted to learn from their colleagues varied according to the most salient cultural differences, both in terms of interpersonal dynamics and the work context. One such instance was described in the above quote regarding a coworker relationship comprised of individuals from high and low context cultures. In another example, a participant focused on learning how to build trust with clients according to the cultural work context from his colleague:

“Also, he forced me to look at things-- I always look for a return on what we did, both immediately and that laying the foundation for what came.

He always was more of a person who looked at a perspective that was further away. He said, "Trust them. Do this, we may lose money in the interim, but this will build confidence in them that we are a good company, and they will continue to buy from us. If you don't do this now, we're never going to get past them, because this is how they're going to test you." He understood them well and those were things that were hard for me, but it really changed how I look at business today. Absolutely it did." (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 394-398)

Learning about the coworker's cultural background is helpful for the development of a shared understanding, as it facilitates one's ability to interpret culturally influenced thoughts, behaviors, and feelings:

"I think you need to have some knowledge of what their cultures teaches them to interpret some things. It's easier to work together when the person is from a culture that you interact with frequently because you've already noticed things about that culture and so you see things. But if they're from a culture you've never interacted with, then that's a lot more difficult because you don't know how to interpret things." (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 412-416)

In addition, the coworker on the receiving end of authentic interest (i.e., one's colleague demonstrates an authentic interest in him or her) seems to experience the relationship as higher quality:

“[In the high quality] one there was an interest. There were sometimes where [he said], ‘I was looking up this in the Caribbean. Is this something that you did? Are you familiar with this? [Did you] travel here or there? [Do you have] any recommendations here?’ and things like that. That kind of questioning or interest I think is what helps the relationship.” (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 623-626)

The work knowledge, cultural perspective, and other information learned from and about one’s coworker was then leveraged by participants directly in the workplace for improved work quality, but also via respectful empathy.

***Property: Respectful empathy.*** ICORs whose members display authentic interest are characterized by the practice of respectful empathy. Respectful empathy is a process by which coworkers interpret and relate to each other’s experiences. When participants describe respectful empathy, it involves two components: a cognitive component (i.e., perspective taking) and an affective component (i.e., concern).

Perspective taking involves attempts to understand the coworker’s point of view. It occurs when an individual imagines what it would be like to have the experience offered by his or her coworker, or attempts to understand the intent behind a colleague’s behavior. It may also involve recalling times in which one has felt similar emotions. Continuing with the example used to illustrate seeking cultural knowledge online, the participant describes how she used this knowledge to practice perspective taking:

“I kind of understand, I’ll be like, ‘This is why it felt difficult,’ because she comes from a high class in Germany, a high class family in Germany and

stuff like that. She's always doing that little thing with NAME, and I said, "Okay, I see where she's coming from," and I don't take it personally. I just use it to try and understand her perspective." (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 559-563)

Another participant shared a powerful example in which she compared the characteristics of two demographically similar ICORs. With her background in cross-cultural research, Whitney was able to point to specific similarities and differences in terms of cultural values from the literature. Both relationships that Whitney discussed were with senior Indian male colleagues who shared a traditional Indian culture value of power distance. However, one of the ICORs was considered to be high quality, while the other was considered to be low quality:

“What I've noticed – because I have two co-workers who are both older, Indian men, and they are both very, very high power distance. One of them, I like a great deal and have great affection for. The other one, I cannot stand.

The difference is that even though they're both very high power distance, the one I don't like is high power in a distant way that he treats everyone like he's better than them and everybody is like his servant. In contrast, the one that I like very much and that I have a very good close relationship with is also very high power distance, but in a very paternalistic way and a very caring way.

Sometimes, he'll say and do things that I have to let roll off my back as an American, where he'll give me instructions on doing things that I already know how to do [but] in a way that he's trying to be helpful. I just have to let that go and not take offense like I would if he was American. I know because I know him well that underneath, that the intent of him doing that is to be helpful and kind, rather than to demean me.

I think that if the other person, the one I don't like, engaged in that same behavior, it would really bother me because I've seen that person be very degrading and not very nice to people. I would not be able to see it as helpful. I would see it only as degrading.” (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 142-158)

In both of these examples of perspective taking, the Trang and Whitney describe consideration of both cultural and individual differences that may be helpful for understanding the colleague's perspective. While the two colleagues Whitney describes are the same in terms of demographic characteristics and share the same cultural value of power distance, the specific individual difference (i.e., degrading behavior) is isolated from the broader cultural value to facilitate a deeper understanding of what drives quality in these two relationships.

Respectful empathy also addresses how one uses the information gleaned through the process of perspective-taking. While the goal of perspective taking is to understand and relate to the colleague's experience, respectful empathy simultaneously involves denying the supposition that one is able to fully understand the other person's experience.

“I think if you are humble enough and you're curious enough to try to understand what another person is going through, you might be missing some tones, you might be missing some spices of the experience. But if you're willing, I do believe you can gain an understanding of what the person is going through. And to me that is empathy. Most people think that empathy is, "I empathize with what you are going through." But I think empathy starts earlier. I think [empathy is] having the humanity, the love, or the curiosity to try to understand what goes into someone feeling a certain way, at a later point represents itself by you feeling sympathy or empathy for them. You don't just feel empathy all of a sudden. (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 817-833)

Thus, respectful empathy refers to a coworker's attempts to gain an understanding through the practice of perspective taking, but is concurrently respectful of the individual's unique experience. In the full context, Andrei shares a thoughtful theory of the genesis of empathy, namely that it emerges out of experiences of suffering and loss. This further suggests his developed understanding of respectful empathy. As illustrated above, respectful empathy involves a response to the other person's perspective with genuine care and concern for his or her well-being (i.e., as opposed to only using the understanding for personal gain).

**Subcategory: Reconciliation of differences (Level 2).** Reconciliation of differences describes the ways in which coworkers address cultural differences (i.e., in terms of work approach and interpersonal dynamics) learned from taking an authentic interest in one's coworker. Thus, this level is made possible directly via the information learned due to authentic interest in one's coworker. In this level, the properties define the strategies participants discussed to resolve cultural differences that influence their work approach and interpersonal dynamics. Properties (i.e., strategies for reconciliation) include respectful discussion of differences, leveraging differences for a purpose, and mutual flexibility, as shown in Table 10.3.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Reconciliation of Differences (Level 2)	Respectful discussion of differences			Low to High Respect
	Leveraging differences for a purpose			Low to High Leveraging
	Mutual flexibility			Low to High Flexibility

**Property: Respectful discussion of differences.** Building upon the previous two levels in development of a shared understanding in which potential differences are anticipated (level 0) and are then learned about due to genuine interest (level 1), next differences are discussed by coworkers in a respectful manner. Because authentic interest in a coworker produces cultural learning both in terms of work approach and interpersonal dynamics, there is also the potential for cultural differences to emerge in each of these areas. For example, a cultural difference discussed by multiple participants

is the extent to which business should be customized to meet the preferences of a client or customer. Saud described this cultural difference with his Korean colleague:

“His perspective was everything to satisfy the customer. It doesn't matter what other reasons you have, whether it has to do with corporate or protecting intellectual property or the ability-- Everything has to be to make sure the customer is satisfied, and that was his primary goal. CLIENT COMPANY is such a huge company in Korea that they influence a lot of what happens in society. He also felt like him doing what was required for CLIENT COMPANY was very important. That was where we had a lot of dialogue. We came to a compromise many times. I grew in the process, because as part of making a compromise, I had to agree to a lot of what he had to say.” (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 357-366)

Another participant, Trang, described cultural differences regarding the extent to which business should be customized to meet the preferences of a client or customer, and how she (a female Vietnamese chemist) approached the difference with her American, male coworker. Trang shared a corresponding discussion in which they disagreed regarding customizing their approach to provide a price discount for a customer:

“He's so very straightforward, like one is one, two is two, zero is zero. In my culture, it is different in the point that for example, if the price is \$2.50 a pound, but because we have good relationship, I can try to negotiate down to \$2.30 a pound. He's very like that and very straightforward on every single thing...



When we do have different opinions, what we do, we sit down and we discuss it. If he's mad, I will just not talk about it. I will walk away or bring something up fun or eat something together. Then when everyone cools down -- because we are human beings and sometimes, we work together every single day, there'll be times that we have conflict -- We try to find a way to sit down and talk. I always put a joke in every single intense talk that we have together so it will reduce the intensity. I'll analyze for him and explain, 'Look. If the customer buys 1,000 pounds with this price but then, they buy 100,000 pounds with this price, we will make more money regardless. If we reduce the price, we still make more money. At the end of the day, our objective is to deliver good quality products and make money. At the end of the day [with this approach], we make money. Why not do it?' If he's still not convinced...I'll say, "Look. How about we ask our manager to see what he thinks? Maybe he agrees with you, maybe he agrees with me. Then we go from there." (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 296-299; 326-339)

In both of these examples, participants share their understanding of the cultural difference and how their colleague's different perspective informs their work approach. Each participant responds to the cultural difference by facilitating a respectful discussion in which shared goals are emphasized and the desired outcome is to reach agreement.

Respectful discussion may also take place between coworkers in response to cultural differences affecting the interpersonal dynamics of the relationship.

“In Russia and in Eastern Europe in Slavic cultures, people are very abrupt not because they're cold and mean as maybe Westerners perceive them, but because watering a message down is considered disrespectful to you because I'm wasting your time. So, getting straight to the point and saying, "I need this." It's not because I'm a jerk. It's not because I want to be mean to you or show my powers, but it's because, "Hey I respect you. I respect your time. So, I'll tell you exactly what I need, so I can get out of your hair." Right? Now, it's funny for me to observe how our colleagues here communicate with our colleagues in Russia. Because what they say is, "Why are they so mean?" I say, "They're not mean." Because in Russia they are thinking, "Why are they wasting my time with, "Hi, I hope this message finds you well." And then whatever, there's a preamble of-- Even if somebody stopped at somebody's cubicle, they will start by, "What'd you do last night?" Or, "Did you watch the latest episode of The Game of Thrones? Did you hear about the dragon?" (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 675-687)

In this example, the participant discusses the cultural differences regarding norms for small talk in Russia and in the U.S. He not only observes these differences for himself, but discusses the differences with his U.S. colleagues to clarify the intent behind the different approach to small talk.

An important element for defining respectful discussion of differences (e.g., a disagreement) was the public vs. private format for the discussion:

“During the meeting, I think you should not show your disrespect or [engage in] unprofessional behavior, [whatever] you call it. Maybe you can do a follow up meeting and try to find out what happened there, even if you had a confrontation with somebody in front of 15 people or 20 people. You should not offend somebody, you can have a follow up meeting... Publicly or privately and I think that plays a big role.”

(Interview #3, Venu, 496-500)

As illustrated in this example, the context for the discussion is an important consideration for facilitating respectful discussion of differences.

***Property: Leveraging differences for a purpose.*** Reconciliation of differences was also characterized by leveraging differences for a purpose. This implies that differences, particularly cultural differences, are viewed positively as valuable benefits of the ICOR. One participant shared this notion in a helpful analogy:

“If you surround yourself with people who think the same way, you'd think the same way then you all have the same blind spots. It's like sitting in the same spot in the car, then expecting to have a 360 view. Now because of how the car is built, you're still going to have the same blind spot. To me, the understanding of the existence of blind spots has to come from the understanding of your own limitations. Once you become aware of your own limitations, you cannot imagine the functional working environment without colleagues. It's just not possible.” (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 175-180)

Participants who valued understanding of cultural differences recognized the importance of high quality ICORs for work quality. In Saud's case, he observed cultural tendencies that corresponded with particular strengths to support the business. As part of his role, Saud helped to ensure new products were met multiple standards to be ready to go on the market:

“I also realized the strengths of each culture. For example, when we developed a new product. A new product was, say, developed here in the U.S. and the initial research and development was done here. We would always look at moving it to Korea next because the folks there were fantastic at taking an idea that is maybe 70% product-development complete, you haven't hit all the metrics in terms of productivity and all that-- They would take it to 120%. Then, you take it to Japan, they would put all the quality into it, make it really robust from a quality perspective. Take it to Taiwan, they would drive the cost even lower. Each one had an expertise that if you were able to leverage it in the right way, we were much stronger as a company.” (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 34-41)

As noted by Saud, each culture tended to focus on different aspects of making a new product ready to go on the market. In his example, Saud notes a product initially conceived of in the U.S., which is then improved upon by colleagues in Korea who consider ways to produce the product in ways beneficial to the business (e.g., efficiently, economically). He leverages the perspective of his Japanese colleagues to ensure the product is of high quality. Finally, Saud recognizes value of the difference in perspective from his Taiwanese colleagues, who suggest ways to drive down costs for the business.

Saud concludes his example by stating that when cultural differences are leveraged, the result is a stronger company.

Another example highlights how coworkers' different viewpoints resulting from cultural differences were leveraged:

“Here, in the US, if there's a quality issue with the customer, everything is black and white in terms of, you make a change to the product. If there's a quality issue, you need to make sure the customer knows exactly all the changes you've made because that's what they require.

Whereas in Korea and Japan, even though the requirements are there that they be made-- Notified about the changes, for them it is, ‘I am doing something good for the customer. I am improving the product. I don't necessarily have to communicate everything as long as they're getting a better product.’ They felt that is perfectly fine to do, ‘It's completely ethical because I'm only helping the customer.’ Whereas we [in the U.S] would ... work to find out what the root cause of the quality issue was....

In Korea and Japan, the way they look at it is, "What are the 10 things that can potentially cause this problem? Let's go fix all of them. I don't really need to do a root cause analysis and find out exactly what caused it. There are 10 things here that could potentially affect it, so I'll change all 10."

Those are things that were very different, which were refreshing and good to see. The challenge comes-- "How do you blend all this for the maximum benefit for the business?" (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 56-74)

In both of these examples, the focus is on how to leverage cultural differences of opinion held by coworkers for the purpose of developing a shared mindset to maximize work quality.

***Property: Mutual flexibility.*** Mutual flexibility refers to coworkers' willingness to adapt to one another in terms of their work approach (e.g., decision making), way of communicating, and use of language. One participant described mutual flexibility in terms of decision making with his colleague:

“One of the nice things was we always had this way to agree to what somebody had said, at least, tentatively, see it through and see how it worked out. If what he was saying wasn't working out, then we would fall back to something. We were both flexible to change. It's not that he felt that he said something and he was committed to it, and even if it went wrong, he wanted to do it, come hell or high water. So, we had a way to say, ‘Okay, I'll take your path and see what [happens]. But if something goes wrong [we'll try my way].’ He'd say, ‘Yes.’ That allowed us to work out a lot of differences.” (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 367-372)

Another example demonstrates how a participant appreciated her colleague's flexibility in their ways of communicating:

“I feel that he's being flexible, maybe I might be saying something that he doesn't understand, or even the language or something like that, but I think that he's being flexible because he supports me in that way. If he does something a different way, then I do the same thing. I'm being

flexible because I think, "Oh he's [from] a different culture, he has this tendency." But we also see the difference as something positive, we value it as a positive, as an opportunity for us rather than a conflict. (Interview #2, Fairuza, Lines 337-342)

The willingness for both colleagues to adapt to one another was suggested to be a critical part of the process to resolve of differences towards the development of a shared understanding.

**Subcategory: Norms for interaction (Level 3).** ICORs in which coworkers successfully reconciled differences resulted in norms for interaction. Norms refer to mutually accepted expectations concerning the ways that coworkers communicate, speak, and interact with one another to maintain clarity, alignment, and predictability in the relationship. Norms for interaction are suggested to be the "resting" phase of the development of a shared understanding because they represent a working system on which coworkers can rely to facilitate communication and comprehension. Established relationship norms may be particularly important in ICORs due to the intercultural nature of the relationship, in which coworkers bring different expectations, styles, and cognitive frameworks to the relationship (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010; Kinloch & Metge, 2014).

Throughout the interviews, participants alluded to three criteria that characterize established norms: clarity, alignment, and practical adherence. Clarity refers to the understanding of the norm by the coworkers in the ICOR. Alignment refers to the state of agreement on the norm itself; both have conceded to adapt to the norm to foster understanding in the relationship. Thus, customizing one's style is necessary to achieve

alignment. Practical adherence refers to the norm in action. Colleagues not only understand and agree to the norm, but they put it into practice in the relationship. All three of these criteria serve to define three types of established norms: communication style, use of language, and behavioral norms. The properties and dimensions that serve to explain the category are provided in Table 10.4.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Norms for Interaction (Level 3)	Communication style	Clarity		Low to High Clarity
		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence
	Use of language	Clarity		Low to High Clarity
		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence
	Behavioral norms	Clarity		Low to High Clarity
		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence

**Property: Communication style.** Communication style refers to the verbal and nonverbal approaches that coworkers use to share information with each other, outside of the language itself. In other words, communication style is about “how” a message is communicated rather than “what” is communicated. Due to differences in cultural



tendencies regarding communication style, many coworkers described establishing norms in this area as an important part of the development of a shared understanding:

“I felt that she was direct because as I told you, I was at the beginning of working here, and I was not used to that. In the beginning, I really thought she was angry with me and then I responded to emails she sent me. I tried to be friendlier, more polite and then she responded back with a smiley face. She was not angry with me. Maybe since my response email was something more friendly, maybe she thought that she was coming across as rude. She tried to soften that. When I went to meet her in person, I noticed that she was not rude at all. I don't know if she's like this with everyone that she works with, or if she's as friendly as she is with me. I think it's because I'm a Brazilian and she knows that I appreciate that.”

(Interview #18, Isadora, Lines 396-400)

The ICOR in the example above refers to communication style in which an American colleague displays a more direct communication style than her Brazilian counterpart. As another example of communication style, one participant noted the norms established as part of a German-U.S. ICOR:

“It's just that with the intercultural relationships, just double checking yourself when you're communicating to make sure you're understanding each other whether it's language or maybe very subtle cultural issues. Directness can be a common trait of Germans and Dutch people, for example, when you're at work and you're doing work and you're in business, they like to just be direct and plain and say, "You should have

gotten this done." In America, we're a little softer about those things and landing those blows or whatever." (Interview #17, Lauren, Lines 283-289)

***Property: Use of language.*** Use of language refers to the ways coworkers customize their use language to facilitate communication and comprehension. A typical characteristic of ICORs is that at least one colleague is speaking a foreign language to communicate with the other. The colleague (usually English speaking) who is able to speak in their native language in the ICOR may reflect on their use of language to foster understanding for the colleague who is not speaking his or her native language. While many times non-native speakers develop an excellent level of proficiency in the language, other times a non-native speaker may have only a working proficiency of the language. The impact of using "global English" is described by Lauren, an American participant, below:

"Anyway, that's where I find it's helpful that, we can take a breath and think about it and also when we're writing to them. I have a staff member who tends to be flowery with language. He'll write an email with three paragraphs that could be said in three sentences and I have to remind him sometimes: This is going to non-English speakers, let's get rid of all the adjectives, let's boil it down, what's your basic statement, what are you saying. They don't need to know all the other, if, ands and buts because you're going to lose them, they're going to feel overwhelmed when they open this because they have to read it and understand it. Again these are just habits I learned over the years too and once in a while also the other, the people, the non-English speakers will share with me how hard it is, or

they'll come back and they'll say, "Hey, can we have a meeting to discuss this because we're not understanding the written communication."

Sometimes we do that. Using that perspective and putting that filter in your head, just takes a minute or two when you're corresponding with someone. Keeping that in mind can help avoid little hiccups in communication that might be simply because of translation or misunderstanding of vocabulary words." (Interview #17, Lauren, Lines 145-158)

As described by the participant above, establishing norms to intentionally use language in a way that promotes shared understanding can be beneficial to the creation of high quality ICORs.

***Property: Behavioral norms.*** Behavioral norms refer to the actions coworkers take as part of their interactions in an ICOR. The behaviors are patterns in the ways that coworkers interact with one another to facilitate understanding.

"There's a number of my coworkers who work out of India and the culture is, "I'll do as much as I can and when I can't do anymore. I'll just stop there and pick it up again the next day." So, many people who work in India would just finish their work on time and leave. Whereas the people in the U.S. or in Europe, they try to stay on it and make sure they communicate the exact status to the client and so on.

I've seen several times that the cultural aspects come in where the client says, "Oh I was waiting for an answer, and my teammate in India says,

"Yes, but it was the end of the day, so I left... When we see those, we do pick it up as an organizational process because I've always believed in process-focused fixes rather than blaming people. We've made sure that we're able to understand the cultural expectations and work with them."

(Interview #4, NR, Lines 156-167)

In this example, the participant describes two different tendencies regarding how work status is communicated, and the implication of work status updates for meeting client expectations (i.e., expectations also influenced by the client's cultural background). To create norms that facilitate understanding, the participant discusses establishing a process with his colleague to ensure their work approach aligns not only with one another, but with the client's cultural expectations.

**Summary of a Development of a Shared Understanding.** In sum, the development of a shared understanding is a framework for describing the progressive steps coworkers take to facilitate communication and comprehension. The introductory level is purposefully "blank" to allow coworkers the space to nonjudgmentally suppose potential differences, while at the same time acknowledging their shared humanity. In high quality ICORs, recognition of unfamiliarity leads to authentic interest in one's coworker. Authentic interest is characterized by cultural learning with the goal of using this information to understand the colleague's perspective, thereby fostering relationship and work quality. Differences learned via authentic interest are reconciled through respectful discussion, leveraging differences for a purpose, and being mutually flexible to one another's approach. Finally, the framework reaches a "resting" phase in which

colleagues establish norms for communicating, using language, and interacting with one another.

While the data suggest that the levels occur in a relative order, it is unlikely to be a purely linear process. Instead, the levels are suggested to occur in relative order, but may occur more than once. This is because the development of a shared understanding is suggested to be iterative in nature. Due to the complex nature of human nonverbal communication, use of language, and interaction behavior, the development of shared understanding is unlikely to occur in a linear fashion that requires only one attempt. Furthermore, the duration of levels may vary according to several factors, such as the exposure colleagues have to one another individually as well as to each other's cultures. It would be expected that increased interpersonal and/or cultural familiarity would increase the speed at which colleagues develop a shared understanding (see personal characteristics category). In remote or virtual contexts, the development of a shared understanding would be expected to take longer than in-person interaction, due to the lower mode of communication. Limited opportunities to practice cultural learning (e.g., observing one another as individuals and within his or her cultural context) may hinder development of a shared understanding. Another factor influencing the rate at which shared understanding is developed are the individuals in the relationship (see personal characteristics category). Finally, individuals with higher levels of cultural competency may be more adept at developing a shared understanding with their colleagues or more motivated to establish norms, and thus more likely to execute the steps outlined in the shared understanding framework.

**Category 6: Comfort**

The category of comfort describes a relationship characterized by colleagues' feelings of ease, openness, comfort and trust. The category is the result of descriptions from participants typifying high quality ICORs as comfortable relationships fostered by interpersonal trust, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and open communication. Trang sums up the essence of comfort well in her summary description of what defines a high quality ICOR:

A good coworker relationship to me is that we have to trust each other, [be] supportive and available, creating a comfortable atmosphere when we're around each other. That kind of informality. Even if work and personal life are separate, when you're at work, being able to have that openness and honesty, feeling like there's no judgement, and just being comfortable with each other. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 165-171)

As evident in Trang's description, open communication, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and interpersonal trust are integral to the experience of comfort in a high quality ICOR. Comfort is therefore further categorized into four subcategories, as outlined in Table 11.

<b>Table 11: Comfort</b>				
Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Openness in Communication	Transparency			Low to High Transparency
	Accessibility			Low to High Accessibility
Mutually Desired Closeness	Alignment			Low to High Alignment
	Personal disclosure			Low to High Personal Disclosure
Congeniality				Low to High Congeniality
Interpersonal Trust	Work values alignment			Low to High Alignment
	Integrity			Low to High Integrity
	Positive intent			Low to High Positive Intent

**Subcategory: Openness in communication.** High quality ICORs were characterized as those with open, comfortable communication. High levels of openness characterized communication that was fluid, transparent, adequate, regular, and candid. Importantly, openness in communication did not reflect one particular type of communication style, as participants took note of the cultural tendencies regarding communication styles (see development of a shared understanding category), but referred to the ways in which communication was experienced. Fairuza articulates the importance of open communication across cultural tendencies:

If you feel that they are open to talk to you over any issues they have or anything about the work, and they understand that if they don't agree, that they give you that feedback, that's good quality. Some cultures are more open, like they do more jokes, or they smile more. Others are shyer or more serious. But those things I don't think influence the quality.

(Interview #2, Fairuza, Lines 120-123)

Regardless of the ways culture may influence an individual's communication style, openness remains an important component of a high quality ICOR.

Open communication was discussed by all participants in the sample as important for high quality ICORs. In addition to its discussion by all participants, openness in communication was discussed in a variety of formats and contexts by participants. Specifically, participants discussed the importance of openness in communication in one-on-one settings, group meetings, during disagreement, as part of decision-making, and in providing each other with opinions or feedback. Openness in communication is further defined by two properties, transparency and accessibility.

***Property: Transparency.*** Transparency further specified participants' description of openness in communication. Transparency was described by participants as the degree to which communication was clear, complete, fully disclosing, and candid. Transparency commonly accompanied discussion of openness in communication. A high level of transparency is exemplified in the quote from Jaelyn:

When I look at the relationship that we have and judge the quality of it, I look at it more along the lines of the openness; she doesn't hold anything back. She always tells me her negative plus positive viewpoints... Because



we're so comfortable, she can just tell me the facts and I'll understand them and take them for face value, and not get internally damaged from words. (Interview #22, Jaclyn, Lines 117-124)

Transparency as described by Jaclyn includes clear discussion of both positive and negative viewpoints. Transparency implies full disclosure, and suggests that colleagues do not hold anything back. Thus, emphasis is placed on openly sharing both good things (e.g., talking about things that are going well) as well as areas for improvement in the work.

Geert echoes the importance of full disclosure, highlighting the role of transparency in fostering quality of decision-making at work:

A coworker should speak up and say, "Hey, that's a really good idea," or maybe "it's not such a good idea," because you need to be able to say that, too, in a quality relationship when you have to make decisions. You need to understand what the pros and cons are, and your colleague needs to share that with you... There's not a day that goes by that you don't have a professional discussion, trying to get all the facts on the table for discussion. Whether that's a big issue, or the way we resolve things, or the way we go to market that we need to think about, or the way the business is moving in a certain direction, or it's a personnel issue. You need to be able to have a relationship that you can at least speak out, and that there's this common sense of, "Okay, let's talk about it. Let's put the arguments on the table." (Interview #7, Geert, Lines 83-88)

Geert outlines the various contexts and types of discussions in which transparent communication is important. He further explains that he expects transparency from his colleagues, as he relies on it to make sound decisions at work. A continuation of this quote from Geert outlines the dyadic nature of transparency, as well as its impact on ICOR quality:

At the end of the discussion, we walk out of the door as normal people and aren't adversaries... I think it's not only one person that can contribute to that, but it needs to be cultivated with a good working partner. (Interview #7, Geert, Lines 88-92)

Transparency is suggested to facilitate open discussion that resolves issues, allowing colleagues to end the conversation without harboring negative feelings. Furthermore, Geert suggests that transparency is fostered by both members of the relationship. Isadora repeats the notions of the dyadic nature of transparency as well as the positive impact transparency has on ICOR quality:

We can be honest with each other when we have a problem. For example, yesterday we had a call and the call did not go very well. We had a big problem to solve and it was a bad situation. We were more serious [on the call], but after the call, everything was like it always has been. I feel that this is a good quality relationship, when you can be open to the person and they don't take things personally. (Interview #18, Isadora, Lines 332-337)

Even though Isadora and her colleague needed to discuss difficult issues as part of their call, transparency allowed them to contain the issue to its domain; the difficult discussion did not hinder their relationship after it had resolved.

***Property: Accessibility.*** Accessibility refers to the extent to which colleagues in the ICOR are available to one another for responsive, regular, and timely communication. Accessibility is an important part of openness in communication, as provides the pathways along which communication occurs.

Accessibility is represented in the quote from Geert below, who discusses accessibility as a way of being present in the moment for one's colleagues:

You need to have good personal relationships with a lot of the other folks that are in the organization. Even if you don't know them closely, you still want to maintain a certain level of accessibility... You need to be present in my job – in any job, you need to be present in the moment. Meaning that when something comes up, you can't say, "Well, maybe I'll look at it next week" or, "No, you've got to make an appointment with my administrative assistant." People need to be able just to reach out to you and call you or stop you in the hallway. (Interview #8, Geert, Lines 196-204)

Geert emphasizes the need to be available to one's colleagues for impromptu conversations or to discuss issues that come up unexpectedly in a timely manner. He notes that this is not reserved to colleagues with whom he is close, but he tries to be available to colleagues across the organization to serve as a good working partner, as he states above.

In another example of accessibility, Nilesh explains the steps taken to increase accessibility to improve the quality of the relationship with his colleague:

There's a lot that we want to tell each other to either setup framework to set up context for the teams, and we're not able to do that when we're always talking as a full team. So, we [my colleague and I] decided that we're going to have a separate half an hour phone call every week, to talk about everything that we're doing, what is where, who's doing what, and so on. I believe that this was an essential mechanism for us to interact more, to be able to say things that we might not be able to say in a more public forum, and to talk about the work tasks that need to be done.

(Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 384-388)

As discussed earlier, this ICOR's quality grew from low to high quality. It appears that one of the actions Nilesh took to improve the quality of the ICOR was to increase accessibility by setting up a separate call for the two to communicate openly about topics they "might not be able to say in a more public forum."

Jaclyn provides a third example of accessibility in her description of what informs her rating of a high quality ICOR:

I would say it's the openness to provide the data. It's the level of detail that it gives you. It's the direct approach, the immediate response, the willingness to always give you more, the "please contact me if you need more, if there's anything you don't understand, please contact me" kind of thing. He's just very, very willing to please, very open. That gives me a clear indicator of how good the relationship is, or how much he values the relationship. (Interview #22, Jaclyn, Lines 380-385)

Jaclyn explains that accessibility is reflected by her colleague's responsiveness and his willingness to communicate to address concerns that arise. She considers accessibility so important that she considers it a measure of how highly her colleague values the relationship.

In contrast to the three examples of high accessibility is an example of low accessibility and its impact on ICOR quality (quote also appears in personal characteristics):

He works remotely a lot, and when he is here, you can't tell because he always is [here] with the door closed. He's very arrogant. He sends messages in email communication that are really poor. The communication is really poor in that he is very demanding. (Interview #15, Vitoria, Lines 386-388)

Vitoria's colleague demonstrates low accessibility in two ways. First, Vitoria's colleague displays intentional physical barriers (e.g., working remotely, closed door). In addition, the description of his poor and perhaps one-sided communication skills suggest Vitoria believes it is not easy to talk to this colleague.

**Subcategory: Mutually desired closeness.** Mutually desired closeness refers to the agreed upon level as perceived by colleagues in the ICOR to discuss or engage in one another's personal affairs. Mutually desired closeness describes the degree to which colleagues prefer to extend the relationship beyond workplace matters. Because closeness was described as an important aspect of ICOR quality early in data collection, the large majority of participants were asked about closeness in ICORs directly.

Closeness was of particular interest in the findings, as there was a wide range of preferred closeness described as appropriate in high quality ICORs. While variation was observed in closeness (i.e., personal disclosure as described below), all responses suggested that a higher degree of alignment (as described below) is associated with high quality.

Therefore, the data suggest that the defining factor for the determination of quality is not the degree of closeness itself, but that it is agreed upon by colleagues in the ICOR.

Mutually desired closeness is further defined by the properties of alignment and personal disclosure, as outlined in Table 11.1.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Mutually Desired Closeness	Alignment			Low to High Alignment
	Personal disclosure			Low to High Personal Disclosure

**Property: Personal disclosure.** Personal disclosure was described by participants as sharing personal opinions, private thoughts and feelings, interacting outside of work, and interacting with a colleague's family or nonwork friends. Participants suggested that personal disclosure can occur through multiple channels, including explicitly through communication, spending time outside of work, and getting to know one another's friends or family. Approximately half of participants preferred a higher level of personal disclosure in ICORs. Higher levels of personal disclosure might be regarded as collegial relationships that developed into friendships. One such example is provided by Lian:

I got an involved in her business. I meddled. She had a family issue. Her husband had a brain tumor. Basically, when she went through all of that, I

was trying to be as supportive as possible. You bond with somebody whenever you go through personal issues together. It really cements that relationship. No matter how challenging things can be, [laughs] you know, I know we got each other's back, and that's what's most important.

(Interview #30, Lian, Lines 500-506)

Lian and her colleague grew closer as a result of personal issues faced by Lian's colleague. Elsewhere in the interview, Lian describes how her colleague confided in her regarding her husband's health and the accompanying emotional experience of enduring a difficult situation. Lian began to act more as a friend, and their level of personal disclosure grew to be very high.

A second example of a high degree of personal disclosure is provided by Saud, who developed a friendship with his colleague by interacting with family outside of work:

We usually went out to have dinner or drinks. We also got to the point where we met with our spouses, so it was not just a relationship between the two of us. Our relationship really expanded to be more personal.

(Interview #6, Saud, Lines 330-332)

The ICOR between Saud and his colleague evolved into a more personal relationship with the inclusion of their spouses in interactions outside of work.

Behaviors signaling lower levels of personal disclosure discussed by participants included keeping discussion focused on light topics and interacting at work or work-related functions (e.g., company happy hour). Approximately half of participants indicated that they prefer lower levels of personal disclosure in ICORs. In one case, a

participant referred to low levels of closeness in high quality ICORs as “business friends”

(Interview #5, Dirim):

I usually don't spend time outside of work with my co-workers. At work, you're one person, and outside [of work] you are another person... At work, we talk about our families, we talk about fun things. We are not friends, I should say. We are business friends. We don't go ahead and text each other, or see each other outside the office. But if I have a question, then she answers; if she has a question, then I answer. We laugh about things, funny things happening, and talk about business-related stuff.

(Interview #4, Dirim, Lines 206-209)

Dirim's description of this ICOR suggests that it is a high quality relationship, but there is not a high degree of personal disclosure. Their interaction is contained mostly to the workplace, and they discuss light-hearted topics when not discussing aspects of their work.

Another example suggesting that low personal disclosure may characterize some high quality ICORs is provided by Geert:

You don't necessarily always need to be friends. It's not key to having a good quality of relationship, but what's not fun sometimes is an old grump... That doesn't mean that you can't be friendly or friends, but I think you can be selective about it. (Interview #8, Geert, Lines 463-467)

To Geert, a high quality ICOR does not require a level of closeness that mirrors friendship. He echoes Dirim's comments that what may be more important is to be regarded as positive and friendly to facilitate ICOR quality.



***Property: Alignment.*** Alignment refers to the level of agreement regarding personal disclosure in the ICOR. As described above, there was a wide range of personal disclosure discussed as appropriate by participants. The commonality in high quality ICORs, however, was a level of personal disclosure that felt comfortable to both colleagues in the ICOR. It was therefore important for colleagues to be aligned and respect the boundaries set in terms of personal disclosure appropriate for that relationship. When there was a low level of alignment, either in terms of an undesirably low level of personal disclosure or an undesirably high level of personal disclosure, this was seen negatively by participants. A high level of alignment reflected a mutual agreement on the level of personal disclosure in the relationship.

Vitoria describes a high quality ICOR in which there was a high degree of alignment and a high degree of personal disclosure:

We try to keep it personal, like we share things about our lives when we have the chance and sometimes we start big conversations just through having that kind of connection first.... To me, that's very important. They are very supportive. They understand what I'm going through and we can laugh a little bit when things are not working really well. (Interview #15, Vitoria, Lines 47-55)

In Vitoria's description of the personal nature of the high quality ICOR, she emphasizes the mutual nature of the personal disclosure, suggesting that both she and her colleague try to keep the relationship personal by sharing about their lives.

In another example of a high degree of alignment, Geert explains why he and his colleague both prefer to engage in less personal disclosure:

Let's be honest. If you're looking for friendship in a work relationship, that may work against you in your work relationship because if you need to be tough, then it's like, "Okay, where does this go? How does that impact your friendship?" I don't necessarily go out with a lot of people from work just for that reason... [In the high quality relationship, we were] very good on separating that, and it's stakes were in the ground. This is the workplace. This is the work relationship we have. Outside of work, you don't talk about work. You don't have to talk about work. Those are good boundaries. (Interview #8, Geert, Lines 463-478)

In Geert's explanation, he notes that boundaries separating work life and nonwork life were helpful for maintaining quality in his high quality ICOR. Importantly, there appeared to be a high level of alignment between Geert's colleague and Geert on what the boundaries were in the relationship.

In a final example, Kushal exemplifies a personal preference for a high degree of personal disclosure. Kushal describes varying levels of alignment he has with coworkers, and the subsequent impact on the quality of those relationships. First, Kushal outlines the mutually agreed upon level of closeness that characterize high quality ICORs:

Good quality relationships are when the needs of both cultures are met to some extent. It cannot be just you meet one person's expectation, but you don't meet the other person's expectations. It is met in both ways. Some of my high-quality relationships, they understood the need for relationship outside the workplace. I have invited them to my home, they've invited me back [to their] home. We met each other's families and they've introduced

some common friends. There is an interest in embracing both of the cultures and really building some quality friendships beyond the work context. Everything revolves around what happens at work... you know we have to treat each other professionally and have to do what is right, etc., but beyond that they go, "Yes, in Indian culture this is fine. It's okay to do." I have some really good friends who are in that space. (Interview #14 Kushal, Lines 21-32)

Kushal contrasts the level of alignment described above with ICORs in which colleagues compromise to improve alignment, but do not fully align in terms of personal disclosure:

I also have some—what I would say [are] average [relationships], where, probably, they understand in Indian culture it is okay to invite colleagues home. They will think, "I definitely understand the context of why Kushal is inviting me home, but I don't want to invite him back [to my home]." They continue to operate in their way for whatever their reason is. The relationship stays the same. It's not balanced, but it is more like there is an understanding. I understand, okay, I invite a colleague of mine to my home. Most of the colleagues that have come to my home, they don't invite me back, but I understand perfectly why they don't invite back, because it's not in their culture to do, and I know that I stand in their relationship scale. We've gone out for lunch, we've gone out for dinner, but not went to their home, because it's very different. (Interview #14 Kushal, Lines 32-42)

Finally, Kushal describes a low level of alignment with colleagues who prefer to practice a low level of personal disclosure:

I also have a few colleagues who would say, "No. We are okay as long as we just meet in the office and do our work. I don't want anything to do with you outside of work," which I understand. I totally get it, but for someone like me who is very relationship-focused, when I talk about quality, I would tend to do a lot more for them. I can stay late and work late for those whom I consider as more trusted friends. For someone else [who's not a friend], I would say, "Okay, I will do it, but I will deal with it on Monday morning when I come back to work. I am not there right now." I would tend to do different things than I do for friends in the way I respond back to them when they need something extra. (Interview #14 Kushal, Lines 43-51)

It is clear from Kushal's description that he has a strong preference for a high degree of closeness in his ICORs, and that a lack of alignment regarding closeness can be harmful to the quality of the relationship.

**Subcategory: Congeniality.** Congeniality refers to participants' descriptions of friendly and informal interactions in high quality ICORs. Congeniality ranged from low to high, as seen in Table 11.2.

<b>Table 11.2: Congeniality</b>				
Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Congeniality				Low to High Congeniality

Informal interactions conveying congeniality in the ICOR took various forms. Some ways in which congeniality was demonstrated through informal interactions included sharing a snack, playing good-spirited pranks, sharing a sense of humor, and discussing common interests. Regardless of the degree of closeness in the ICOR, participants consistently acknowledged the importance of congeniality and informal interactions with colleagues. This can be seen in the case of Geert, who describes congeniality as “professional-personal”:

There's this professional-personal relationship that you will need to have. It's a must-have. You can't make decisions as a team and not be at least professionally friendly with someone. You may not always like them or agree with their point of view, or the decisions that they make, or the inactions or the actions that they take, but I think for me, it's personally more beneficial if you have a good relationship or a quality relationship.

(Interview #8, Geert, Lines 58-62)

Even though Geert is noted above as someone who prefers more distance in his coworker relationships, he emphasizes the importance of having a congenial, informal aspect to the relationship as well.

Trang notes the importance of congeniality to experience comfort in ICORs, such as through sharing a snack:

For me, work and personal [life] are very separate. However, when I'm at work, I prefer to be able to joke with my coworkers sometimes. I want to be comfortable enough to say, "Let's just share a pack of M&Ms," or I can

tell my coworker about my weekend. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 174-176)

As indicated by Trang, congeniality facilitates a sense of comfort in the ICOR, important for determining ICOR quality.

Humor was described as a part of informal interactions serving to facilitate comfort in ICORs. Parker explains the ways in which he and his colleagues would engage in good-spirited pranks and jokes:

It got to the point where we'd pull pranks on each other and that kind of thing within the department, within the job place, but not so much outside of work. We'd eat lunch a couple of times here and there, and both of us play racket ball, but we never got together for a chance to play racket ball. I felt comfortable with them... The people that I like, I'd also pull pranks, whether it's closing the doors or moving our chairs around, stuff like that. We are at the higher level of informal. We are humans, so we prank. That's the kind of stuff that we would do... It's important, whether your peers or in a reporting structure, I think it's important to have humor. Laughter is the best medicine. Sometimes, it will just ease tensions as well. Like I said, if I'm teasing you or whatever, it means I like you and I'm comfortable. (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 588-599)

As noted by Parker, the level of informality and joking practiced by his colleagues may be considered to be at a particularly high level. Nonetheless, the congeniality observed in these interactions appears to contribute to feelings of comfort characteristic of high quality ICORs as described by participants.

Due to the intercultural nature of ICORs, congeniality can be difficult to cultivate. Factors such as communicating in a foreign language and/or a lack of shared cultural information can hinder the practice of informal interactions. Andrei describes this as a frustrating experience when he was new to the U.S. work environment:

I had only been in the U.S. for a couple of years at that point, maybe three years. I was frustrated with the fact that I can't just freely, easily communicate with someone in English. I will see all these people like, joke on the [fly]. I could do that in Russian or Romanian or Turkish or German. All these are languages that I spoke before I came here. I could not do that in English, and it was frustrating to me. I would observe these guys being funny and sociable and people interacting with each other, they just--these on-the-spot quips and sarcasm. I was frustrated I couldn't do it... Even understanding, "Hey what kind of humor do you like, what goes in, so that this comes out?" They will tell me about Friends and John Oliver show, all of these things that they watch, which indirectly inform and create [conversations]. (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 661-671)

Andrei explains that he wanted to be able to joke and interact freely with his colleagues, but that this was made difficult by the lack of shared language and cultural references. He recognized that having these types of informal conversations was helpful to experiencing quality in his coworker relationships.

**Subcategory: Interpersonal trust.** Interpersonal trust describes the degree to which colleagues feel that they can rely on one another to act according to each other's best interests. Interpersonal trust was discussed early and often in all interviews

conducted. Interpersonal trust refers to the degree to which ICOR members display a willingness to be vulnerable due to assumptions of positive intent, alignment of work values, and perceptions of integrity. Interpersonal trust specific to ICORs is defined by its properties of work values alignment, positive intent, and integrity, as shown in Table 11.3.

Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Interpersonal Trust	Work values alignment			Low to High Alignment
	Integrity			Low to High Integrity
	Positive intent			Low to High Positive Intent

As implied by the subcategory's label, interpersonal trust was suggested by participants to be mutual in nature. Typically, when interpersonal trust was discussed by participants, it was described in mutual accord (e.g., "we trust each other," Interview #25, Trang, Line 312), rather than unidirectional, or only in consideration of one person's perspective.

Parker exemplifies the two-way nature of interpersonal trust in ICORs below (quote first appeared in personal characteristics):

When it came to budgeting, when it came to my expenses or my group's expenses, or any purchase orders that were put out, they question, "Did you think about this? Did you see if there were alternatives?" If I could consistently show that I thought about those things and my team investigated those things, then he'd think, "Hey, he's on the up and up. At least we can start to trust him." That's the



way I built some trust with him with regard to working through what I think was a high quality, productive relationship.

He trusted me, I trusted him.

He was generally just a straight-shooter in terms of the things he said and his thought processes. I knew he would try to be supportive if there was something that really wouldn't work, [saying] "That's not in your budget. Here's the alternatives." There was that collaborative relationship with him. (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 450-459)

Parker suggests the reciprocal nature of interpersonal trust in high quality ICORs by explaining that he trusted his colleague, and his colleague trusted him.

***Property: Work values alignment.*** Work values alignment refers to the degree to which values held by colleagues in the ICOR complement one another. Participant responses suggested that a high degree of alignment facilitates trust, while lower levels of alignment can hinder trust. Because values (e.g., morals, ethics) may be heavily influenced by culture, alignment of values pertinent to the workplace is particularly important to the presence of trust in ICORs.

With her background in cross-cultural research, Whitney references a story illustrating the role of values alignment in the development of trust in cross-cultural relationships:

It's about a rule-based versus a relationship-based culture. He talks about the story in which his friend gets in an accident....It's really interesting. He's talking about Koreans and Americans. He talks about a story in which you're driving with your friend, and your friend is speeding. Your

friend gets in an accident, and then you get interviewed by the cops. The cops ask, "Was your friend speeding?" Your friend says, "Please, please lie and say I wasn't speeding, so I won't get in trouble." Both the Americans and the Koreans, they have an ethical dilemma. They don't know what to do. In the end, the Americans, they tell the truth. The Koreans, they lie for their friend. He has this funny punch line at the end of it where he says he interviews the Americans and they say, "Those Koreans, you just can't trust them. They won't even tell the truth." He interviews the Koreans, and the Koreans say, "Those Americans, you just can't trust them. They won't even help their friend." I think it's such an interesting example of how we're all inherently similar and different at the same time. Neither person really wants to be in that ethical dilemma. They both are struggling. It's just how they resolve it. It's different because of their culture. (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 337-358)

This is a rich example illustrating the critical role of values alignment in facilitating trust, and the challenge differing cultural viewpoints can present. While the example above is not specific to the workplace context, it has clear relevance for work values alignment and the development of trust within ICORs. Coworkers that lack alignment on work-related values may have difficulty establishing interpersonal trust, which participants discussed as critical in every interview conducted.

Whitney goes on to provide a specific example of an ICOR in which the role of work values alignment facilitated high quality in an ICOR:

I think it goes back to having some shared values, even though you come from different cultures. On the surface, things may look different. I think that underneath there, though, sometimes you're very similar people... It's like on the surface, we have very different experiences. I grew up here. She grew up in India. When you look underneath that, about the things we care about and what we value with people, the fact that we care about people, we care about helping - [we want to] help people and create a good world - we have really similar values. (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 116-126)

Whitney articulates the role of shared values in determining the quality of her relationship, explaining that the ways in which the value is expressed may look different on the surface, but she and her colleague share similar values of helping others and working to create a better world.

Kwai and his colleague share similar work values in the form of work ethic.

Kwai explains that they both had experiences early in life that taught the value of having a strong work ethic:

Well, actually we have something in common because he also grew up on a farm, in a dairy farm. He had to milk cows when he was growing up. I grew up in Malaysia until the age of 13-14. My father also owned a farm, plantations and raising poultry. So, I also started to work with my hands when I was 10-12 years old. That is the commonality, right? Even the one [farm] that's in Malaysia is totally different and it's in the jungle, in a tropical country and all that. Whereas he's in Wisconsin where it's cold.

That is the common background I would say from my work perspective...

Work ethic in particular. (Interview #7, Kwai, Lines 509-512)

There is a shared work value of work ethic, although learned in very different cultural environments, that arose from starting work at an early age. Alignment on the value of work ethic allowed for Kwai and his colleague to rely upon one another, trusting each other to act in accordance with the shared value of work ethic.

***Property: Integrity.*** Integrity refers to the degree to which one's colleague acts in accordance with his or her word. Participants indicated the importance of integrity in developing trust with phrases such as "commitment to your word," (Interview #6, Saud, Line ), "trusting him to hold himself responsible to do it" (Interview #8, Geert, Line 320), "I know I can count on her to do what she says she'll do," (Interview #13, Jessica, Line 220). Consistent with the extensive body of extant trust research (e.g., Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), integrity was described as playing a key role in the development of trust. Saud explains integrity, as a property of trust, is reciprocal in nature:

For me, the first thing with high quality with anything I do is really trust and integrity from both sides, and a commitment to the word that they give. All those things, trust, integrity, commitment to your word...

Integrity means that they say something that they're going to do, and they will do it. (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 134-137)

Integrity may be thought of as the behavioral aspect of trust, as Saud explains that integrity complements the verbal component of trust. Kwai echoes Saud's description of integrity in high quality ICORs (originally quoted in the personal characteristics section):

In high quality, trust is about whether what he said is true, [and he] doesn't lie. That's really basic; it's the foundation of trust. I think that as long as there are those two things, right? One is the person doesn't lie. The other thing is that the person is dependable and that if he says he'll do something, he'll do something. So really there are two areas, dependability and the trustworthiness of his words. That's an essential thing in a relationship. (Interview #6, Kwai, Lines 685-689)

Kwai equates integrity with being able to trust a colleague's words. Integrity facilitates trust in the relationship by allowing one to rely on another person's words, and believing that action will follow.

***Property: Positive intent.*** Personal intent in ICORs was described by participants as the extent to which one can assume a colleague has his or her best interests in mind, allowing for a willingness to be vulnerable. Positive intent also mirrors extent trust research (e.g., Zaheer, McEvily, & Perrone, 1998). Like integrity, as a component of trust, positive intent is suggested to be bidirectional in nature. Higher levels of positive intent signify higher levels of trust, and are therefore associated with high quality ICORs.

Nilesh describes how positive intent appears in ICORs and the ways in which it facilitates quality:

Positive intent also includes not taking things personally; you assume the person's intent is positive and not negative against you. -- I think the ability to have enough trust to have open debate and be able to explain each other's perspective, and the bigger thing that trust does, is that it does not allow any negative thoughts to come in, in terms of saying, "Does he

have a different agenda in this whole picture?" Is something that we don't bring in at all. It is not taking things personally. (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 404-408)

As noted by Nilesh, positive intent makes the relationship easier. It allows for the dismissal of negative thoughts that may otherwise impede quality. Positive intent may therefore be particularly important in determining ICOR quality (i.e., as opposed to relationship quality more generally), due to the higher levels of ambiguity associated with the presence of two sets of cultural norms.

Assumption of positive intent allowed for participants to display a willingness to be vulnerable with colleagues. When a colleague has one's best interests in mind, participants described the ability to share comfortably. Kait describes assumption of positive intent and vulnerability:

I'm a strong believer that trust is at the root of all good relationships, and so trust is the willingness to be vulnerable; it's assuming positive intent. It's all of those things, and when there's that trust, you don't have to say things perfectly, it doesn't have to be [worded] exactly or eloquently. (Interview #28, Kait, Lines 554-557)

Trang echoes the sentiments of positive intent and vulnerability shared by Kait, by explaining how this assumption allows for discussion of mistakes in the ICOR:

I can tell my coworker if I do something stupid or wrong in the lab with something. I'll be like, "Oh my God. I did this. I was so stupid." I want to be able to feel comfortable enough to share with my coworker, and not

think that he's judging me or trying to find a way to report me or anything, but he will help me. (Interview #25, Trang, Lines 176-180)

In contrast to these examples, a lack of positive intent and willingness to be vulnerable impedes interpersonal trust, and therefore hinders quality in ICORs. Nilesh describes a lack of positive intent and willingness to be vulnerable by his colleague at the beginning of their relationship:

When there is no trust, everything is questioned, and something as simple as, can you give me a report of all the problems that you had in the last one year. He wrote so much garbage around it, because here I am saying that, "If I see what problems you had, maybe I can suggest to you what you can do better." Whereas the other person is thinking, "This guy is trying to find more problems for me and he's going to use this against me." (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 451-455)

As can be seen in Nilesh's description, the lack of trust hindered the quality of the ICOR. As described earlier, this ICOR grew from a low quality to a high quality ICOR, and an important change was the development of trust in the relationship.

**Summary of Comfort.** In summary, comfort describes ICORs in which colleagues experience feelings of ease, openness, comfort and trust. Openness in communication, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and interpersonal trust serve as indicators of high quality ICORs.

## Quantitative Results

The present study aimed to build upon previous research by bringing together work on intercultural competence and social exchange to study intercultural exchange quality in the workplace context. While the primary form of data collected in the present study was qualitative, quantitative data were also collected to facilitate more direct comparison and theoretical discussion resulting from the findings. Quantitative data was collected to triangulate findings in three primary ways. First, comparisons were made to ascertain the level of alignment between quantitative measures and externally provided ratings. Specifically, quantitative scores on the *CQ* and *MPQ* measures were compared with endorsements that those individuals are regarded as highly culturally competent, and quantitative scores on the *CEQ* and *HQCs* measures were compared with participants' labeling of ICORs as high and low quality. Second, correlations between intercultural competence measures and relationship quality measures were assessed. Third, quantitative data from surveys was used to evaluate the extent to which qualitative data revealed novel, contradictory, or consistent information specific to ICORs. This third component reflects the integration of the qualitative and quantitative findings. To this end, the content of *CQ* and *MPQ* was compared with the personal characteristics category, and the content of *CEQ* and *HQCs* was compared with the categories of investment, interdependent contribution, and comfort. The quantitative data as it relates to each of the qualitative categories is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, and a summary of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings is presented (see *Figure 5*).

To inform these analyses, participants completed survey measures (See *Appendix E*) of intercultural competence constructs (i.e., Cultural Intelligence Scale and Multicultural Personality Questionnaire) as well as social exchange in the workplace (i.e.,



High Quality Connections Scale and Coworker Exchange Scale). A social desirability scale was included to assess the degree of socially desirable responding in the survey. Finally, a theoretically unrelated scale (i.e., Financial Interest) was administered to participants to measure potential methods effects.

Of the 30 participants interviewed in the study, 23 completed the survey portion, yielding a survey response rate of 77%. Means, standard deviations, and coefficient alphas for study variables are provided in Table 12. Correlations among study variables are also included (see Table 13).

**Table 12: Scale Means, Standard Deviations, and Coefficient Alphas**

Scale	$\bar{x}$	$\sigma$	$\alpha$
<b>Cultural Intelligence (CQ)</b>	4.19	.55	.85
<b>Multicultural Personality (MPQ)</b>	3.70	.37	.87
<b>Coworker Exchange Quality – High (Hi-CEQ)</b>	4.23	.53	.84
<b>High Quality Connections – High (Hi-HQC)</b>	4.42	.41	.89
<b>Coworker Exchange Quality – Low (Lo-CEQ)</b>	2.33	.61	.75
<b>High Quality Connections – Low (Lo-HQC)</b>	2.30	.80	.96
<b>Financial Interest (Finan. Int.)</b>	2.92	.72	.71
<b>Social Desirability (Soc. Des.; True = 1; False = 2)</b>	1.64	.23	.78

**Table 13: Correlation Table**

	<i>CQ</i>	<i>MPQ</i>	<i>Hi-CEQ</i>	<i>Hi-HQC</i>	<i>Lo-CEQ</i>	<i>Lo-HQC</i>	<i>FINAN. INT.</i>	<i>SOC. DES.</i>
<i>CQ</i>	1	<b>p = .04</b>	p = .49	<b>p = .03</b>	p = .65	p = .62	p = .15	p = .48
<i>MPQ</i>	<b>0.43</b>	1	p = .21	<i>p = .10</i>	p = .37	p = .49	p = .90	p = .51
<i>Hi-CEQ</i>	0.17	0.30	1	<b>p = .01</b>	p = .39	<b>p = .05</b>	p = .13	p = .60
<i>Hi-HQC</i>	<b>0.49</b>	<i>0.38</i>	<b>0.58</b>	1	p = .12	p = .12	p = .62	p = .87
<i>Lo-CEQ</i>	0.11	0.22	-0.21	-0.37	1	<b>p &lt; .01</b>	p = .32	p = .46
<i>Lo-HQC</i>	-0.12	0.18	<b>-0.45</b>	-0.37	<b>0.77</b>	1	p = .46	p = .54
<i>FINAN. INT.</i>	0.34	0.02	0.36	0.12	0.24	0.18	1	p = .97
<i>SOC. DES.</i>	-0.17	0.16	-0.13	0.04	0.18	0.15	0.01	1

**Bold** indicates statistical significance at  $p \leq .05$ . *Italics* indicates marginal significance at  $p \leq .10$ .

**Cultural competence.** Participants in the current study were recommended by HR and/or colleagues as individuals who were regarded as culturally competent in building high quality relationships with others in their organizations. In addition to this recommendation, participants completed two measures of overall cultural competency more comprehensive than relationship building (i.e., cultural intelligence and multicultural personality). These measurement instruments were developed in previous research and were used in the current study to further assess participants' status as highly culturally competent individuals. A highly multiculturally diverse, large-scale study ( $N = 3,526$  across 14 countries) on cultural intelligence (*CQ*) suggested that an average *CQ* score is 3.55, with a standard deviation of .57 (Thomas et al., 2015). This information was used to define high scores of cultural intelligence in the present study. Specifically, individuals scoring higher than one standard deviation above the mean (i.e., higher than 4.12) were interpreted as having a high level of cultural intelligence. Fifteen individuals recommended by others for their cultural competence scored 4.12 or higher on the measure of cultural intelligence. The overall sample was highly culturally intelligent, with a mean score of 4.19 (see Table 12). The large study developing the short form of the multicultural personality questionnaire (Van der Zee et al., 2013) that is leveraged in the present study suggests that an average score on multicultural personality is 3.51, with a standard deviation of .45. Following the approach previously described in which a high score is indicated by one standard deviation above the mean, high scores on multicultural personality are indicated by 3.96 or above. Sixteen individuals recommended by others for their cultural competence scored lower than 3.96 on the measure of multicultural personality. This finding is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Although the average

score for the overall sample did not reach 3.96, the sample's overall score was above average on multicultural personality with a mean score of 3.70 (see Table 12).

Participant scores on cultural intelligence and multicultural personality are discussed in detail in the discussion section.

**High quality connections.** One of the original authors of the high quality connections scale recommended the median score be used to determine high and low scores on the *HQCs* scale (A. Carmeli, personal communication, August 12, 2018). However, the majority of previous research on *HQCs* does not report the median score. In the present study, the median may also be less helpful to use, as the design of the study intentionally focused on the positive (high quality) and negative (low quality) poles of *HQCs*, and was not designed to target average or typical scores. Therefore, the mean ( $M = 3.38$ ) and standard deviation ( $\sigma = .52$ ) from previous *HQCs* research (Carmeli et al., 2009) was used to determine high and low quality coworker relationships<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, ICOR scores were regarded as high quality via the *HQCs* measure when they were above 3.90 (i.e., one standard deviation above the mean). As reported in Table 12, the average score for high quality ICORs measured using the *HQCs* scale was 4.42. Of the nineteen high quality ICORs as defined by *HQCs* scale scores, seventeen received an average rating at or above 3.90 from participants. ICOR scores were regarded low quality via the *HQCs* measure when they were below 2.86 (i.e., one standard deviation below the mean). As reported in Table 12, the average score for low quality ICORs measured using the *HQCs* scale was 2.30. Of the nineteen low quality ICORs, fourteen received an average rating below 2.86 from participants.

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<sup>1</sup> As a point of comparison, the median (using scores from both high and low quality ICORs) of *HQCs* in the present study was 3.69.

**Coworker exchange quality.** In their paper introducing the measure of coworker exchange quality (*CEQ*), Sherony and Green (2002) distinguish levels of quality in coworker exchange relationships by suggesting that high quality is indicated by scores one standard deviation above the mean ( $M + \sigma = 4.30$ ), and low quality is indicated by scores one standard deviation below the mean ( $M - \sigma = 2.84$ ). The average score for high quality ICORs measured using the *CEQ* scale was 4.23. Of the nineteen high quality ICORs, ten received an average rating above 4.3 from participants. The average score for low quality ICORs measured using the *CEQ* scale was 2.33. Of the nineteen low quality ICORs, eighteen received an average rating below 2.84 from participants.

**Internal consistency.** Reliability scores using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  are reported in Table 12. As a measure of internal consistency, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is "a function of the number of items in a test, the average covariance between item-pairs, and the variance of the total score" (Cronbach, 1951, p. 297). Generally, scale reliability scores aligned with reliabilities observed in previous research. Reliabilities observed in previous research on cultural intelligence ( $\alpha = .85$ ; Thomas et al., 2015), multicultural personality ( $\alpha = .79$ ; Van der Zee et al., 2013), coworker exchange quality ( $\alpha = .92$ ; Sherony & Green, 2002), and high quality connections (.77; Carmeli et al., 2009) suggest general alignment with the reliability scores observed in the present study, as reported in Table 12.

**Correlational findings.** Correlation coefficients among the variables included in the study are reported in Table 13. Four correlations are of particular interest in the present study: correlation between the two cultural competence measures, correlation between the two high relationship quality measures, correlation between the two low relationship quality measures, and the correlation representing the relationships between

cultural competence and relationship quality measures. As expected, a positive, significant correlation was observed between *CQ* and *MPQ* ( $r = .43, p = .04$ ). High quality relationships measured via *HQCs* and *CEQ* were positively and significantly related ( $r = .58, p = .01$ ). Low quality relationships measured via *HQCs* and *CEQ* were positively and significantly related ( $r = .77, p < .01$ ). *CQ* was positively and significantly related to high quality relationships rated using *HQCs* ( $r = .49, p = .03$ ), but did not demonstrate statistically significant relationships with high quality relationships measured via *CEQ*, or low quality relationships measured via *HQCs* or *CEQ*. *MPQ* was positively and marginally significantly related to high quality relationships rated using *HQCs* ( $r = .38, p = .10$ ), but did not demonstrate statistically significant relationships with high quality relationships measured via *CEQ*, or low quality relationships measured via *HQCs* or *CEQ*. Marginal significance is noted for the relationship between *MPQ* and *HQCs* because of the difficulty to observe low  $p$  values in studies with a small number of participants. Previous research has suggested that significance testing may be a “reflection of the number of people who decided to show up to the study” (Murphy, Myers, & Wolach, 2014). Research, such as the present study, that leverage purposeful sampling techniques associated with smaller samples may be particularly subject to this challenge (Murphy et al., 2014). Thus, the magnitude of observed effects in cases when significance values are marginally significant may be particularly important to bear in mind in such cases.

**Common method variance.** Previous research has noted the potential for common method variance to artificially inflate or deflate observed correlations among constructs measured using a common method (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and

Podsakoff, 2003). While the present study leveraged a mixed methods approach, a survey was utilized to assess the relationship between measures of individual cultural competence (i.e., cultural intelligence, multicultural personality) and coworker relationship quality (i.e., high quality connections, coworker exchange quality). Thus, two approaches were leveraged to assess the potential influence of common method variance (CMV) in the survey portion of the study: the marker variable approach using the theoretically unrelated construct of financial interest, as well as inclusion of a measure on social desirability. When sample size is small, the marker variable approach may be well-suited for assessing common method bias (Lindell & Brandt, 2000; Lindell & Whitney, 2001). To assess common method bias using the marker variable approach, an additional construct (i.e., financial interest; Goldberg, 2010) theoretically unrelated to the other constructs was included in the survey. Traditional application of the marker variable approach, as recommended by Lindell (2001) and Podsakoff et al. (2003), involves controlling for CMV. In the current study, however, controlling for CMV is not feasible and perhaps unnecessary, given the current sample size and supplemental nature of quantitative analyses. Indeed, for mixed methods studies, concerns regarding common method variance within individual methods may be particularly unsubstantiated (Doty & Glick, 1998). Thus, the marker variable approach was leveraged to test, rather than control, for the potential influence of CMV in the supplemental survey portion of the study. Correlational findings may alleviate concerns regarding the potential impact of CMV, as the theoretically unrelated marker variable of financial interest was unrelated to all scales included in the study. A second strategy was employed to assess the potential impact of CMV. Podsakoff et al. (2003) note that researchers may benefit from assessing

specific types of biases, as particular types may be more likely to influence results. Specifically, a measure of social desirability (Reynolds, 1982) was included in the present survey. Similar to the method leveraged in the marker variable approach, CMV was assessed by examining the correlations among social desirability and the focal scales included in the study. Results indicate that social desirability was unrelated to other scales included in the survey (see Table 13). Collectively, the findings resulting from the two separate tests of CMV may serve to assuage concerns regarding the potential impact of common method variance in the observed correlations among the constructs included in the study.



## Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is five-fold. It opens with a summary of the primary findings and addresses the two research questions. Second, this chapter will relate the six categories developed in the present study via a unifying framework (i.e., core category) and discuss the ways in which categories are proposed to interrelate. Third, the chapter will integrate qualitative and quantitative findings in light of connections with previous research. The chapter will also discuss the present study's limitations. Finally, potential implications for theory, practice, and future research will be discussed.

### Summary of Findings

The present study was designed to address two primary research questions:

1. What defines a high quality intercultural coworker relationship (ICOR)?
2. What behaviors do individuals enact to facilitate quality in ICORs?

The six categories developed to address these research questions are labeled workplace context, personal characteristics, investment, interdependent contribution, development of a shared understanding, and comfort. Workplace context refers to the organizational structure, policies, and practices that create an environment in which the development of high quality ICORs is facilitated. The category of workplace context is further specified by its subcategories of multicultural work environment and FIT culture. The category personal characteristics describes the individual differences that belong to members of the ICOR, which serve to promote the development of high quality ICORs. Personal characteristics that serve to promote quality in ICORs are further categorized into three subcategories of multicultural connectedness, motivation, and interpersonal practices. Investment refers to an ICOR characterized by an attitude of commitment to

expend personal resources in the relationship. Investment includes three subcategories of affective, behavioral, and cognitive investment. Interdependent contribution refers to an ICOR in which coworkers perceive one another's work contribution as having a positive and meaningful impact toward achieving shared work outcomes. Interdependent contribution is comprised of four subcategories: work-related effort, work-related talent, work intersection, and work value. Development of a shared understanding refers to a relationship that is characterized by the dynamic creation of norms outlining ways in which coworkers work with, interact with, and understand each other. Development of a shared understanding refers to the ways by which coworkers in high quality ICORs establish a means to "speak the same language." The four subcategories of development of a shared understanding serve as the levels by which understanding is created, beginning with level 0: "tabula rasa," moving to level 1: authentic interest in coworker, level 2: reconciliation of differences, and then resting in level 3: norms for interaction. The sixth category comfort describes a relationship characterized by colleagues' feelings of ease, openness, comfort and trust. Comfort reflects the descriptions of high quality ICORs as comfortable relationships fostered by interpersonal trust, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and open communication. In addition to the qualitative data gathered to address these questions, a quantitative survey was employed to ensure the suitability of the data collected. Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data is discussed later in this chapter.

In sum, findings of the present study suggest that the formation of high quality ICORs is indicated by the presence of interdependent contribution and comfort, promoted

by the conditions of workplace context and personal characteristics, powered by investment, and created through the process of development of a shared understanding.

With these findings in mind, the first research question (*RQ 1*) may be most appropriately addressed by consideration of the categories interdependent contribution and comfort. Both interdependent contribution and comfort may serve as signals for the current state of quality in ICORs. “Quality” may be observed most easily by those outside of the relationship by the work contributions produced. This may also be of particular interest to business as an evaluation of relationship quality in the workplace context. “Quality” may be most easily identified by members inside of the ICOR through their shared sense of comfort. Some organizations with a bottom-line orientation may struggle with the subjective nature of comfort, but the current study provides preliminary evidence that these subjective ratings are the “ones that count,” particularly in light of proposed interrelatedness of interdependent contribution and comfort (see Interrelatedness of categories section in this chapter). In other words, interdependent contribution and comfort may be the most relevant categories to consider with regard to defining the current state of quality in an ICOR.

In response to the second research question (*RQ 2*), the findings illustrate the complex and dynamic processes by which ICOR quality may be facilitated. Personal characteristics and workplace context are considered to be conditional factors that interact to give rise to ICOR quality formation. The category of personal characteristics addresses the specific interpersonal practices, motivations, and multicultural connectedness exhibited by individuals to facilitate the development of ICOR quality. In connection with personal characteristics, the category of workplace context reflects the

notion, rooted in the field of social psychology, that individual behavior does not occur in a vacuum, but within a given context. While a common error (i.e., fundamental attribution error), attribution of individual action solely to the character or personality of the actor without consideration for the context in which the behavior occurs ignores the potential influence of environmental factors. The category of workplace context addresses the environmental factors that may influence the successful development of quality through the actions taken by individuals in ICORs. Additionally, the category of investment describes an attitude of ICOR members that may power the continued and ongoing nature of effort helpful for building high quality ICORs. Due to the dynamic and ongoing nature of ICORs (i.e., as opposed to single, time-bound interactions), there is an implied expectation of multiple, future interactions. Thus, effort exerted into the relationship may be expected to yield a future return on investment, rather than (or in addition to) the pursuit of immediate gain. Investment addresses the second research question by clarifying that the behaviors individuals enact to facilitate quality in ICORs involves a continual investment to sustain the relationship.

Both research questions are addressed from the perspective of the development of a shared understanding category. Development of a shared understanding represents the unifying framework of the categories developed in the current study to address the definition and facilitation of quality in ICORs. Development of a shared understanding is proposed to serve a central role in explaining the process by which quality is created in ICORs. Given its proposed centrality to ICOR quality, development of a shared understanding provides greater explanatory depth to articulate *why* the supporting categories are important for the definition and facilitation of ICOR quality. Identification

of and explanation for development of a shared understanding's central role is articulated next in this chapter.

### **Selective Coding Process to Identify the Core Category**

During open coding, the researcher moves from labeling concepts to identifying categories and their properties, along with the dimensions along which those category properties vary. Axial coding provides the analytic process by which the researcher systematically relates categories to subcategories until theoretical saturation is reached. Selective coding is the final component of grounded theory analysis. In this stage, the researcher takes a broader view of the developed categories to think critically regarding the theoretical underpinnings that that may explain the phenomenon of interest. The result of selective coding is a “core category” that serves as an abstraction of the process by which the theory may operate. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that the process of selective coding gives “analytic power” to the theory by unifying the categories together into one “explanatory whole” (p. 146). The core category may be an existing category, or be a new abstraction is required to make sense of the categories developed.

To evaluate the suitability of the core category developed in the present study, the researcher relied on the recommended criteria published by the originators of grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These criteria are reviewed in detail in the Methods section of the current study. Briefly, a core category should (1) be conceptually related to all other categories in the study, (2) appear frequently in the data, (3) offer a logical explanation as to its connection to other categories, (4) have adequately abstract labeling to enable future theory-building research, (5) provide explanatory power, and (6) withstand its application despite

variation in the phenomena of interest explained by other categories (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Because core categories can be derived from an existing category within the list of developed categories, or may be explained by a concept not included in the initial list (see Alston, 2014 for an example), a systematic process was used in which the researcher first attempted to explain ICORs using each of the existing categories. Leveraging the criteria noted by Strauss and Corbin, this mental exercise was useful for quickly eliminating the majority of the categories from consideration as the central category. Both workplace context and personal characteristics cannot be the core category, as they are conditional antecedents to the creation of quality in ICORs. While investment is certainly important for ICORs, and all participants discussed it during interviews, investment without the appropriate skill may not be enough to create quality in ICORs. Interdependent contribution is critical due to its role in coworkers' sense of efficacy to produce work-related outcomes, but it also does not serve to unify the other categories through a process or framework. Comfort was considered more extensively as a potential core category, particularly due to its overlap with previous research in high quality coworker relationships (see Discussion of Findings). Ultimately, however, it was determined by the researcher that data in the current study suggest that comfort may serve as a critical indicator of high quality ICORs, but it is unable to provide a theoretical explanation regarding its creation. Development of a shared understanding was an intriguing choice as the core category, as the researcher realized that it may simultaneously operate to create shared understanding at smaller levels (e.g., specific ways of interacting, such as how the dyad engages with clients) as well as developing a

sense of shared understanding in the relationship overall. As a reminder to the reader, development of a shared understanding refers to a sequence of levels in which coworkers form habitual patterns of interacting. The levels occur in a logical model, each building upon the last. Specifically, participant data revealed a framework in which four levels facilitate the development of a shared understanding. These four levels comprise the subcategories. The development of a shared understanding begins with level 0: tabula rasa, progresses to level 1: authentic interest in coworker, then level 2: reconciliation of differences, and rests in level 3: norms for interaction. The levels begin with zero (rather than one) to indicate the lack of progression at the initial stage and to signify its focus as an introductory phase in the development of shared understanding. Additionally, the language used by the researcher to describe “resting” in level 3 is intentional, as the levels are not suggested to “end,” and there is not an optimum stopping point in which participants finish developing a shared understanding. Specifically, the model indicates that the levels occur in a progressive order relative to one another, but not in a one-time, linear fashion. Instead, dyads are likely to progressively build their shared understanding by moving through the levels multiple times. This is because the development of a shared understanding may be iterative in nature. The multifaceted nature of human relationships suggests that the development of shared understanding is likely to require multiple iterations in which different aspects of nonverbal communication, use of language, and interaction behavior fine-tuned each time. Thus, there was clear evidence for the potential explanatory power of the development of a shared understanding, and this suggested it merited further consideration as the core category.

To ensure appropriate identification of the core category, however, the researcher discerned the need for additional analytic distance before continuing to consider development of a shared understanding as the core category. Given this determination, three additional techniques were found to be beneficial in the process of selective coding. The first technique was what Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to as “writing the storyline.” In this approach, the researcher attempted to gain analytic distance from the present study by writing out descriptive explanations of the overarching theme. In this informal but insight-provoking exercise, the researcher asked herself, “What is the main issue or problem with which people seem to be grappling? What keeps striking me over and over? What comes through, although it might not be said directly?” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 148). Relatedly, the use of analogies to attempt to explain the findings were used. Writing the findings in these terms allowed the researcher to gradually experience greater degrees of clarity. At the same time, use of visual diagrams to illustrate the categories and their roles in the creation of ICOR quality were found to be helpful to the researcher. Diagramming was particularly helpful for forcing the researcher to take a more abstract view of the findings. Lastly, the analogies and diagrams were shared within a group of qualitative researchers who provided helpful consultation in the form of thought-provoking questions, checks for accurate and complete representations of the findings, brainstorming, and active listening. As a result of the group’s monthly meetings, this research group became familiar with the study in a broad but not specific sense, making their contributions particularly beneficial in the selective coding process.



**Development of a shared understanding as the core category.** As a result of the selective coding process, the category development of a shared understanding is suggested to serve as the core category explaining the creation of relationship quality in ICORs. First, qualitative data revealed a clear indication of dynamic and dyadic processes in which colleagues engage to drive the development of quality in ICORs. These processes appear to center around a goal to move from unfamiliar to familiar. To transform the relationship from a state of unfamiliarity to an increased state of familiarity, development of a shared understanding is suggested to serve as the catalyst by which ICOR quality is created. A term frequently used in chemistry, a catalyst is defined as “an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action” (Catalyst, 2016). In the formation of ICOR quality, development of a shared understanding is proposed to serve as the catalyst by which ICORs move from a state of unfamiliarity to increased familiarity. It is proposed to operate on two levels: the micro level and macro level. At the micro level, development of a shared understanding is suggested to take place when a dyad creates specific norms for interaction, such as how the dyad begins meetings, speaks to one another during disagreement, or shows appreciation for one another. Development of a shared understanding may also occur at the macro level, describing the shared understanding as experienced in the relationship overall. At the macro level, the development of a shared understanding may be experienced in a more abstract sense, in addition to the micro level instances of development of a shared understanding. Further explanation for the development of a shared understanding at the macro level may be provided through consideration of the challenges to be addressed by colleagues in ICORs. In ICORs, the distinct and central challenge is inherent to the intercultural nature

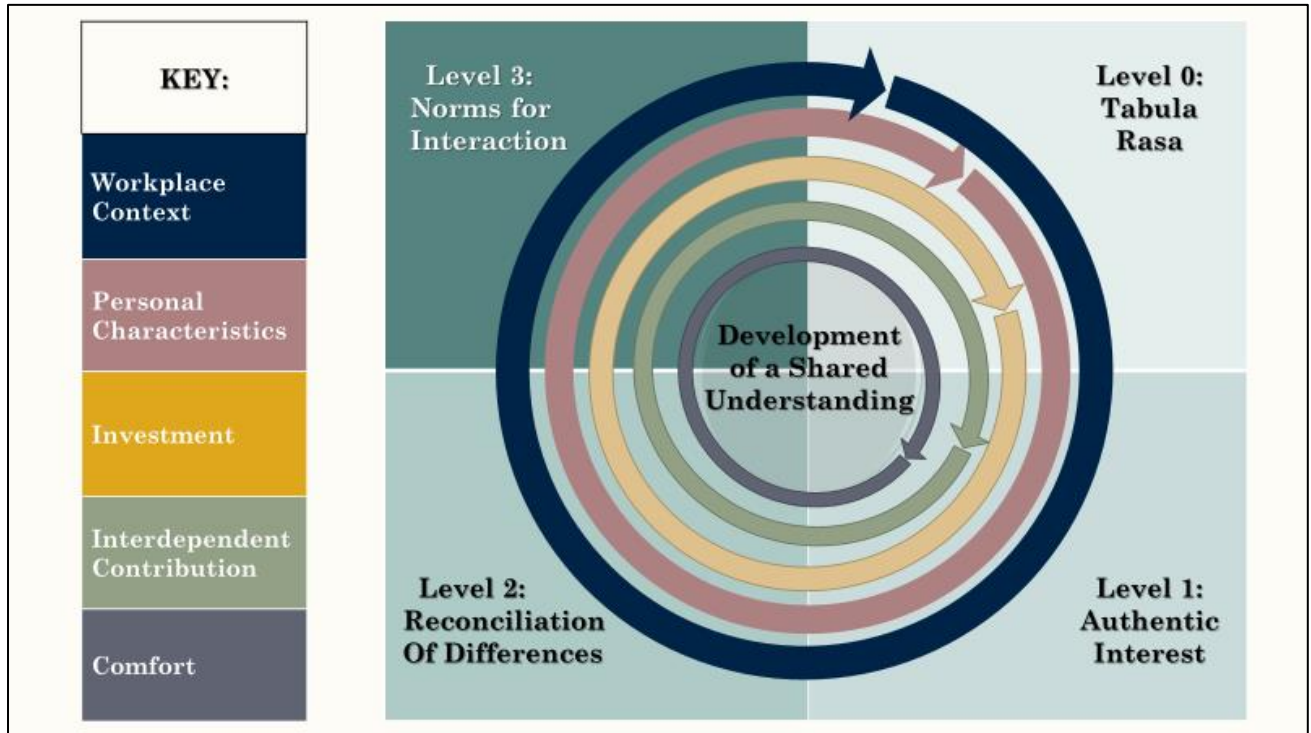
of the relationship, in which colleagues' cultures and associated practices are literally foreign to one another. The term "intercultural" signifies the interaction of two different cultures, each with its own culturally informed set of schemas, values, and norms (Leung & Morris, 2015). Given these parameters, the interaction of differing cultural backgrounds in ICORs represents the simultaneous potential for advantages as well as liabilities. Specific to the formation of high quality ICORs (i.e., as opposed to ICORs that were not regarded as high quality), the tension created by the lack of familiarity appeared to prompt individuals to leverage a process (i.e., development of a shared understanding) to move away from a state of not knowing to the creation of shared understanding in the relationship (i.e., at the macro level) through a series of interactions with the goal of creating understanding (i.e., at the micro level).

The goal to move from unfamiliar to familiar appears to be multifaceted. Thus, the development of a shared understanding acknowledges the complexity and nonlinear process of human relationship development. This is important, as an important characteristic of a well-developed theoretical scheme is the extent to which it reflects consideration of variation in the phenomena it seeks to explain (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While theories reflect patterns, reality (and in this case, the complexity of human relationships) introduces the opportunity for varied manifestations of the theory into the explanation. As described, development of a shared understanding is comprised of four levels, each building upon the last. While these levels are suggested to occur in the same order generally, the time spent in each level was not specified by participants. This suggests the possibility for individuals to spend varying amounts of time within each level, depending on a number of factors. Thus, not every ICOR capable of quality may

reach quality in the same timeframe, nor will level 3 always immediately follow level 2. There may be instances in which colleagues reconcile some differences, but learn new information (level 1) that reinvigorates their status at level 2, and delays their advancement into level 3. Future research may investigate additional factors that may influence these variations to bring additional clarity and expand upon the theory of ICOR quality development. Development of a shared understanding is therefore suggested to be the unifying framework that connects all six categories identified in the present study.

**Development of a shared understanding as a unifying framework for ICOR quality.** As the core category, development of a shared understanding is suggested to unify all six categories of ICORs. In essence, the development of a shared understanding in ICORs represents a dynamic framework in which colleagues move from unfamiliar to familiar. Therefore, connections among the categories are made clear by examining their relevance to the umbrella framework of development of a shared understanding. These connections further support the identification of development of a shared understanding as the core category. Specifically, components of each category (i.e., workplace context, personal characteristics, investment, interdependent contribution, and comfort) may be considered within the four levels of the development of a shared understanding (i.e., level 0-tabula rasa, level 1-authentic interest in coworker, level 2-reconciliation of differences, level 3-norms for interaction). Personal characteristics can equip the individuals in the ICOR with the personality, motivation, and skills to facilitate shared understanding and the formation of quality. Throughout development of a shared understanding, individuals must operate within the workplace context, according to its structure and relying on cues within the environment. Individuals interact with the workplace environment such that

they may be more or less likely to join, stay, or leave an organization depending upon the alignment with his or her personal identity. Organizations also adapt over periods of time depending upon the individuals inside them. Personal characteristics and workplace conditions therefore interact to result in the set of conditions that give rise to and continue to influence the formation of the development of a shared understanding necessary for ICOR quality. Due to the inherent challenges of developing a shared understanding in ICORs, individuals must invest personal resources at each level to overcome unfamiliarity, learn and empathize about the different perspectives brought forth, reconcile differences, and establish norms for interaction. Colleagues invest personal resources to monitor and maintain quality throughout the life of the ICOR. Moving through the levels of developing a shared understanding allows colleagues with differing perspectives, approaches, and skill sets to create norms that facilitate interdependent contribution. Individuals able to rely on established ways of interacting can more easily put forth work-related effort. Colleagues who understand the value garnered by their differing perspectives are then able to leverage those differences in applying work-related talent. Finally, components of comfort are incrementally built as colleagues move through the levels of development of a shared understanding successfully. Openness in communication, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and interpersonal trust are gradually increased as colleagues progress through each iteration of development of a shared understanding. Each time, colleagues have the opportunity to practice and impact the quality of the relationship through their styles in communication, alignment of preferred closeness, informal interactions, and level of interpersonal trust.



*Figure 3:* Proposed Theoretical Framework for the Development of ICOR Quality. This figure illustrates the six categories, unified by the core category, development of a shared understanding.

**Interrelatedness of categories.** To support the development of a theory, a necessary requisite for selective coding is the presentation of categories as “a set of interrelated concepts, not just a listing of themes” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 145). Thus, underlying connections among categories must be made explicit to support the integration of categories into a theory. In this section, the ways in which the categories are suggested to interrelate are summarized. These are phrased to suggest propositional connections (e.g., “may relate...”) to indicate the need for the future research to further explore and empirically assess these associations. Each category is discussed in relation to the other categories developed in the current study, beginning with workplace context. Relationships between development of a shared understanding and the other categories are discussed as part of the explanation for development of a shared understanding as the core category. In addition to the interrelatedness of categories discussed here, more detailed discussion of specific interrelations (e.g., at the subcategory and/or property level) are provided in this chapter.

***Workplace context and personal characteristics.*** The categories of workplace context and personal characteristics are related in the following ways. Both work context and personal characteristics are antecedents that serve to explain the conditions which give rise to the formation of high quality ICORs. The two categories work together to create the circumstances that may enable the creation of ICOR quality. More specifically, their related nature can be understood in light of previous theory which suggests that individuals may be more likely to work in environments with which they perceive themselves aligned. The attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model suggests that individuals seek out environments which appear similar to their own identity in terms

of personality, values, and experiences (Bretz, Ash, & Dreher, 1989; Nielson & Nielson, 2010). Individuals who value fairness, inclusivity, and transparent (FIT) workplace practices may be drawn to organizations who display such practices. In particular, individuals motivated by social connection may be more likely to value fairness and inclusivity. Individuals motivated by personal growth and development may be more likely to seek out organizations with a multiculturally diverse workforce as a way to experience new ideas, thereby increasing opportunity to grow and develop. Furthermore, the ASA model suggests that organizations may display an increased likelihood to select individuals who possess similar characteristics at the individual level. Applied to the current study, this may indicate that multicultural organizations show a preference for employees who are culturally self-aware and multiculturally connected. Organizations with a FIT organizational culture may be more likely to select individuals who would be expected to uphold these practices. Individuals who display empathy and humility may be more likely to uphold practices necessary for a FIT culture, as these individuals may be less likely to unfairly promote their own well-being or success over the well-being or success of others. Finally, the ASA model may support an association between workplace context and personal characteristics because higher levels of alignment between the personality, values, and experiences of individuals and organizations may lead to higher levels of employee retention.

***Workplace context and interdependent contribution.*** The category of workplace context describes work environments that are marked by a lack of politics, and more generally a FIT (i.e., fair, inclusive, transparent) organizational culture. These characteristics may result in several implications relevant to the category of

interdependent contribution. Employees may feel more comfortable exerting work-related effort in environments characterized by lower levels of organizational politics and higher levels of fairness. In these environments, employees may feel more confident that “credit will be given where credit is due.” In ICORs, perceptions of work-related talent may be facilitated in multicultural work environments. Because multicultural work environments may be culturally diverse due to a business-related need (e.g., to better serve customers), employees may be more likely to see colleagues’ culturally-bound skills and knowledge as beneficial aspects of work-related talent. While workplace context may not increase perceptions of work intersection, aspects of workplace context may allow for work intersection to be viewed as more beneficial by ICOR members. Because previous research suggests the possible positive as well as negative outcomes associated with work interdependency (as discussed in more detail in this chapter; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995; Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010), there may be additional factors that influence whether or not the effects of work intersection are experienced positively in the ICOR. In particular, work intersection may be seen more positively by ICOR members when the workplace is characterized by a lack of politics, as well as the presence of fairness and transparency (i.e., elements of a FIT culture). Under these circumstances, individuals may feel more comfortable in coworker relationships characterized by interdependency. Finally, the workplace context may send signals to ICOR colleagues regarding the value of their joint work. To the extent that the workplace is a multicultural work environment, the differing cultural perspectives leveraged in the work produced may increase colleagues’ perceptions of their work’s value.



***Workplace context and investment.*** Workplace environments characterized by a FIT organizational culture may foster an environment in which employees feel safe to invest themselves into their relationships at work. This notion is similar to previous research in psychological safety, which describes a group-level phenomenon in which individuals feel safe to take interpersonal risks and feel accepted and respected by group members (Kahn, 1990; Edmonson, 1999, Edmonson 2004). Given this definition, individual group members simultaneously affect the overall level of psychological safety with their own behaviors (e.g., accepting and respecting others) and are affected by the group's level of psychological safety (e.g., being accepted and respected by others). Therefore, when employees invest personal resources into ICORs, they may not only have a direct influence on the quality of the relationships in which they invest, but may also indirectly influence the workplace context more generally. In addition, the multicultural nature of the workplace context may increase the likelihood that individuals invest personal resources into ICORs (as opposed to same-culture relationships) specifically. Employees may see the multicultural work environment as an environmental cue, bringing about the recognition for investment into ICORs. In other words, individuals may invest into ICORs out of perceived necessity to be successful in the context of a multicultural work environment.

***Workplace context and comfort.*** The workplace context characterized by a multicultural workforce and a FIT culture may promote a sense of comfort in ICORs. This type of workplace context may result in ICORs characterized by higher levels of comfort due to the multicultural diversity and dispersion in the organization overall, yielding additional opportunities for ICOR members to interact with culturally diverse

colleagues as the norm. The FIT culture and lack of organizational politicking may also result in higher levels of comfort, particularly concerning openness in communication, congeniality, and interpersonal trust. When employees regard their environment as fair, transparent, and are not concerned about others' personal political motivations, they may feel safe to share information openly and transparently with one another. Culturally inclusive workplace practices may foster a sense of comradery among a multicultural workforce, generating higher levels of comfort in the forms of openness in communication, congeniality, and interpersonal trust.

*Personal characteristics and interdependent contribution.* The primary way in which personal characteristics is suggested to relate to interdependent contribution is through achievement motivation. Individuals who are motivated to build high quality ICORs because of the perceived connection to work success may be more likely to exhibit work-related effort on shared work. Individuals who are motivated to achieve have a desire to contribute to the work, and may be more likely to focus on what they can give to the organization or the ICOR. In contrast, those who are less motivated to achieve may be less concerned with how they can contribute. Individuals who are concerned with what they have to contribute may be more likely to demonstrate work-related effort in the ICOR. In addition to the potential relationship between personal characteristics and interdependent contribution through motivation, another proposed explanation is through multicultural connectedness. Similar to the arguments made above connecting the multicultural nature of the work environment and interdependent contribution, the multicultural connectedness of individuals may facilitate colleagues' perceptions of one another's interdependent contribution (in terms of work-related talent

and intersection). Individuals who are multiculturally connected may place more value on culturally-different colleagues' talents, as they may serve to "fill in the gaps" in their own perspectives. As such, they may be more likely to feel comfortable with work interdependency with culturally-different colleagues.

***Personal characteristics and investment.*** Multicultural connectedness may serve as the primary rationale supporting the relationship between personal characteristics and investment. Multiculturally connected individuals may be more likely to appreciate the importance of investing personal resources in ICORs, having experienced the result of investment. In other words, prior experience successfully developing a sense of multicultural connectedness may increase the likelihood that these individuals will invest again. In addition, both social connection and affective investment were components discussed as important for high quality ICORs by all participants in the study. As a reminder to the reader and to clarify their distinction, affective investment describes the emotional resources an individual devotes to the ICOR, while emotional resources may include affect, liking, or feelings of emotional attachment in the relationship. While social connection is suggested to be an important motivation for ICOR quality more generally, social connection may serve as a primary source of an individual's motivation for devoting emotional resources into the ICOR. Individuals who are motivated to develop high quality ICORs because of the satisfaction gained from high quality relationships may be more likely to invest emotional resources into the relationship. Individuals motivated by the social or relational aspect of work may also feel an emotional investment in their coworker relationships.

***Personal characteristics and comfort.*** The personal characteristics of each individual in a given ICOR may serve to influence the likelihood that a sense of comfort is developed. ICOR members' alignment with the category of personal characteristics (i.e., the extent to which individuals embody the personal characteristics suggested to be beneficial in ICOR quality development) may serve to facilitate openness in communication, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and interpersonal trust. Individuals with the motivation (i.e., social, achievement, personal growth) and interpersonal skills (i.e., empathy) to build high quality ICORs may be more likely to create a sense of comfort in their ICORs. Individuals with higher levels of multicultural connectedness may also feel higher levels of comfort in cross-cultural encounters (e.g., ICORs) more generally, due to the positive experiences enabling their feelings of connectedness. In contrast, individuals who lack the personal characteristics beneficial for building ICOR quality may struggle to cultivate a sense of comfort in ICORs. For example, individuals who are motivated to develop a sense of comfort, but do not engage in the identified interpersonal practices helpful for building high quality ICORs may experience some success, but perhaps not as much as individuals who are multiculturally connected, motivated, and skilled in leveraging helpful interpersonal practices.

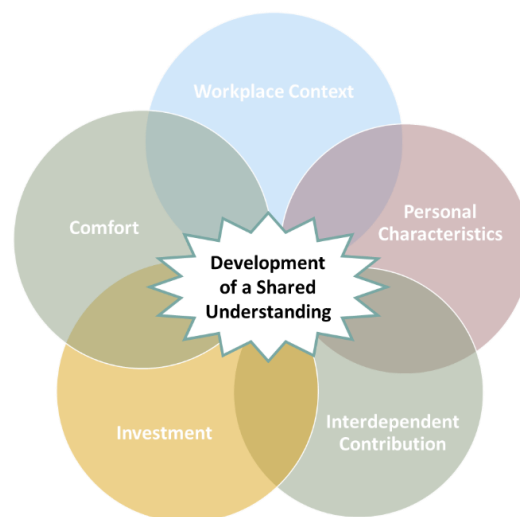
***Interdependent contribution and investment.*** The recognition of one's interdependency with a colleague to achieve work success may have a positive impact on the investment one exhibits in the relationship. Investment refers to the willingness to dedicate personal resources (i.e., emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively) to the ICOR. A condition in which an individual believes that work success is dependent upon a

successful relationship with a particular colleague may motivate investment of personal resources to build quality in that ICOR.

*Interdependent contribution and comfort.* Both interdependent contribution and comfort may serve as signals for the presence of quality in ICORs. “Quality” may be observed most easily by those *outside* of the relationship by the work contributions produced. “Quality” may be most easily identified by members *inside* of the ICOR through their sense of comfort. However, comfort and interdependent contribution may also inform one another. Earlier in this section, the link between workplace context and interdependent contribution was proposed. This link was explained by expectations of workplace fairness and transparency, confidence that credit would be given where credit is due, and an organizational culture that minimizes risks while maximizing benefits of interdependency. When an organization embodies this type of workplace context, individuals may feel more comfortable exerting work-related effort, able to leverage and appreciate talent fully, value interdependency in their work, and assign higher levels of value to the work that is produced. Comfort may play an intermediary role to help explain the link between workplace context and interdependent contribution in ICORs. Organizations that embody the category of workplace context may promote a sense of comfort in ICORs that leads to interdependent contribution. In addition, this may be a cyclical rather than one-way process. As colleagues grow in their level of interdependent contribution, they may experience higher levels of comfort with one another. As colleagues are able to rely on the contributions generated in an ICOR without worry regarding the work-related efforts, talents, or value involved, the result may be higher levels of interpersonal trust and openness in communication (i.e., elements of comfort).

Reliable interdependent contribution may also open up space in the relationship for informal interactions as well as higher levels of closeness (if this is mutually desired by ICOR members). In this way, interdependent contribution and comfort may work in tandem to signal quality in ICORs.

***Investment and comfort.*** When one colleague in an ICOR invests personal resources into the relationship, it may foster feelings of comfort for his or her partner colleague. Investing personal resources may be perceived as a risk and a willing display of vulnerability on the part of the investing individual. This is because there is no assurance of a “return on the investment,” and the effort devoted to the relationship may be done in vain if the partner colleague does not respond positively. This willingness to be vulnerable may facilitate interpersonal trust in the relationship, a component of comfort. This may also lead to higher levels of closeness (when this is mutually desired by both colleagues), openness in communication, and congeniality in the ICOR.



***Figure 4:*** Interrelatedness of Categories.

This figure illustrates the interrelated nature of the six categories, unified by the core category, development of a shared understanding.

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**Comparison of the development of a shared understanding with previous research.** Development of a shared understanding in ICORs may be compared to extant theories of relationship quality formation, particularly vertical dyad linkage theory (i.e., role making, role taking, and routinization; Graen, 1976; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987) and the theory of team formation (i.e., forming, storming, norming, and performing; Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jenson, 1977). For example, vertical dyad linkage theory describes the formation of quality leader-member exchange relationships (LMX). Previous research suggests that quality develops in three primary stages of “role making, role taking, and role routinization” (Graen & Scandura, 1987). In the first stage of role making, the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the direct report are assessed by the leader. In the subsequent stage of role taking, the leader and direct report negotiate roles through both explicit discussion as well as implicit patterns of reinforced behaviors (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989). Role behaviors include the ways in which information is shared between leader and direct report, the level of input expected from the direct report in decision-making, types of assignments, the levels and ways in which the leader offers support, and the level of trust established between leader and direct report (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Lastly, role routinization describes the stage in which “recurrent patterns of role making” are established (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989, p. 547). The theory of team formation is comprised of the stages forming, storming, norming, and performing, with a final stage of adjourning added in later research (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jenson, 1977). While the stages of team formation are more widely known with the aforementioned labels, Tuckman originally referred to the model as a “developmental sequence of small groups” with the four stages labeled “(1) testing and

dependence, (2) intragroup conflict, (3) development of group cohesion, and (4) functional role relatedness” (Tuckman, 1965, p. 384). Testing and dependence (forming) describes the initial stage in which team members seek clarity on behaviors admissible and inadmissible in the group. Team members come to understand the existing norms in the team based upon behaviors reinforced or not reinforced by a powerful group member, such as the leader. Intragroup conflict (storming) is the second stage in which team members challenge norms and expectations, experience emotional strain, and seek to address discrepancies between their vision of the task or mission compared to others. The third stage is development of group cohesion (norming), wherein team members overcome conflict and resolve disputes experienced in the prior stage, thereby establishing new norms. Team members have the opportunity to share more personal opinions and develop closer relationships. The fourth stage of functional role-relatedness (performing) is marked by peak levels of effectiveness, significant progress toward stated goals, and smooth operations within the team. The final stage (adjourning) occurs when a team disassembles.

There are a number of parallels among the stages outlined in vertical dyad linkage theory, team formation theory, and in the development of a shared understanding in intercultural coworker exchanges. First, all three models suggest that relationship quality forms in dynamic stages, with each level building upon the last. All three models recognize the need for members to develop shared ways of interacting to reduce ambiguity and increase clarity, and the three models all address the role of conflict in reaching shared ways of interacting. There are also important differences due to the cross-cultural nature of peer-level interaction of ICORs as compared to interactions



between leaders and direct reports, or among group members. First, a preliminary level (i.e., stage, phase) is suggested to occur within the development of a shared understanding, level 0: tabula rasa. Due to the intercultural nature of ICORs, there may be a need to leverage “tabula rasa,” or a state of nonjudgment in which individuals delay drawing conclusions and enter the relationship as a “blank slate” to define the relationship norms or rules of conduct. While this practice may be generally helpful for relationships, it was noted as particularly important for facilitating ICOR quality.

Second, the development of a shared understanding is explicit in recognizing the need for individuals to cycle through the model a number of times, rather than through a single, linear path. This recognition may be particularly applicable to cross-cultural relationships, as there may be more differences to navigate as compared to same-culture relationships. Finally, the development of a shared understanding explicitly accounts for cultural differences in relationship formation. Previous research has focused on cultural norms at the country level, but in practical application, individuals must navigate the influence of two unique sets of cultural norms on individual behavior, and develop a shared understanding with the individual. This distinction is important, as it implies a recognition of cultural differences at the national level while also simultaneously considering the individual.

## Discussion of Findings

The following section discusses each category in three parts: First, each category is defined and discussed in relation to other findings in the present study. Second, because quantitative measures included in the present study reflect the ways in which cultural competency and coworker relationship quality were measured in previous research, quantitative results will be discussed and compared to qualitative findings where appropriate. This reflects the third use of the quantitative data, as described above. The quantitative data as it relates to each of the qualitative categories is discussed, and a summary table of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings is presented (see *Figure 5*). Specifically, the quantitative measures of cultural intelligence and multicultural personality will be compared to the category of personal characteristics. The quantitative measures of coworker exchange quality and high quality connections will be compared to the categories of interdependent contribution, investment, and comfort.<sup>2</sup> To determine the degree to which each of the following categories and its components may be assessed in the intercultural competence or relationship quality scales included in the study, each subcategory was mapped onto the items and dimensions of the scales. For simplicity, the result of this process is depicted using four colors (See *Figure 5*). Lastly, the following section includes the discussion of the potential contributions of each category, reviewed in light of related extant research.

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<sup>2</sup> Previous research did not include aspects of workplace context as a definitive aspect of quality in coworker relationships. Therefore, workplace context is discussed separately from the quantitative measures included in the study, and reviewed with previous literature.

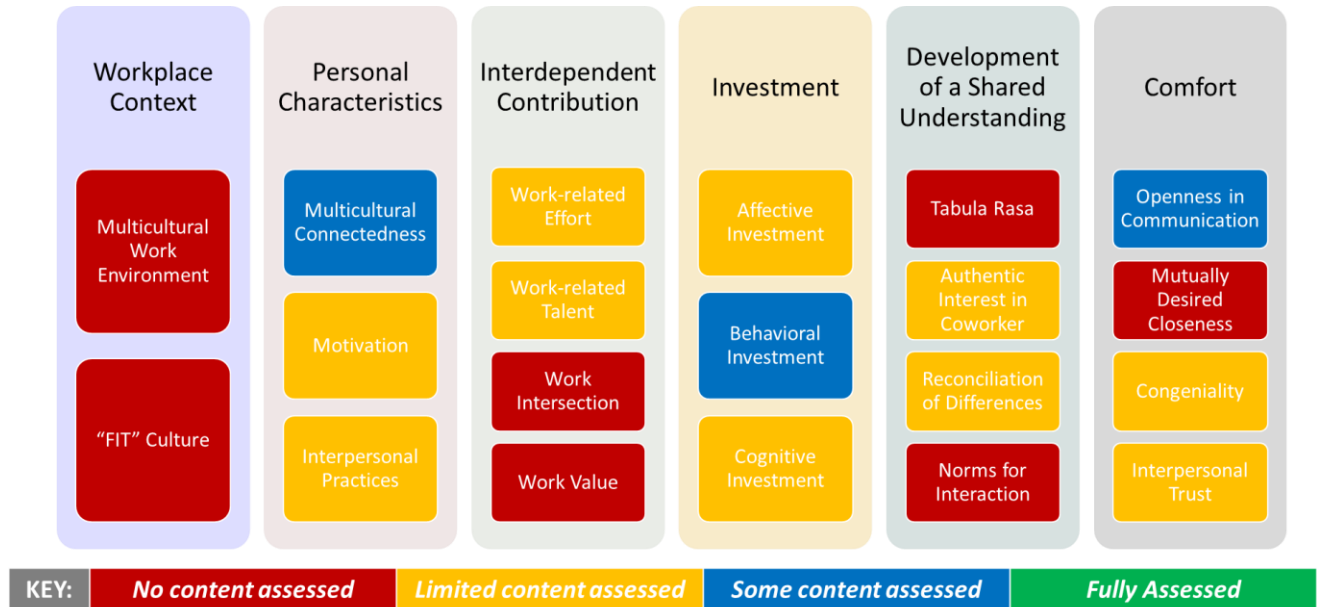


Figure 5: Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Comparisons.

This figure illustrates a summary of the overlap between previous scales and the qualitative findings in the current study. The color of each subcategory box signifies the level of content assessed by one or more of the scales included in the current study.

**Workplace Context.** Workplace context is comprised of the structure, policies, and practices that serve to facilitate the development of high quality ICORs. Specifically, the findings revealed high quality ICORs are fostered by colleagues who work in a multicultural work environment characterized by a “FIT” culture.

**Workplace context and investment.** There were two participants (Dirim and Geert) working in environments characterized as high multicultural coworker diversity, low dispersion of multicultural coworker diversity. Both Dirim and Geerts put forth effort to adapt themselves and minimize the cultural differences they expressed in their work environments, which were primarily comprised of coworkers with one other cultural background (i.e., U.S. colleagues). In these cases, it appears that Dirim and Geert may have exhibited higher levels of behavioral investment compared to their

colleagues due to the low dispersion work environment. Behavioral investment, discussed in the investment category, refers to the actions in which participants engage to promote quality in ICORs. Behavioral investment is the effort put forth in ICORs through actions and reactions directed in intercultural relationships. While behavioral investment is regarded as a key piece of high quality ICORs, it appears there may be situational (e.g., work environment) characteristics that can moderate the level of behavioral investment required for positively impacting ICOR quality. Specifically, in low dispersion work environments, cultural majority group employees may expect unequal levels of behavioral investment, such that cultural minority employees are expected to exhibit higher levels of behavioral investment (i.e., adapting, minimizing the impact of cultural differences) to promote quality in the ICOR. It appears that Dirim and Geert recognized this condition, given their higher levels of behavioral investment (i.e., adapting, minimizing cultural differences).

Another way in which work conditions may relate to investment is via fair organizational practices and clear organizational goals. As discussed by employees, fair and clear workplace practices mitigate the use of political behavior for personal gain. Instead, workplace conditions that embody fair and clear workplace practices facilitate high quality ICORs. It is possible that investment mediates the observed relationship between workplace conditions and ICOR quality. Specifically, when employees perceive workplace conditions with fair policies, clear goals, and the absence of politics, they may feel secure to put forth additional effort into ICORs without risking that the effort may be in vain. Thus, employees may deem such work conditions to be indicators of a “safe”

environment in which they can readily invest personal resources to foster quality in ICORs.

*Workplace context and the development of a shared understanding.* Workplace context may impact the ways in which shared understanding is developed in ICORs. Specifically, characteristics of the multicultural work environment may alter the strategies leveraged by employees to foster quality in ICORs. Dirim and Geert are non-native employees in work environments characterized as low in cultural dispersion. As just discussed, Dirim and Geert exhibited higher levels of behavioral investment to adapt to their coworkers, who belong to dominant cultural group. While there are only two participants who represented this category, the data suggest potential differences related to development of a shared understanding. Due to higher levels of investment relative to their colleagues, the process by which shared understanding is developed may differ. The primary reason for potential differences is due to the differing levels of effort exhibited by colleagues in the ICOR. Multicultural work environments with low cultural dispersion may result in increased levels cultural learning on the part of cultural minority employees while it is lessened for cultural majority group members. Aspects of a shared understanding such as leveraging differences for a purpose may be mitigated in their influence in the ICOR. Because the onus appears to be placed more on the foreign-born employee to put forth higher levels of effort to adapt, it may hinder the ICOR's ability to leverage differences for a purpose. In other words, if foreign-born employees are minimizing the differences expressed in the relationship, it would not be possible to leverage those differences. In addition, reconciliation of differences may look different in ICORs in low cultural dispersion work environments. To the extent that minority

cultural group employees adapt to the ways of the majority cultural group, the process of reconciliation of differences may occur faster. The potential differences in fostering ICOR quality in multicultural work environments with low cultural dispersion do not preclude the development of high quality ICORs, as evidenced by both Dirim and Geert's discussion of high quality ICORs, but it may put higher levels of responsibility for ICOR quality on the cultural minority employee.

*Comparison of workplace context with previous research.* Previous research in the areas of organizational climate (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989), organizational justice (Erdogan, Liden, & Kraimer, 2006; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006), and psychological safety (i.e., a team or group-level phenomenon; Edmonson, 1999) has recognized the interrelation of the workplace context and relationship quality. Specific to the connection between workplace context and dyadic relationships, previous research in leader-member exchange suggests that employee perceptions of leader-member relationship quality are intertwined with perceptions of the work environment (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989). Specifically, employees who perceived a higher degree of LMX quality tended to regard the organizational climate more favorably (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989).

Similar to the interconnected nature of LMX and organizational climate, previous research in psychological safety suggests the interrelated nature of same-culture coworker relationship quality and psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2009). Psychological safety describes a group-level phenomenon in which individuals feel safe to take interpersonal risks and feel accepted and respected by group members (Kahn, 1990; Edmonson, 1999, Edmonson 2004). Given this definition, individual group members simultaneously affect the overall level of psychological safety with their own behaviors (e.g., accepting and

respecting others) and are affected by the group's level of psychological safety (e.g., being accepted and respected by others). In Carmeli et al.'s study (2009), quality of same-culture coworker relationships within groups were significantly and positively related to levels of psychological safety. Psychological safety facilitated learning behaviors, resulting in higher levels of creativity and innovation (Carmeli et al., 2009). Previous research on the role of organizational justice in LMX relationships suggests that there may be cultural differences in terms of the relative weight of the type of justice (i.e., informational, interpersonal, procedural, distributive) in determining perceptions of quality (Erdogan, Liden, & Kraimer, 2006; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006). While the power differential in LMX relationships may explain the cultural differences observed (i.e., due to different levels of power distance), it is also important to consider the intercultural nature of coworker relationships in the present study. Specifically, it may be more important for the practices of coworkers in the relationship to default to the highest common denominator. For example, cases in which one coworker views a type of justice (e.g., informational) as more important in comparison to one's colleague, defaulting to meet the coworker's preference for informational justice may be important to determine quality.

The workplace context category denotes the importance of a lack of organizational politics for the formation of ICOR quality. This finding is consistent with the majority of previous research on perceptions of organizational politics (POPs), which suggests that POPs are predominantly related to unfavorable outcomes, such as higher job anxiety, higher turnover, lower job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment (Drory, 1993; Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2002; Hill, Thomas,

& Meriac, 2016; Yang, 2009). Furthermore, findings suggesting the importance of clear (i.e., rather than ambiguous) goals in the organization is consistent with previous research investigating situational antecedents of organizational politics. Specifically, clarity of goals is associated with lower levels of organizational politics (Poon, 2003). The category of workplace context aligns with previous research through the association observed between a low level of politics and a high level of organizational goals.

The influence of the organization's multicultural work environment on the development of intercultural relationship quality aligns with previous research. One aspect of a multicultural work environment is the multicultural diversity of the organization's leadership team. Previous research suggests that individuals who perceive the support of authority figures in making cross-cultural connections may be more likely to engage in similar behaviors (Brislin, 1981; Rosenblatt, Worthley, & Macnab, 2013). Additionally, positive cross-cultural interactions role-modeled by organizational leaders may encourage helpful behaviors in coworker relationships, such as "challenging and modifying culturally bounded thinking and assumptions" (Rosenblatt et al., 2013, p. 360). Finally, the level of multicultural diversity of coworkers and dispersion of multicultural coworker diversity in the organization may be related to previous research on multinational organizations with respect to their stage in globalization. Previous research suggests that there is a typical progression to which companies adhere in their journey to globalization (Black & Morrison, 2015). There are two major components that define an organization's stage in globalization: trade and investment. Trade refers to the notion that organizations can transport goods (e.g., products, knowledge, people) to generate value. For example, a company may create a product in India, but sell it to customers in



Italy. A Japanese professional could be relocated to Spain to leverage her talent and generate value in the new market. Specifically, as an organization becomes more globalized through trade, it may experience higher levels of coworker cultural diversity as well as higher levels of dispersion of coworker cultures. This is illustrated in a quote from Karen describing the nature of trade in her organization:

TechInvest is different. Different growth, different industry, different view of the worlds. Our product is U.S.-based which brings the big difference. [The questions] ‘Who is your customer? Who is your client?’ I think also impacts the multicultural point of view. We are mostly in two countries; that's who we are. I would expect some differences from MultiTech to a TechFinan or a COMPANY, or other companies.” (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 593-598)

As Karen depicts, the global nature of an organization’s trade operations may be an antecedent to the level of coworker cultural diversity and dispersion of cultures in the organization. Another way that previous research has operationalized an organization’s stage of globalization is through financial investment (Black & Morrison, 2015).

Organizations may devote financial resources to establish their presence in other markets, such as by building a manufacturing plant or constructing an office in that location.

Certainly, establishing a presence in another culture may facilitate diversity in the customer base, as is likely the organization’s primary goal of financial investment.

Increased globalization via financial investment in other markets may also promote increased diversity of the workforce as well as dispersion of cultures in the workforce.

**Personal characteristics.** The category personal characteristics describes the individual differences that belong to members of the ICOR which serve to promote the development

of high quality ICORs. Personal characteristics that serve to promote quality in ICORs are further categorized into three subcategories of multicultural connectedness, motivation, and interpersonal practices.

***Multicultural connectedness and development of a shared understanding.***

Cultural connectedness describes the degree to which participants described the individual difference of one's level of connectedness with multiple cultures, in their personal and professional lives. Individuals with higher levels of cultural connectedness may be more likely to develop shared understanding in ICORs, thus facilitating quality in the relationship. Higher levels of cultural connectedness signify an individual's perceived association with multiple cultures. At the highest level, cultural connectedness was described as identification with multiple cultures (e.g., "multicultural identity," "culturally undefined," "citizen of the world"). Due to their high level of cultural connectedness, individuals may be more practiced in the process of developing a shared understanding in ICORs. Specifically, highly culturally connected individuals described their experiences living and/or working in culturally diverse environments, which is likely to have afforded them additional opportunities to practice relationship building in such contexts. Importantly, it may be these individuals felt connection explaining this relationship, as opposed to the cultural experiences themselves, as not all individuals with multicultural experiences are adept at building high quality ICORs.

***Cultural connectedness and multicultural work environment.*** Individuals who regard themselves as culturally connected may gravitate towards work environments which are perceived to mirror this identity. Support for this assertion is provided by the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model, which suggests that individuals seek out

environments which appear similar to their own identity in terms of personality, values, and experiences (Bretz, Ash, & Dreher, 1989; Nielson & Nielson, 2010). Further application of this model suggests that multicultural organizations may also play a role, with increased likelihood to select individuals who possess similar multicultural characteristics. Finally, the ASA model may support an association between cultural connectedness and multicultural work environment because individuals may be more likely to remain in organizations perceived to align with their multicultural identity. Support for the relationship between cultural connectedness and multicultural work environment is observed in the following quotes from two participants described above as highly culturally connected, Fairuza and Andrei (quotes originally discussed in multicultural work environment):

I feel better with the people who have perhaps the kind of same background, and that doesn't mean the same culture. It means they are open to know about other countries or other cultures. I feel more comfortable around that, and I don't have the feeling that I have to impose my religion, my feelings, my point of view, etcetera. (Interview #2, Fairuza, Lines 73-77)

Fairuza feels more comfortable in multicultural work environments, as she feels her background aligns in such contexts. In addition, Andrei supports the association between cultural connectedness and multicultural work environments when he shared his experience in the work environment (quote originally appears in multicultural work environment):

I think at this point given how globalized we are it actually takes an effort not to have cross-cultural [relationships]. You actually have to make an effort to close yourself down... So, I think by simply being here and being open-minded and willing enough to simply talk to different people, you do tap into that cross-cultural experience without having to make an effort.

As a matter of fact, it should take an effort to only choose to talk to people of your race, religion, your creed, or your cultural affiliation. That's hard to do. So the way... I'm not going to wake up and say, I'm going to have a cross-cultural experience today. I'm just open to whatever happens.

(Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 63-71).

As he notes above, Andrei believes it requires intentional effort to *avoid* cross-cultural interactions, as ICORs characterize his work environment. Both Fairuza and Andrei demonstrate the potential relationship between an individual's cultural connectedness and working in a multicultural environment.

***Social connection and affective investment.*** Both social connection and affective investment were components discussed as important for high quality ICORs by all participants in the study. Affective investment describes the emotional resources an individual devotes to the ICOR. Emotional resources may include affect, liking, or feelings of emotional attachment in the relationship. While social connection is suggested to be an important motivation for ICOR quality more generally, social connection may serve as a primary source of an individual's motivation for devoting emotional resources into the ICOR. Individuals who are motivated to develop high quality ICORs because of the satisfaction gained from high quality relationships may be

more likely to invest emotional resources into the relationship. Individuals motivated by the social or relational aspect of work may also feel an emotional investment in their coworker relationships. Lian presents an example of this association, as she is motivated by social connection and feels and emotional investment in her ICORs (originally presented in affective investment):

Very important. We see these people every day. We spend more time with them than we do with our own family because we are in the office a lot of the time, so it's very important to have developed good relationships. They involve what you do mentally, emotionally, and professionally, and they affect you. It's really important to develop those relationships.

(Interview #30, Lian, Lines 79-82)

Similar to Lian, Whitney shares her motivation to invest emotional resources into the relationship (originally presented in affective investment):

When you develop a really good co-worker relationship -- I think that this is true across cultures, but it's particularly true in cross-cultural settings -- the best ones, you develop a sense of affection for the person as a human being. You respect and value them as a person that you can collaborate with and get things done in a productive way, but you also like them as the person. (Interview #12, Whitney, Lines 111-115)

In both cases, Lian and Whitney illustrate the potential relationship between social connection and affective investment in ICORs.

***Achievement and work-related effort.*** Work-related effort (see interdependent contribution) refers to employee perceptions regarding effort exhibited to make a contribution to the work. Individuals who are motivated to build high quality ICORs because of the perceived connection to work success may be more likely to exhibit work-related effort on shared work. The connection between motivation via achievement and work-related effort is noted by Karen (originally presented in achievement), who uses “engagement” to describe the various levels of motivation to achieve:

An engaged person is here because they want to contribute; [they think] it is about what I can give to an organization. A person who is not engaged is here pretty much here for the paycheck, just like “I’m trying to do what I need to do.” Someone who is disengaged actually makes it known, and shares the disgruntledness, actively saying negative things. It becomes very difficult to work together if someone is actively disengaged. It takes a lot of fun out if people are just not engaged because you’re working for goals from a different point of view. (Interview #9, Karen, Lines 95-99)

According to Karen, individuals who are motivated to achieve tend to have a desire to contribute to the work, and focus on what they can give to the organization. In contrast, those who are “disengaged” are less motivated to achieve or concerned with how they can contribute. Individuals who are concerned with what they have to contribute may be more likely to demonstrate work-related effort in the ICOR.

***Personal growth and learning and cultural learning.*** Cultural learning (see development of a shared understanding category) refers to behaviors intended to discover information about one’s colleague with the goal of promoting quality in the ICOR (i.e., in

terms of work quality and interpersonal dynamics) through the development of a shared understanding. Participants indicated that cultural learning often served as a source of personal growth and learning. As in the example provided above, Ping illustrates the connection between motivation via personal growth and learning with cultural learning:

I talk with colleagues from different countries, and they tell me about their daily lives – what they do, what they talk about, and what they like. They also introduce some interesting books, novels, and movies to me, so it's keeping me learning new things. It makes me more and more curious and learning more and more different things. I think it helps me to stay open all the time... For my life, I think another thing my cross-cultural colleagues help with is we understand the different ways to, for example, to bring up the children. In China, we only have one child, so that the child is well looked after by the parents and the family. When I talk with the friends from the other countries or the colleagues from the other countries, they explain that they try to make their children very independent and so they know what to do after they go to the universities. Those things, they give me insights and I believe it helps me in my life. (Interview #16, Ping, Lines 119-124)

Ping describes that learning the perspectives and practices of her cross-cultural colleagues allows her to “stay open all the time,” giving her insights that she believes are an asset to her life. While all participants in the study discussed cultural learning,, there may be an added importance of or additional reason for cultural learning when individuals are motivated by personal growth and learning.

*Humility and development of a shared understanding.* Two specific properties within development of a shared understanding are posited to relate to humility. Cultural learning describes behavior that seeks to learn about one's coworker in order to facilitate quality in the ICOR, through the development of a shared understanding.

Acknowledgement of a shared humanity refers to the mindful recognition that individuals are of inherent worth and value as fellow human beings. This property includes acknowledgement of the shared characteristics that the two share as human beings. In Saud's conceptualization of humility, also shared above, he describes humility in terms that allude to cultural learning as well as acknowledgement of a shared humanity:

Humility is being comfortable that you don't know everything. Everybody has something to contribute. Status is not defined by money or education and other things. There are people who have, in many ways, a high quality-- They're a high-quality person because of so many other traits. Actually, confidence is different. You have to be confident in who you are, but also have the humility to know that you are not the super-being who's accomplished something great which you think in your mind you have accomplished. But really, people are doing great things in so many different spheres of life that, for them, it gives a high quality of satisfaction from what they do. So, being able to look at that and understand that, learn from everybody what they have to teach you, always knowing that you can learn something. Be open to failure and all of that. It doesn't come easy, though." (Interview #6, Saud, Lines 199-208)



When Saud describes confidence, he echoes the acknowledgement of a shared humanity in expressing that each individual has inherent worth and value. In his conceptualization, Saud discusses the connection between humility and acknowledging the valuable contributions and teaching offered by others. Saud ends his discussion of humility by noting that one's level of confidence (or self-acceptance) along with humility may allow an individual to be more open to failure, as failure may be an important part of cultural learning.

Andrei's comments on humility bolster Saud's assertions, making clearer the connection between humility and acknowledgment of a shared humanity (as is also referenced in acknowledgment of a shared humanity):

It's odd because I'm saying what I need is to be humble, is not humble [laughs]. So, listening in humility is one thing, but there has to be an inherent appreciation in your value as a fellow human that makes you equal. Like if I have to peel enough layers, we have to assume that at its core, we are brothers. Someone poor someone richer and we're slowly moving to the hippy land – at its core, the common understanding of humanity is that you're just as good as I am. Old, young, skinny, fat, dark, white, they're just noise. I think there might be a sequence, when you understand that everybody is equal, I may not be able to do this, when you understand that everybody at their core as a species of humanity, whether your source of morality is from God or whether it's from some sort of humanistic understanding. At that core if we're equal, that brings you humility because you understand we're

all here. If you understand that, then you have humility, and then you have the willingness and the patience to listen. I think this is where they come together. (Interview #1, Andrei, Lines 280-292)

As noted in the explanation of acknowledgment of shared humanity, Andrei's discussion of an individual's humility does not refer to equality in terms of qualifications, power, or other physical characteristics, but emphasizes the view of individuals' inherent value and worth by virtue of being human. Second, Andrei notes the tie between humility and "patience and willingness to listen," which are critical for cultural learning, in which an individual takes an authentic interest in his or her colleague for the purpose of building quality in the relationship.

These examples illustrate the potential relationship between an individual's humility and tendency to practice cultural learning as well as acknowledgment of a shared humanity.

*Empathy and respectful empathy.* Respectful empathy refers to ICORs whose members display authentic interest in one another. Respectful empathy is a process by which coworkers interpret and relate to each other's experiences. When participants describe respectful empathy, it involves two components: a cognitive component (i.e., perspective taking) and an affective component (i.e., concern). The properties of respectful empathy appear to align well with the personality and skills-based aspects of empathy as an individual characteristic. The tendency to experience emotional concern for others (i.e., as a personal characteristic) is likely to relate to the demonstration of concern (i.e., the affective component of respectful empathy). Similarly, the skills an

individual uses in perspective-taking are likely to impact the cognitive component of perspective-taking in respectful empathy.

*Dependability and interpersonal trust.* Interpersonal trust is generally regarded as an individual's attitude toward another regarding the willingness to be vulnerable and expectations of positive behavior (see comfort category; Rotter, 1967). There was a clear overlap in the words used by participants to describe the dependable nature of their colleagues (or themselves) as it related to trust in the relationship. Kwai makes the connection between dependability and trust evident by saying that together, they are "an essential thing," in his quote below:

In high quality, trust is about whether what he said is true, [and he] doesn't lie. That's really basic; it's the foundation of trust. I think that as long as there are those two things, right? One is the person doesn't lie. The other thing is that the person is dependable and that if he says he'll do something, he'll do something. So really there are two areas, dependability and the trustworthiness of his words. That's an essential thing in a relationship. (Interview #6, Kwai, Lines 685-689)

Kwai's description of his colleague's dependability is integrated with this consideration of trust as a critical component of the ICOR's quality. The dependability of his colleague serves as a "foundation of trust." Parker's example also serves to illustrate the link between individual dependability and interpersonal trust in the relationship:

When it came to budgeting, when it came to my expenses or my group's expenses, or any purchase orders that were put out, they question, "Did

you think about this? Did you see if there were alternatives?" If I could consistently show that I thought about those things and my team investigated those things, then he'd think, "Hey, he's on the up and up. At least we can start to trust him." That's the way I built some trust with him with regard to working through what I think was a high quality, productive relationship.

He trusted me, I trusted him.

He was generally just a straight-shooter in terms of the things he said and his thought processes. I knew he would try to be supportive if there was something that really wouldn't work, [saying] "That's not in your budget. Here's the alternatives." There was that collaborative relationship with him. (Interview #10, Parker, Lines 450-459)

Parker builds up the support for the association between dependability and trust by suggesting the dyadic nature of coworkers' dependability on the two-way direction of trust; he trusted his colleague, and his colleague trusted him. The cases presented by Kwai and Parker may provide evidence to suggest that individual dependability is associated with interpersonal trust in the relationship.

*Comparison of quantitative results (CQ, MPQ) and personal characteristics.*

There is a plethora of previous research regarding individual characteristics that promote and define cultural competency, such as cultural intelligence, multicultural personality, global mindset, and expatriate adjustment. Two quantitative measures developed in previous research, cultural intelligence (CQ) and multicultural personality (MPQ), were

included in the present study to assess the level of agreement between these general measures of intercultural competence and organizational ratings of participants' competency that are specific to intercultural coworker relationship building. In addition, as part of the qualitative interview data collected, participants described the personal characteristics (i.e., their own as well as coworkers' characteristics) that facilitate the development of quality in ICORs. Therefore, there are in total four sources of data (i.e., *CQ*, *MPQ*, organizational recommendation to participate, and personal characteristics) that may serve to triangulate the characteristics that define cultural competency as it relates to the development of high quality ICORs in the workplace. For a summary of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings, see Figure 5.

Participant scores on measures of *CQ* and *MPQ* were generally high (see Table 12). Specific to *CQ*, participant scores indicate that the sample was highly culturally intelligent overall. There were, however, eight individuals who scored below the threshold to indicate a "high" score. Specific to *MPQ*, results suggest that the sample was above average in terms of their level of multicultural personality. However, sixteen individuals did not reach the threshold to indicate a "high" score via *MPQ*. These results may be explained by three primary reasons. First, both scales lack specificity regarding the personal characteristics required for development of quality in ICORs. While the personal characteristics that define a general level of cultural competence would be expected to correlate with those that define cultural competence for the purpose of building high quality ICORs, they are not one in the same. Given the wide-ranging applications for cultural competency measures (e.g., successful negotiations, successful business acquisitions, sales profitability, managerial effectiveness, team innovation,

missionary success), previous constructs have been broad, rather than targeted, in their measurement approach. This distinction is important, as the application of cultural competence may be in conflict. For example, successful cross-cultural negotiations may require some of the same skills as are beneficial in developing quality ICORs, but the goals of the interactions are vastly different. In negotiations, there are finite resources, such that the more one's partner profits, the less the individual stands to gain. Thus, the goals of the two interaction partners are inherently in conflict with one another.

Successful interaction is singular, defined, and time-bound. Thus, quickly discerning one's competitor and adapting one's style to benefit the most from the interaction may be highly valuable in contexts such as negotiation, sales, and business acquisitions. In more however, the goals are shared. Successful interaction is ongoing, fluid, and may or may not be time-bound. Second and related to this distinction, additional explanation may be warranted for participant scores on the *MPQ*. The *MPQ* contains a measure of flexibility. Flexibility on the *MPQ* is measured with reverse-coded items such as, "Works according to plan," "Looks for regularity in life," and "Wants predictability" (Van der Zee et al., 2013). When these behaviors are considered within the framework of the development of a shared understanding, it becomes clear that there may be a previously unseen benefit to these preferences. The first level of development of a shared understanding is *tabula rasa*, which suggests that colleagues should reserve judgement, acknowledge the potential for cultural differences, and assume unfamiliarity. However, this is the initial phase of developing a shared understanding, and the creation of quality in ICORs requires individuals to move past this stage of ambiguity to establish helpful norms that facilitate communication and interaction. Remaining in a state of unpredictability and irregularity

is unlikely to be practical or beneficial for relationships, particularly within the workplace context. Additionally, the study targeted individuals working within the IT industry. As an industry, organizations heavily reliant upon the use of technology to be successful may be more likely to value predictability, regularity, and working according to a plan. Because of this, individuals working inside IT organizations may be oriented such that they also value predictability, regularity, and working according to a plan. Finally, it may be noteworthy that all items in the flexibility dimension are reverse-coded. While reverse-coding items can be beneficial in some cases, methodological research has noted the measurement issues that can accompany use of reverse-coded items, such as loading on a separate factor and misinterpretation by respondents (Weijters, Baumgartner, Schillewaet, 2013).

In addition to the consideration of the quantitative findings regarding participants' intercultural competency as measured by *CQ* and *MPQ* in light of extant research, findings were also examined to see if and how participants below the "high" thresholds on *CQ* and *MPQ* varied from the rest of the sample. As stated above, 8 participants scored below the threshold to indicate a "high" score for *CQ*, and 16 participants scored below the threshold to indicate a "high" score for *MPQ*. Examination of the participants who scored below the "high" threshold on cultural intelligence revealed that all eight of the participants were female. Previous research suggests that men may be more likely to hold positive expectations of themselves, particularly in STEM contexts (Beyer, 1990; Cooper, Krieg, & Brownell, 2018; Reuben, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2014). Specifically, one study found that men were over three times more likely than women to believe they possessed superior overall intelligence compared to the colleague with whom they work

most often (Cooper et al., 2018). This finding held irrespective of the colleague's gender (Cooper et al., 2018). In addition, five out of the eight participants who scored below the "high" threshold on cultural intelligence had less than 5 years of work experience. Consideration of the 8 participants' gender as well as lower levels of work experience, particularly in the STEM industry, may suggest that scores below the "high" threshold on cultural intelligence may be a reflection of a lack of confidence, rather than competence, regarding cultural intelligence. In addition, the qualitative findings were examined for potential patterns specific to these 8 individuals. Five of the eight individuals were indicated that they valued coworker relationships marked by higher levels of closeness (see comfort category). Their preference for higher closeness (as it is particular to relationships, rather than interactions) may highlight the lack of specificity in *CQ* to effectively measure relationship quality. Examination of the 16 participants who scored below the "high" threshold on multicultural personality showed that the same 8 individuals who scored below the threshold for cultural intelligence also scored below the threshold for multicultural personality. Only 2 of the 16 individuals were male. In comparing the qualitative findings for these 16 participants compared to the rest of the sample, no differences were observed. This is likely because at 16 participants, this subset represented over half of the sample. However, when the dimension of flexibility was removed from the average of the multicultural personality score (see discussion of the flexibility dimension above), only 9 participants scored below the "high" threshold on multicultural personality. While this does not reflect a sufficient modification to suitability of the scale for measuring personality as it relates to the development of ICOR quality, it may be a noteworthy observation. In comparing the qualitative findings for



these 9 participants compared to the rest of the sample, a pattern was noted. Five of these individuals tended to emphasize the affective component of investment. Affective investment refers to the willingness to invest emotional resources (e.g., empathy, affect, liking) into the relationship. This may be explained by some similarity between affective investment and cultural empathy (i.e., a specific affective resource), a dimension of the *MPQ*.

***Comparison of personal characteristics with previous research.*** Previous research on *CQ* and *MPQ* is compared with the category of personal characteristics. As explained above, participant scores on cultural intelligence and multicultural personality scores were aligned with the expected direction and strength. *CQ* and *MPQ* are both intended to reflect the nature of cultural competence on a wide-ranging and general level (Thomas et al., 2015). Personal characteristics is a category comprised of the individual qualities that serve to facilitate high quality ICOR formation. The findings suggest that an individual's level of multicultural connection, sources of motivation, and interpersonal practices may be integral to the development of high quality ICORs.

Each subcategory of personal characteristics (i.e., multicultural connectedness, motivation, and interpersonal practices) is compared with the cultural competence as it is measured in previous research in cultural intelligence and multicultural personality. To frame these comparisons, a review of *CQ* and *MPQ* are provided.

The short form of the *CQ* measure is comprised of skills, knowledge, and metacognition. Skills includes one item to measure each of the following: "relational skills, tolerance of uncertainty, adaptability, empathy, and perceptual acuity" (Thomas et al., 2015, p. 4). Knowledge refers to an individual's general awareness of cultural

differences, including awareness from cultural differences experienced personally (Thomas et al., 2015). Metacognition involves regulation of one's thinking, such that it can be adapted to suit a variety of cultural situations (Thomas et al., 2015).

The short form of the *MPQ* measure includes emotional stability, social initiative, open-mindedness, cultural empathy, and flexibility. The degree to which one remains calm, even under stressful or unfamiliar situations is emotional stability (Van der Zee et al., 2013). An individual's tendency to initiate social interactions is reflected by social initiative (Van der Zee et al., 2013). The degree to which one has an open and unbiased attitude with respect to cultural differences is included in the dimension of open-mindedness (Van der Zee et al., 2013). Cultural empathy is defined as empathizing with culturally different individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions (Van der Zee et al., 2013). Finally, flexibility is measured by reversing the scores on items designed to measure a preference for predictability, routine, and working according to a plan (Van der Zee et al., 2013).

Multicultural connectedness is a subcategory of personal characteristics. Multicultural connectedness refers to the degree to which individuals experience a sense of connection with cultures other than their culture of origin. Participants discussed low multicultural connectedness as an inappropriate focus on one's own culture and a lack of awareness or exposure to other cultures. In contrast, higher multicultural connectedness referred to a sense of association with multiple cultures. At the highest level, multicultural connectedness was described as identification with multiple cultures. In comparison with *CQ*, multicultural connectedness demonstrates some consistency with the knowledge dimension. Specifically, there may be overlapping content with the item,

“I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.” Implicit in this item is the notion that individuals have multicultural personal experience from which they can draw examples. However, this item does not distinguish between knowledge of cultural differences and feeling a connection to multiple cultures. Given the focus of the present study is building high quality intercultural relationships, connecting with cultures may be more important than an awareness of differences. As described above, connecting with cultures on a personal level may have a negative effect in cases where a high level of *CQ* is desirable for short-term, win-lose, non-relational purposes (e.g., business acquisition, negotiations). In comparison with the *MPQ*, multicultural connectedness may be a proximal outcome of open-mindedness. Specifically, open-mindedness may be required to develop a sense of multicultural connectedness, as one must be open and willing to experience cultures first to develop a sense of multicultural connectedness. However, one must have personal or professional exposure to cultures for multicultural connectedness to develop.

Motivation is the second subcategory of personal characteristics. Motivation describes sources of motivation for building high quality ICORs. It is comprised of social connection, achievement, and personal growth and learning. In comparison with *CQ*, there is one item that clearly aligns with social connection, “I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.” However, achievement and personal growth and learning are not explicitly measured in the scale. Items included in the *CQ* measure are suggested to lead to effectiveness in culturally diverse environments, but do not measure the drive to achieve as a source of motivation. Personal growth and learning is not explicitly measured, though there are items to capture individuals’ level of existing

cultural knowledge. An existing level of knowledge may indirectly measure one's motivation to grow and learn, but an intentional measurement of personal growth and learning is not included in the scale. In comparing motivation to the *MPQ*, clear conceptual overlap may be noted between social connection and the social initiative dimension, as both purport to reflect the degree to which one seeks out affiliation with others. Social connection, however, is specific to relationships at work. Achievement may be reflected in the item, "Takes initiative." Although this item is included in the social initiative dimension in the *MPQ*, there is no information provided to respondents that it refers to initiative within the context of social connections. Lastly, personal growth and learning is reflected in some items included in the open-mindedness dimension of the *MPQ*. Specifically, the items "Tries out various approaches," "Seeks people from different backgrounds," and "Likes to imagine solutions to problems" may reflect an individual's motivation to grow and learn.

Interpersonal practices represents the third subcategory of personal characteristics. This subcategory describes behaviors that promote the development of ICOR quality. Because interpersonal practices describe behaviors, these behaviors may be considered the combined observable outcome of an individual's personality traits and skills as related to that particular interpersonal practice. Specifically, interpersonal practices include cultural self-awareness, empathy, humility, and dependability. Cultural self-awareness appears to align with the dimension of metacognition in *CQ*, with items that reflect individuals' practices regarding self-reflection and awareness. The interpersonal practice of empathy appears to be measured in two items under the skills dimension of *CQ*, "I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from

other cultures.” and “I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.” Humility is not explicitly measured in *CQ*, though potential implications of humility may be embedded throughout the scale. Because consideration of others’ preferences and attempting to adapt to those preferences involves considering others’ needs and opinions alongside one’s own, humility may be measured indirectly throughout the scale. Dependability does not appear to be measured in *CQ*, which may not be surprising, as it is more specific to relationship building. In comparing interpersonal practices with *MPQ*, cultural self-awareness did not appear to be measured, as no items refer to an individual’s mindfulness of his or her own culture or personal style. Comparison of interpersonal practices to the *MPQ* dimensions yields clear alignment between empathy and cultural empathy. Both involve perspective taking as a skill and sympathizing with others’ emotions. Similar to *CQ*, humility is not explicitly measured. However, it may be indirectly measured through items on open-mindedness, such as “seeks people from different backgrounds.” Lastly, dependability is not explicitly measured on the *MPQ*. This may be expected, however, as it is more related to building relationship quality.

**Interdependent contribution.** Interdependent contribution describes ICORs in which coworkers perceive one another’s work contributions as having a positive and meaningful impact toward achieving shared work outcomes. The subcategories of interdependent contribution are work-related effort, work-related talent, work intersection, and work value. As described earlier, interdependent contribution refers to perceptions held by ICOR members, rather than the interdependency of colleagues’ roles as indicated by explicit structural conditions put in place by the organization. Although the

organization's structural characteristics are likely to influence colleagues' perceptions of the interdependency of their roles, the perceptions themselves may provide a more straightforward understanding of the behaviors and perceptions pertaining to ICOR quality.

***Interdependent contribution and investment.*** The recognition of one's interdependency with a colleague to achieve work success may have a positive impact on the investment one exhibits in the relationship. Investment refers to the willingness to dedicate personal resources (i.e., emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively) to the ICOR. A condition in which an individual believes that work success is dependent upon a successful relationship with a particular colleague may motivate investment into that ICOR. As stated by Nilesh,

There is more investment in the relationship because of the environment in which we were operating. Whereas, I can think of other relationships which didn't go very well, but I did not invest as much into those relationships because the environment did not demand for it. If I'm sharing honestly, that's where I put it, because in spite of everything not all relationships go well, and at some point I have to let go. (Interview #4, Nilesh, Lines 518-522)

Nilesh contrasts the investment put forth to change this low quality relationship into a high quality relationship. He suggests that the conditions of his work environment (i.e., the interdependency of the roles) necessitated a quality working relationship. He further postulates that he may not have invested as much into this ICOR, as was the case in other

lower quality relationships, if the circumstances were not such that encouraged his investment.

*Comparison of quantitative results (HQCs, CEQ) and interdependent*

*contribution.* As described in detail above, the current study employed two quantitative measures developed in previous research to measure the quality of coworker relationships, high quality connections (HQCs) and coworker exchange quality (CEQ). For a summary of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings, see *Figure 5*. In comparison with the measure HQCs, interdependent contribution may be measured in the item, “My coworker and I are attentive to new opportunities that can make our system more efficient and effective.” “System” may refer to the interpersonal system of interacting, but more likely refers to the system utilized in the work performed by colleagues. Colleagues who endorse this item may exhibit higher levels of work-related effort. This may refer to the subcategory of work-related effort in interdependent contribution. Comparison of interdependent contribution with CEQ also suggests a conceptual overlap with the subcategory of work-related effort. Specifically, the item, “Regardless of how much formal authority the coworker has built into his/her position, what are the chances that he/she would use his/her power to help you solve problems in your work?” Endorsement of this item may indicate that one believes his or her colleague would exert effort to assist in the solution of work-related problems. In addition, the CEQ item, “I have enough confidence in this coworker that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so” appears to correspond with work-related talent. Endorsement of this item suggests (in part; see comfort

discussion below) that one has confidence in the work-related skills and/or knowledge of one's colleague.

***Discussion of previous research and interdependent contribution.*** Previous research on shared goals in diverse teams highlights the role of interdependent contribution. Though previous research provided mixed findings regarding the impact of shared goals (i.e., as a form of task complexity; McGrath, 1984) on work performance in diverse teams (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995; Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010; Stewart, 2006), recent work has harkened back to original theoretical work in the field of cross-cultural psychology with Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis. Specifically, meta-analytic research and recent studies suggest that the perception of shared goals in cross-cultural teams define one component of "optimal contact," along with equal status and personalized contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Rosenblatt, Worthley, & Macnab, 2013; Schippers, Hartog, Koopman, & Wienk, 2003). The positive effect of shared goals was explained by the perception of interdependency of shared goals (i.e., outcome interdependence; De Jong, Dirks, & Gillespie, 2016) as part of the opportunity to engage in multiple optimal contact interactions over time (i.e., develop an ongoing relationship; Rosenblatt et al., 2013; Schippers, et al., 2003). It may be the combination of these characteristics (i.e., interdependency as part of personalized, peer-level contact) that explains the positive impact of interdependency in ICORs. Previous research suggests that culture has the strongest potential to influence individual behavior in situations characterized by higher levels of work complexity and necessitate an interdependent work partnership (Gibson, Maznevski, & Kirkman, 2009). As a form of optimal contact, goal interdependency in culturally diverse teams was further suggested to foster cross-



cultural learning, promote positive emotions, and ease tensions in cross-cultural interactions (Rosenblatt et al., 2013; Schippers, et al., 2003).

**Investment.** Investment refers to an ICOR characterized by an attitude of commitment to expend personal resources in the relationship. Investment includes three subcategories of affective, behavioral, and cognitive investment. As stated earlier, cultural differences in coworker relationships can certainly be a major advantage. However, commitment of one's personal resources to drive quality may be the "grease" to the proverbial wheel of ICOR functioning.

*Investment and the development of a shared understanding.* In the summary of investment, three exemplary cases (shared by Trang, Nilesh, and Saud) were described to illustrate the powerful role that investment may play in transforming low quality ICORs into high quality ICORs. In addition, these three cases elucidate the connection between investment and the development of shared understanding. This is observed through the use of cultural learning strategies employed by colleagues in ICORs. As discussed in the description of cultural learning strategies, the use of more effortful strategies is associated with the increased level of perceived difficulty in building the relationship quality. In the three cases discussed by Trang, Nilesh, and Saud, participants tended to use more advanced strategies when cultural differences presented a challenge or obstacle in the ICOR. As discussed in the development of a shared understanding section, Trang conducted online searches to learn more about her German colleague's cultural tendencies, specifically in the use of direct language. In Nilesh's case, he learned that many others in Colin's team had experienced job loss due to outsourcing to employees in other countries. Saud spent time speaking with Jang as well as others in his organization

to learn about Korean culture and how to build trust with the client. As exemplified in these three cases, participants tended to invest more resources, exert additional effort, and leverage more advanced strategies for learning when their use was necessary for building quality ICORs.

*Comparison of quantitative results (HQCs, CEQ) and investment.* Two quantitative measures developed in previous research measuring the quality of coworker relationships in the U.S., high quality connections (*HQCs*) and coworker exchange quality (*CEQ*), were included in the present study. *HQCs* and *CEQ* were included to assess the level of agreement between qualitative findings defining ICOR quality and the previously developed measures of coworker relationship quality. For a summary of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings, see *Figure 5*. *HQCs* reflect positive coworker relationships defined by emotional carrying capacity, tensility, and connectivity (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Emotional carrying refers to the authentic expression of both positive and negative emotions. Tensility describes a coworker relationship that is able to overcome and grow from difficult circumstances, such as conflict, work stress, or emotional strain. Connectivity describes relationships in which coworkers are open and accepting to one another's ideas and suggestions. *CEQ* refers to coworker relationships characterized by mutual respect, trust, and obligation (Sherony & Green, 2002). Notably, these are the same dimensions that serve to define high quality leader-member exchange relationships.

In comparison with the measure *HQCs*, investment may be measured in the item, "If I get upset with my coworker, I know he/she will try to understand me." This item appears to measure affective investment, or the willingness to devote affective resources

(e.g., via perspective-taking, a component of empathy) into the relationship. A comparison between the *CEQ* scale and investment yields an observation of similarity with the item, “Regardless of the amount of formal authority your coworker has, what are the chances that he/she would ‘bail you out,’ at his/her expense?” Endorsement of this item suggests that one would expect his or her colleague to expend personal resources to act in one’s best interests. Notably, the item suggests that a colleague would act in one’s best interests, despite a personal cost. This indicates that the colleague would exert effort primarily for the sake of quality in the relationship (i.e., as opposed to work contribution as the primary reason for exerting effort in this case).

*Discussion of previous research and investment.* Parallels may be drawn between ICORs and other high quality dyadic relationships with respect to the importance of investment. Specifically, previous literature on marriage relationships, romantic relationships, and close friendships suggests that commitment is a foundational element to the success of these relationships (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). Commitment, or the intent and willingness to maintain a relationship (Rusbult, 1983), may shed light on the role of investment in ICORs. Recent work specific to the workplace context builds upon previous research on commitment in intercultural relationships. Individuals in committed, long-term intercultural relationships (e.g., friendships, close relationships, marriage) have “opportunities and incentives to learn about another culture...the more contact two intercultural friends have with each other, the more chances they have to assimilate and draw upon ideas from both cultures to synthesize novel and useful insights” (Lu, Hafenbrack, Eastwick, Wang, Maddux, & Galinsky, 2017, p. 1094).

The importance of investment in intercultural relationships may be supported in cultural intelligence research, as well. As discussed in the literature review of the current study, the updated, short form of the cultural intelligence scale was leveraged due to previous research that advocates for its use in business (i.e., as opposed to more general) settings (Thomas et al., 2015). However, the updated scale eliminated the motivational component of *CQ*. Motivational *CQ* refers to one's ability to give attention and sustain energy to learn about culturally diverse topics. The finding of investment suggests that this omission may be unhelpful for the purpose of measuring intercultural relationship quality. Previous researchers have also asserted that motivation influences the degree to which "an individual directs energy to learn about cultural differences and to understand culturally different others accurately," and its importance in *CQ* more generally: "Given the inextricable link between cognition and motivation, intelligence models that ignore the role of motivation are fundamentally incomplete." (Leung et al., 2014). In sum, the current study suggests that the category of investment is critical to understanding quality in ICORs.

**Comfort.** The final category of comfort describes a relationship characterized by colleagues' feelings of ease, openness, comfort and trust. Comfort reflects the descriptions of high quality ICORs as comfortable relationships fostered by interpersonal trust, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and open communication. Openness in communication in ICORS describes communication that is fluid, transparent, adequate, regular, and candid. Importantly, openness in communication does not refer to one particular type of communication style, as cultural tendencies may influence the communication styles used in the relationship (see development of a shared

understanding category). Openness of communication within the category of comfort therefore describes the way communication is experienced by ICOR members. Mutually desired closeness refers to the perceived level of alignment regarding the degree to which ICOR members discuss or engage in one another's personal affairs. Mutually desired closeness describes the degree to which colleagues prefer to extend the relationship beyond workplace matters. There was a wide range of preferred closeness observed as suitable in high quality ICORs. Findings therefore indicated that the determination of quality is not defined by the level of closeness itself. Instead, the defining factor for quality is that the level of closeness is agreed upon by individuals in the ICOR. Congeniality refers to the friendly and informal interactions that characterize high quality ICORs. Irrespective of the preferred level of closeness, congeniality and informal interactions with colleagues were typical of high quality ICORs. Interpersonal trust describes the extent to which coworkers perceive that they can depend on one another to behave according to each other's best interests. Interpersonal trust refers to the degree to which ICOR members display a willingness to be vulnerable due to assumptions of positive intent, alignment of work values, and perceptions of integrity.

*Development of a shared understanding and comfort.* As highlighted in the next section discussing previous coworker relationship quality research and comfort, a sense of comfort may be the mark of a mature high quality ICOR. As colleagues progress through each level of the development of a shared understanding framework, the components of comfort are gradually built up. Openness in communication, mutually desired closeness, congeniality, and interpersonal trust grow as colleagues move through each iteration of development of a shared understanding. Each time, colleagues have the

opportunity to practice and impact the quality of the relationship through their styles in communication, alignment of preferred closeness, informal interactions, and level of interpersonal trust. Thus, the impact of comfort is two-fold. Comfort serves both as the mark of a mature high quality ICOR, and as it increases, it may have additional potential to positively facilitate shared understanding.

*Comparison of quantitative results (HQCs, CEQ) and comfort.* The two quantitative measures, high quality connections (*HQCs*) and coworker exchange quality (*CEQ*), are also compared to the category of comfort (see above for additional description of *HQCs* and *CEQ*). For a summary of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings, see *Figure 5*. Comparison of comfort to both *HQCs* and *CEQ* reveals some overlap with the subcategory openness in communication. Conceptually, the bulk of the content in previous scales appears to align with the openness in communication subcategory of comfort. Specific to *HQCs*, the dimension of emotional carrying capacity as well as an item in the connectivity dimension (“My coworker and I are always open to listening to each other’s new ideas”) appear to correspond with openness in communication. Emotional carrying capacity describes sincere and open expression (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). It may therefore align with openness in communication in ICORs. While there is some overlap, there are elements missing that may serve to explain the “why” behind the rating of emotional carrying capacity not reflected in the dimension’s items, that is specific to the intercultural nature of ICORs. Specifically, the present study extended previous research (e.g., Liu, Chua & Stahl, 2010) by suggesting that an important component of communication within intercultural coworker relationships is coming to an agreed upon use of language (verbal communication; e.g.,

global English), interaction style (nonverbal communication; e.g., friendliness), and communication style (verbal and nonverbal communication; e.g., high/low context styles of communicating). In other words, while a lack of endorsement on the items in the emotional carrying capacity would likely correspond with a lower level of openness in communication, additional items specific to ICOR communication (e.g., reconciliation of differences, accessibility, use of language) may be helpful for measuring communication in ICORs. A comparison of comfort to *CEQ* yields five items that align with comfort in the form of interpersonal trust or openness in communication. Two of the seven items on *CEQ* (“Do you usually know how satisfied he/she is with what you do?” and “How well does he/she understand your job problems and needs?”) appear to align with openness in communication. Both items emphasize the degree of transparency and sincerity that characterize the relationship. Three separate items (also mentioned earlier, “Regardless of the amount of formal authority your coworker has, what are the chances he/she would ‘bail you out,’ as his/her expense?,” “Regardless of how much formal authority the coworker has built into his/her position, what are the chances that he/she would use his/her power to help you solve problems in your work?”, and “I have enough confidence in this coworker that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so”) appear to tap interpersonal trust. Endorsement of all three items require the respondent to believe one’s colleague has his or her best interests at heart (i.e., positive intent). Endorsement of the third item also requires the respondent to believe the individual made the decision in alignment with one’s work values.

***Discussion of previous research and comfort.*** Previous research as well as many popular press articles advocate for “getting out of your comfort zone” to effectively build

cross-cultural relationships (e.g., David, & Volpone, 2015; Pogosyan, 2016; Volet & Tan-Quigley, 1995). While the present study supports this to a degree (see levels 1 and 2 of a development of a shared understanding), overall findings suggest that a shift in thinking may be warranted. To build high quality ICORs, individuals may be better served by attempting to develop a shared understanding with colleagues that result in mutual feelings of comfort.

Recent research has provided a uniquely informative setting to study the determinants of communication quality in intercultural interactions. Specifically, Liu and colleagues (2010) studied intercultural communication quality in integrative negotiations (i.e., negotiations in which the highest *joint* gains are pursued). Quality in intercultural communications (QCE) in this setting was defined by responsiveness, clarity, and comfort (Liu, Chua, & Stahl, 2010). In connection with the current study, there is a high level of convergence with the findings. As a property of openness in communication, transparency refers to the degree to which communication is clear, complete, fully disclosing, and candid in the ICOR. This parallels the clarity dimension of QCE. Accessibility is the extent to which coworkers in the ICOR are available to one another for responsive, regular, and timely communication. Accessibility reflects the pathways along which communication occurs. Responsiveness in QCE bears a close resemblance to accessibility in the present study. In the context of QCE, comfort is defined as “a condition of positive affect of ease and pleasantness when interacting with each other” (Liu et al., 2010, p. 6). In the present study, however, comfort is suggested to extend beyond the realm of communication to include relational aspects of comfort such as interpersonal trust, congeniality, and mutually desired closeness. This may be due to the



current study's focus on defining quality in the context of an ongoing relationship, rather than in a short-term interaction.

Due to the cross-cultural nature of the present study, a discussion of the subcategory of interpersonal trust within the context of previous literature is merited. Extensive research has examined the degree to which the conceptualization of interpersonal trust is etic (i.e., universal) versus emic (i.e., culturally-specific). Some research supports the theoretical universality of trust (Ferrin & Gillespie, 2010; Bass, 1997; Lonner, 1980), while other research has advocated for conceptualizations of trust specific to individualistic and collectivistic societies. Specifically, cognitive-based trust (i.e., trust is a rational choice influenced by the individual's examination of another's trustworthiness, such as credentials) has been suggested to be more relevant in individualistic societies, and affective-based trust (i.e., trust is experienced in the presence of care and concern, the relationship is valued, and sentiments are mutual) has been suggested to be more relevant in collectivistic societies (Chen et al., 2011; Chua et al., 2008, McAllister, 1995). Specific to dyadic relationships, longitudinal LMX research on the trust-building process may elucidate these mixed findings to suggest that both affective and cognitive trust may be important (Bauer & Green, 1996). Nevertheless, it may be that some aspects of trust are etic, while others are influenced by culture. The building blocks of trust in intercultural coworker relationships (i.e., work values alignment, integrity, positive intent) were found to be consistent across combinations of coworker cultural backgrounds in the present study. Thus, while it is worthwhile to consider the influence of culture on trust, the present study suggests that both cultural norms as well as individual preferences may be more impactful for ICOR members to

consider in their efforts to build relationship quality. In other words, it may be helpful for ICOR members to consider the potential influence of culturally-informed tendencies (i.e., particularly in level 0 and level 1 of the development of a shared understanding framework), but it may be more beneficial for individuals to take an individualized approach with each colleague to develop trust as is appropriate for the dyad.

Mutually desired closeness may also be discussed in light of demographic moderators. Specifically, individual cultural background and the gender(s) represented in the ICOR may serve to moderate the preferred level of closeness. First, cultural background was observed to influence the degree to which closeness was preferred in the current study. Specifically, a pattern in which participants with a more collectivistic cultural background (e.g., Brazilian, Indian) preferred a higher degree of closeness than participants with a more individualistic cultural background (e.g., Dutch, German). This finding corresponds with previous research. Collectivism describes a societal-level phenomenon in which members tend to display a preference for highly cohesive, integrated social groups, in comparison with individualistic societies (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). Individualism describes a societal-level phenomenon in which members tend to value individual uniqueness and view relationships in light of the particular purposes they serve, in comparison with collectivistic societies (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). Due to these societal-level tendencies, individuals who adhere to the norms associated with collectivistic cultures may be more likely to define high quality coworker relationships as those that are integrated within their lives overall. In contrast, individuals who connect with norms of individualistic societies may be more likely to view coworker relationships

according to their original purpose, and be less likely to require interaction outside of these bounds to achieve quality in ICORs. Notably, individualism does not preclude closeness in coworker relationships. Instead, the implications are that integration is not required to achieve quality for individualistic individuals, which may be more likely the case for collectivistic individuals.

### **Implications for Theory**

The current research offers four main theoretical contributions. First, the present study makes theoretical contributions to the field's understanding of cross-cultural relationships. Specifically, the present study extends previous exchange literature (e.g., leader-member exchange; Pellegrini, 2015) by utilizing a grounded theory approach to understand quality formation in lateral, coworker relationships within the context of multinational firms in the technology industry. Coworker relationships represent an imperative area for researchers to study, as they are elements that define a functional workplace (e.g., "peers make the place," Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008, p.1). Despite their clear importance, the preponderance of research investigating exchange quality has focused only on leader-member relationships (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Research examining coworker exchange quality has yet to develop a theoretical understanding of quality formation, as extant research on intercultural exchange has been largely confined to leader-subordinate relationships. While leader-member exchanges are critical to study for multinational business organizations (Pellegrini, 2015; Pellegrini, & Scandura, 2006; Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, & Shore, 2012), consideration of coworker relationships in their own right is merited. Research examining the outcomes of coworker support and coworker antagonism suggests that one's collegial relationships can have important

impacts on work-related outcomes, such as effectiveness, role withdrawal, work attitudes, and role perceptions (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). The current study expands upon this research by offering a more comprehensive picture regarding coworker relationship quality in ICORs, including its definition and theoretical development. Theoretical development, rather than testing the extension of previous theory in social exchange, was deliberate. Findings indeed suggest that individuals may value a different set of qualities or behaviors to facilitate peer-peer relationships compared to leader-member relationships. Rather than the financial rewards (e.g., increased salary) or promotions from a leader as a result of a high quality leader exchange relationship, the current study suggests quality coworker relationships are indicated by the presence of interdependent contribution and comfort, promoted via the conditions of workplace context and personal characteristics, powered by investment, and created through the process of development of a shared understanding.

Second, the current study is pioneering in the theoretical framework offered to explain how, when, and why ICOR quality is developed in multinational firms in the technology industry. To this end, the present study leveraged a mixed-methods, grounded theory approach to address calls for qualitative research to more clearly conceptualize quality in intercultural coworker relationships (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Specifically, the development of a shared understanding was developed to explain the catalytic process by which quality is formed in ICORs. Development of a shared understanding represents the theoretical framework by which quality is developed within ICORs. The current study offers a substantive theory by which ICOR quality may be developed. Substantive theory refers a theoretical model that provides an explanation for

a phenomenon within a specific context (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). A substantive theory may therefore be transferred (i.e., in contrast with generalizability in formal or grand theories) to like contexts (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Substantive theories may therefore be fodder for future research to examine the contexts to which the theory applies (as discussed in the future directions).

Third, the present study makes a theoretical contribution by offering a definition of intercultural coworker relationship quality as a distinct and well-defined criterion within the intercultural competence literature. The present study suggests that the formation of high quality ICORs is indicated by the presence of interdependent contribution and comfort, promoted by the conditions of workplace context and personal characteristics, powered by investment, and created through the process of development of a shared understanding. In this way, the current research begins to address “the criterion problem” (Austin & Crespin, 2006; Austin & Villanova, 1992) specific to the deficiency of research clearly defining relational outcomes of cultural competency, specifically intercultural relationship quality among peers in the workplace (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Odden & Sias, 1997). Previous research has studied the relationships between individual-level characteristics and intercultural exchange without clearly defining the criterion. For instance, previous research has measured “relational skill” dichotomously as having (or not having) a close friend from another culture (Canary & Dainton, 2003; Thomas, Liao, Aycan, Cerdin, Pekerti, Ravlin, & Moeller, 2015), despite a lack of theoretical understanding regarding what constitutes ICOR quality. Other work has included measures of individuals’ self-reported tendency to build ICORs. However, these studies did not assess the quality of

those relationships (Javidan & Teagarden, 2012). Thus, the current research makes a theoretical contribution by offering a definition for intercultural relationship quality.

Fourth, the current study is the first to examine potential relationships among the existing measures of cultural competence (i.e., *CQ* and *MPQ*) and coworker relationship quality (developed in the U.S. context; *HQCs* and *CEQ*). Examination of these relationships extends the nomological network of both cultural competence constructs of cultural intelligence and multicultural personality. Although significant correlations were observed between measures of cultural competence and coworker relationship quality, implications of these findings should be considered within a broader understanding of validity. In essence, validity describes the extent to which evidence corroborates the inferences one proposes to make concerning that which is being assessed (Sackett, 2012). A measure's validity may be considered from multiple perspectives to develop a preponderance of evidence that the test is valid for its intended purpose (Landy, 1986; Binning & Barrett, 1989). Consideration of current measures (i.e., *HQCs* and *CEQ*) for the purpose of assessing intercultural coworker relationship quality from a validity perspective may be beneficial. In the present study, one may infer that a high degree of criterion-related validity would be observed with current measures. This is because previously developed measures of coworker relationship quality were correlated with participants' global ratings of each ICOR's quality. Significant correlations in the expected directions were observed between high quality ICORs using *HQCs* and *CEQ*, and between the measurement of low quality ICORs using *HQCs* and *CEQ*. To the researcher's knowledge, it is also the first study to assess the suitability of *HQCs* and *CEQ* for non-U.S. populations. Despite these quantitative findings, qualitative findings

suggest that use of *HQCs* and *CEQ* for the purpose of measuring ICORs may be inappropriate, given the ICOR-specific content not captured in these scales (e.g., multicultural work environment, FIT culture, multicultural connectedness, investment, development of a shared understanding). In other words, construct validity was suggested to be compromised when *HCQs* or *CEQ* (both developed in the U.S. context) were used to assess intercultural coworker relationships. Construct validity is critical because it links psychometric practices to theoretical notions about constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2013). Lastly, support for content validity is garnered only when items align with the focal construct (Podsakoff et al., 2013).

### **Implications for Practice**

This study offers three main practical contributions. First, the setting in which the understanding of ICOR quality formation was conducted may have useful practical implications for multinational organizations in the technology industry. Second, implications specific to actions that can be taken by organizational leadership, organizational development consultants, human resource professionals, and employees are discussed. Lastly, practical application is discussed concerning the performance implications derived from an increased understanding of ICOR quality.

The need to understand how quality ICORs are formed has never been higher, particularly in STEM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, math) fields in the United States. Currently, more than one-fourth of all STEM employees in the United States with a college education are foreign-born (Zong & Batalova, 2015; Science & Engineering Indicators, 2014). More strikingly, foreign-born make up 25% of the entire STEM workforce in the U.S. (Ewing, 2017), and over half of the STEM workers in the U.S. with

Ph.D.'s are foreign-born (American Immigration Council, 2017). The current study provides theoretical as well as practical understanding concerning how quality may be developed in ICORs specific to this important context.

Practical application of the development of a shared understanding framework may serve to inform the efforts of organizational leadership, human resource professionals, and employees in multinational organizations in the technology industry. Organizational leadership as well as organization development professionals may benefit from an understanding of the workplace context conditions that give rise to the development of ICOR quality, but implications from the findings overall suggest multiple opportunities for organizational decision makers in the multinational technology industry. Specifically, the current findings suggest that organizations may benefit from promoting inclusive multiculturalism (Galinsky, Todd, Homan, Phillips, Apfelbaum, Sasaki, & Maddux, 2015) by emphasizing the ways that cultural differences may be leveraged specific to the organization's mission. Informal interactions, whether inside or outside of the workplace, may be nurtured to foster a sense of congeniality among colleagues. Job design may be such that individuals have individual role clarity as well as a sense of interdependent collaboration with colleagues. Communication training that provides employees in ICORs with the knowledge and tools to customize an approach that is suitable for the individual ICOR may be more beneficial than a prescriptive or one-size-fits-all method. Additionally, organization development and/or HR professionals may leverage the framework of a development of a shared understanding to identify areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement to guide development efforts of individuals in ICORs. Lastly, coworkers in ICORs may use this framework to pinpoint



their own strengths and improvement opportunities. Colleagues might use this framework to guide discussions regarding how they can best support each other at work.

Finally, previous research relying upon U.S. coworker relationships suggests that the quality of coworker relationships has important impacts on workplace outcomes, such as task and contextual performance, creativity, and organizational commitment (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Homan et al., 2015). To the extent that intercultural coworker relationship quality impacts these and/or other workplace outcomes, the present study may inform practical ways to build quality relationships, and thereby positively impact these workplace outcomes. For example, extensive previous research supports increased creativity and innovation in culturally diverse teams (in inclusive and psychologically safe environments; Rosenblatt et al., 2013). Recent research suggests that intercultural dyadic relationships may mirror this pattern with evidence that cross-cultural friendships and romantic relationships outside the workplace can increase an individual's creativity at work (Lu et al., 2017). Thus, the current study may provide another type of dyadic intercultural relationship that may serve to positively impact workplace creativity and innovation.

### **Limitations**

The present study is not without limitations. Three primary limitations are discussed in the following section. First, the study did not collect dyadic data in each ICOR. Second, the sample was uneven in terms of gender distribution. Lastly, the sample may be range restricted in terms of performance and education.

First, the current study collected data from one perspective of each ICOR (i.e., not dyadic data). Therefore, it was not possible to assess the level of agreement between

coworkers in each dyad. Dyadic data collected to understand the quality of the relationship from the perspective of both members of the relationship may be helpful for understanding joint outcomes, such as decisions involving negotiation and the efficiency or quality of work produced in partner projects. However, the present research sought to leverage the perceptions of individuals, as these perceptions drive subsequent attitudes and behaviors. Participants were also purposefully selected according to recommendations from others inside their respective organization. Specifically, individuals were invited to participate based upon recommendations from their organization's human resources team or a professional colleague endorsing the individual as culturally competent in building ICORs. In this way, the current study was intentional in leveraging the perspective of individuals considered to be adept at building high quality ICORs.

Second, the sample was not evenly divided in terms of gender representation. Specifically, the majority of the sample was comprised of female participants (73% female). However, when overall gender representativeness of ICOR members in the sample (i.e., participants as well as participants' colleagues) is considered, the split is more evenly distributed (55% female). While the larger proportion of female participants may be a limitation of the present study, it may be valuable in other respects. The higher percentage of women in the current study counteracts the gender gap in previous expatriate adjustment research that has relied on predominantly male samples. Specifically, a meta-analytic review of expatriate adjustment (i.e., and its association with "relational skills" as described earlier) found that 85% of participants were male (Bhaskar-Shrivastava et al., 2005).

Lastly, the sample may be range restricted such that it is more applicable to high performers. Participants in the current study may be more representative of high performers in organizations, as they were recommended by organizations for their cultural competence. Although cultural competence in relationships is certainly distinct from task performance, the present study (as well as previous research; Ang et al., 2007; Javidan & Teagarden, 2012) suggests that cultural competence and performance are integrally related in multicultural organizations. Thus, it is improbable that an organization recommended an individual to participate who was regarded as highly culturally competent in building coworker relationships, but considered to be a low performer.

### **Future Directions**

The current study offers several promising directions for future research. Five opportunities for future research are highlighted. First, recommendations are proposed for future research to consider the ways in which quantitative measures may be developed to assess ICOR quality. Second, future research may assess the suitability of the theoretical framework developed in the current study in other environments. Specifically, future research should test, extend, and refine the proposed findings in other settings of a similar nature, with intercultural peer relationships as a core feature. Third, lateral intercultural relationship quality may be an important avenue to explore within the context of shared leadership. Fourth, the present study calls for future studies to systematically investigate the combination of other important demographic characteristics in the development of ICOR quality. Lastly, a general suggestion for additional qualitative research in the field of industrial/organizational psychology is provided.

The current study examined existing measures of intercultural competency (*CQ* and *MPQ*) and coworker exchange quality (*CEQ* and *HQCs*). Given the wide-ranging applications of extant intercultural competency measures (e.g., successful negotiations, successful business acquisitions, sales profitability, managerial effectiveness, team innovation, missionary success), previous constructs have been broad, rather than targeted, in their measurement approach. This distinction is important, as the goals of a “successful interaction” may vary extensively, and partners’ goals may be in conflict with one another. In more relational contexts, however, the goals are shared. Successful interaction is ongoing, fluid, and may or may not be time-bound. In addition, qualitative findings illustrating the dynamic and fluid nature of the process of ICOR development in combination with the quantitative intercultural cultural competency findings, suggest that one’s level of flexibility may not be universally helpful at all stages of relationship quality development. Taken together, qualitative and quantitative findings suggest extant intercultural competency measures may be unable to provide accurate assessment of the personal characteristics helpful for the development of quality in ICORs. Given their lack of specificity to ICOR development, a scale to assess individual intercultural cultural competence specific to ICOR quality formation should be developed in future research.

While *CEQ* and *HQCs* may currently contain some helpful items for measuring ICORs, findings suggest that these scales may not tap the entirety of the content needed to effectively measure ICOR quality. Future research should consider developing a scale to measure the quality of ICORs. Importantly, the theoretical framework describing the process by which ICOR quality develops suggests that the dynamic nature of human relationship formation should be reflected in quantitative measures used to assess quality.

In other words, quantitative measures should take steps to distinguish between an underdeveloped relationship and a low quality relationship. While time may be one factor used to make this distinction, future research should explore other moderators on the time needed to develop quality. For example, cultural distance or unfamiliarity may require coworkers to remain in level 1 (authentic interest in coworker) for a longer duration. Additionally, future research may assess the potential application of the current theoretical framework for transforming antagonistic coworker relationships (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; potentially distinct from “low” on the quality spectrum) into quality ICORs.

Future research may also assess the suitability of the current theoretical framework in ICORs in other settings. Future research may test, extend, and refine the definition and formation of ICORs as proposed in the current study in other settings of a similar nature. The context of the current study focused on ICOR quality in multinational organizations in the technology industry. Organizations who are heavily reliant upon the use of technology to be successful may share certain characteristics. Specifically, individuals in such environments may simultaneously be expected to work in predictable, planful ways while also engage in creative thinking and innovation in efforts to provide maximal profitability to their organizations. Other contexts, such as the nonprofit sector, government, and education, may be characterized by other shared traits. For example, organizations in the nonprofit sector may place additional focus on serving the community and less on profitability. The macro level characteristics of the industry on the development of ICOR quality may be examined in future research.

Third, shared leadership (e.g., leadership teams) is becoming more and more common in organizations (particularly in healthcare institutions such as hospitals and medical centers; Hughes, Gregory, Joseph, Sonesh, Marlow, Lacerenza, & Salas, 2016; Miles & Watkins, 2007; Salas, Kozlowski, & Chen, 2017; Waldman, Wang, & Zhang, 2016; Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014). Multiculturally diverse leadership teams represent another opportunity to examine the formation of high quality intercultural relationships. This may serve as another avenue for future research to test, extend, and refine the proposed findings, as shared leadership represents an important opportunity to study intercultural peer relationships.

Though the study's focus necessitated diversity of participants was relatively high in terms of national culture, future research should systematically investigate the combination of coworker demographics in ICOR development. Research has only just begun studying the role of employee minority status in cross-cultural situations (Volpone, Marquardt, Casper, & Avery, 2018). This research represents an important area for future research to pursue in efforts to be inclusive in its understanding of cross-cultural relationship development.

Lastly, an overarching suggestion is offered for future research. The current study employed a grounded theory methodology to develop a theoretical framework explaining quality in intercultural coworker relationships. Qualitative research (including grounded theory studies, among others) in the field of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology have been infrequent, as recent research has highlighted. Spanning 2006-2013, purely qualitative studies in top I/O journals represented 5% of all articles published, while mixed methods papers represented only 3% of all articles published (Pratt & Bonaccio,

2016). Recent research in I/O suggests that grounded theory studies may be a particularly useful form of qualitative research in the field of I/O in efforts to generate, expand, and elaborate theories that explain the why and how behind phenomenon (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2011; Pratt & Bonaccio, 2016). Specifically, cases in which the researcher seeks to understand the reasons why or ways in which individuals think, feel, or behave, the field may greatly benefit from a qualitative research approach (Pratt & Bonaccio, 2016).

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the present study sought to gain theoretical understanding regarding the conceptualization of ICOR quality and the processes that underscore the formation of ICOR quality. Extant research has yet to examine the formation of intercultural coworker relationship quality, and understanding its development is critical for individuals and organizations in the ever-increasing globalization of the workforce. The present study leveraged a mixed methods approach with a primary focus on qualitative data. To generate theory rooted in real-world occurrences, qualitative data were collected and analyzed using grounded theory principles. Quantitative data were used to triangulate findings in the current study. Specifically, qualitative findings were compared with quantitative findings as well as previous research in the intercultural competence and coworker exchange literature to determine areas of conceptual consistency, contradiction, and novelty. The efforts of the present study generated a definition of ICOR quality and a substantive theory by which ICOR quality may be understood in multinational organizations. Because the current study is pioneering in its efforts to conceptualize ICOR quality and its formation, it provides ample opportunity for researchers in the areas

of intercultural competence and coworker exchange to further refine and test the proposed model in a variety of contexts.



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**Appendix A: Recruitment Email Initial Invitation to Participate**

This email is an invitation to participate in a doctoral study, “Intercultural Exchange Quality in the Global Workplace.” I am conducting this study in partial fulfillment of my Ph.D. at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. If you are interested in participating but would like to learn more or have questions, you may contact me directly via email at [jennifer.morton@umsl.edu](mailto:jennifer.morton@umsl.edu) or via phone at 314-482-4866. If you are not able to participate but know others that fit the study’s requirements, please forward this invitation to participate and notify me of their interest.

If you would like to participate in this study, please click the link below to read and sign a brief message of Informed Consent (also attached to this email).

<Hyperlink to Informed Consent form>

Informed Consent is required prior to participating. If you have any difficulty accessing the Informed Consent document, you may contact me directly via email at [jennifer.morton@umsl.edu](mailto:jennifer.morton@umsl.edu) or via phone at 314-482-4866.

Once your Informed Consent is submitted, I will send you an email to confirm receipt and provide next steps for your participation in the study.

Thank you.

**Appendix B: Informed Consent****Department of Psychological Sciences**

8001 Natural Bridge Road  
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499  
Telephone: 314-516-5384  
E-mail: [jennifer.morton@mail.umsl.edu](mailto:jennifer.morton@mail.umsl.edu)

**Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities**  
Intercultural Exchange Quality in the Global Workplace

HSC Approval Number \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Morton

PI's Email: [jennifer.morton@mail.umsl.edu](mailto:jennifer.morton@mail.umsl.edu)**What You Will Be Asked to Do:**

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jennifer L. Morton (Graduate Student) and Dr. Ekin Pellegrini (Faculty Advisor). The purpose of this research is to better understand coworker relationships between individuals of different national cultural backgrounds.
2. You were invited to participate in this study because of your successful cross-cultural coworker relationships. Specifically, qualified participants for the current study align with the following criteria:
  - a. Employed at a multinational organization and/or its subsidiary
  - b. Regarded as relationally culturally competent (i.e., individuals who establish and/or maintain quality intercultural relationships) according to one or more of the following sources:
    - i. Human Resources Department (e.g., personal recommendation, performance ratings, or other performance evaluation)
    - ii. Professional colleague (e.g., recent or current coworker)
  - c. Interacts with two or more colleagues of a different national origin
    - i. for an average of 10+ hours per week
    - ii. for at least one year in duration
    - iii. currently or in the last five years

To help ensure your alignment with the focus of the current study, there is a brief screening on the following page.

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3. Your participation will involve three parts: answering interview questions (approximately 1 hour), completing a brief survey about your relationship with two cross-cultural coworkers (approximately 15 minutes), and a short follow-up phone call (5 minutes). The interview portion of this study may be completed in person, via virtual communication, or via phone. The brief survey portion of the study may be completed via paper-and-pencil or online. You will be asked to complete the survey approximately ten days after the interview. During the follow-up phone call, scheduled approximately ten days after the interview, you will be reminded to take the survey and offered an opportunity to add any insights to supplement or clarify your interview responses.

The total amount of time involved in your participation will be about 1 hour and 20 minutes.

4. There are no known risks associated with this research other than the potential for mild boredom or fatigue.
5. There are no direct benefits or compensation for you participating in this study.
6. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or withdraw your consent at any time. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.
7. All data from the present study will be stored on a secure, password protected online survey site and a secure, password protected laptop. Only the primary investigator and faculty advisor will have access to the raw data. Quotes will only be used with the participant's permission, stripped of identifying information.
8. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, neither your identity nor your company's identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection) that would lead to disclosure of your data as well as any other information collected by the researcher.
9. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may contact the Investigator, Jennifer Morton ([jennifer.morton@mail.umsl.edu](mailto:jennifer.morton@mail.umsl.edu)) or the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Pellegrini ([pellegrinie@umsl.edu](mailto:pellegrinie@umsl.edu)). You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research, at 516-5899.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. (You may print a copy of this consent form for your records).

**By checking here, I acknowledge I have read this consent form and hereby consent to participate in the research described above**

- If you do not consent to participate in the research described above, please check this box and then inform the researcher.**

**(Page 2)**

To confirm your eligibility for the study, please answer the following statements as they describe you today or in the last 5 years:

1. I have at least two relationships at work that are:
  - a. **intercultural** (their native language differs from my native language(s))  
  
AND
  - b. **with coworkers** (peers I work alongside at the same level in the organization)

- TRUE
- FALSE

2. My intercultural coworkers are NOT my direct reports or manager; they are my peers in the organization.

- TRUE
- FALSE

3. Others would probably say that I build good intercultural relationships.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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### Appendix C: Pre-Interview Reflection Questions

Hi PARTICIPANT NAME,

This email is to confirm our interview appointment on DATE at TIME and LOCATION.

Prior to our conversation, I'd like to offer you some reflection questions that may help you prepare for the interview. These questions are intended to be an easy way to encourage thoughtful discussion and facilitate our conversation.

*Please note that **no formal or written response is asked of you*** (though you can take notes if you'd like). You can think about them a week in advance, or even on your way to the interview.

**The purpose of these questions is to get you thinking and help you prepare in a simple way.**

#### Reflection Questions to Think About Before the Interview:

- Think about:
  - 1 *high* quality relationship with a coworker who has a different national culture than you
  - 1 *low* quality relationship with a coworker who has a different national culture than you

**Coworker:** Peers at about the same level as you at COMPANY

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**Different national culture:** Coworker's native language differs from your native language(s)

- For each intercultural coworker relationship:
  - Would you describe this coworker relationship as quality, effective, and/or healthy? Why or why not?
  - What aspects of the coworker relationship make it valuable or make it less valuable?
  - How is this relationship unique in comparison with your coworker relationships involving individuals who share your native culture?

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you on DAY/TIME at LOCATION.

## Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

### **Key: Using this Interview Guide**

*Italics = Information given by the researcher to guide the participant and provide explanation*

*ALL CAPS = Fill in as appropriate for each interview*

*\* \* = Action to be taken by the researcher*

***Lettered indentions under each question are optional probing questions, to be used only if needed to elicit richer data or additional detail to provide sufficient understanding of responses. Not all questions will be asked in every interview, and exact question phrasing may vary.***

### **Introduction – 5 minutes**

*Thanks so much for meeting with me today! As you may have heard from COMPANY CONTACT, I am working towards my PhD in I/O psychology at UMSL. Your participation helps support the completion of my dissertation, where I'm trying to learn about what makes a good quality relationship when coworkers bring 2 different cultural backgrounds to the relationship. I'm looking for your help and you are the expert in your relationships. I want to know your perspective!*

*Before we start, I want to remind you that our conversation is for research purposes only. Your individual responses will not be shared with anyone in your company, nor will your name or the company's name be shared in any publications resulting from this study. Only my dissertation advisor, Ekin Pellegrini, and I will have access to individual responses (she will not have access to names, either). Because I'm interested in gaining an accurate and comprehensive understanding of this topic, I want you to feel as comfortable as possible in **sharing the richness of your experiences through details and examples**. Where relevant, direct quotes (excluding identifying information such as names, locations, etc.) may be used to support assertions made in the paper. If there is anything (like a specific example) you'd like to share but are concerned about keeping anonymity, just let me know and I'll stop the recorder so we can figure out if it can be rephrased to be included in the data. If we can't get to phrasing that you feel comfortable with, it will not be included or recorded.*

*Do you have any questions or concerns regarding confidentiality before I turn on the recorder?*

*...*

*\*Turn on recorder\**

### **Opening Questions – 3 minutes**

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*First, I'd like to ask you a few questions to get to know you and your role at COMPANY:*

- 1) Can you give me a sense of how you see your role in the Company?
  - a) What goals are most important for you to achieve in support of the business?
  - b) What goals are most important to you in terms of professional development?
  - c) Do you have any other goals in your position?
- 2) Besides how they relate to work outcomes or performance, how important are coworker relationships to you personally?
  - a) Why?
- 3) What national culture(s) are you a part of (or feel connected to, or are immersed in)?
  - a) How important is your national culture to your identity?
  - b) What role does it play in your life?
  - c) Language?
  - d) Contact with other people of the same culture?
- 4) If the U.S. is a secondary culture, how much do you feel a part of or connected to U.S. culture?
- 5) How would you rate your fluency in English on a scale of 1 (barely able to communicate in English) to 5 (native-like proficiency)?
- 6) Do you speak any other languages besides English and/or LANGUAGE of origin?
  - a) How would you rate your fluency in LANGUAGE on a scale of 1 (barely able to communicate in LANGUAGE) to 5 (native-like proficiency)?

*Thank you – that gives me some helpful background. So, we're here to talk about intercultural (or 'cross-cultural' if that is more familiar) coworker relationships. Those terms can mean different things to different people, so I'll clarify: When I say intercultural, I mean a coworker you consider to be of a different national culture than you. As an example, if you consider yourself to be Chinese American, you might consider anyone who is not Chinese and not U.S. American of a different national culture. When I say "coworker," I mean peers with whom you work that are at about the same level in the organization as you are. This person might be in the same or different department,*

*function, etc. Quite literally, you “work together” towards some kind of work-related goal and are of about equal status in the company.*

*Does that make sense?*

...

*I’m looking forward to learning your insights and perspective about how a quality intercultural coworker relationship is defined. Feel free to give examples where you can, and any other details that might help me understand your perspective.*

### **Initial Thoughts – 3 minutes**

*To get started, I’d like to learn a few of your initial thoughts to the following questions – this is just to get you thinking. We’ll talk about this in greater detail in the rest of the interview.*

- 7) How do you know when a relationship with a coworker from another country is good quality?
  - a) If it is helpful, you can also think about a cross-cultural coworker relationship that you have observed that you noticed was good quality.
- 8) How do you know when a relationship with a coworker from another country is bad quality?
  - a) If it is helpful, you can also think about a cross-cultural coworker relationship that you have observed that you noticed was of poor quality.
  - b) What should people do (or not do) to facilitate quality intercultural relationships at work?
  - c) Can you give me examples?

### **Identifying Coworker Referents – 2 minutes**

- 9) Think of one or two coworkers that are 1) at the same level in the organization and 2) are of a different national culture from you? For example, the coworkers you thought of for the reflection questions. (*NOTE: If Q3 suggests the individual is bicultural, coworker national culture must be different from both of the participant’s identified cultures.*)

*Please do not share specific names. We will refer to each coworker simply as C1 and C2. Ideally, one will be high quality and one will be low quality.*

*It's okay if we spend more or less time talking about each relationship. If there is one relationship you feel most able to discuss in detail compared to the other, we'll start with that first, just in case we run short on time.*

10) From what culture(s) is C1? C2?

*Now I'm going to ask you some questions specific to your relationship with C1. We'll come back to C2 in a few minutes.*

### **Coworker #1 - ~20 minutes**

#### **Nature of Relationship**

11) What do you work on together?

a) How does your role interact with his/her role?

12) How long have you worked together?

13) Do you ever interact outside of work?

a) What do you do?

14) In terms of C1's fluency in English/LANGUAGE mentioned earlier, what would you rate C1's fluency on a scale of 1 (barely able to communicate) to 5 (native-like proficiency)?

#### **Grounding – Quality of Relationship**

15) On a scale of 1 (lowest quality) -10 (highest quality), how would you rate the relationship between you and C1?

16) What makes the relationship a (#)?

a) What would improve the relationship?

b) What's the most difficult part of the relationship?

c) What's the most rewarding aspect of the relationship?

17) If C1 were to rate this relationship, would you expect him/her to give it the same rating or a different rating? Why or why not? (Perceived Mutuality)

#### **Culture Specific – Behaviors Supporting Relationship Quality**

18) What (if any) aspects of your relationship are shaped by your differences in cultural background?

- a) What do they do that you appreciate?
  - b) About what habits or tendencies does C1 exhibit that you feel uncomfortable?
  - c) How do you manage differences due to cultural background?
  - d) How did you learn or notice these differences existed?
  - e) How have you negotiated differing work preferences?
  - f) What compromises or tradeoffs do you make?
  - g) How have you/C1 been flexible?
  - h) Where do you/C1 not compromise? Why?
    - i) What do you do instead?
- 19) How does your cultural background influence how you build the relationship?
- 20) How does C1's cultural background influence how he/she builds the relationship?

### **Broad – Behaviors Supporting Relationship Quality**

- 21) What does C1 do that's important in your relationship?
- a) What kinds of things does C1 do to impact how you see the relationship?
- 22) What do you do to facilitate the quality of the relationship with C1?
- a) Why are these behaviors important to do?

### **Workplace Specific – Behaviors Supporting Relationship Quality**

- 23) Tell me about a recent project or assignment you worked on with C1. How did it go?
- a) How do you partner on projects or assignments at COMPANY?
  - b) How does working at COMPANY influence how you work? For example, do you have very structured roles or do you have leeway in how you get work done with C1?**
  - c) How do you decide who does what?
  - d) How do you make decisions?
  - e) How do you manage timelines?
  - f) How do you get the project done (e.g., establish accountability)?
  - g) How would you personally assess the success of your partnership on a project?
  - h) What do/would you do if C1 performs poorly on a project you did together?  
(How do you give each other *feedback*?)

- i) What do/would you do if C1 performs well on a project you did together? (How do you give each other *feedback*?)
- 24) Tell me about a typical one-on-one meeting between you and C1.
- a) What happens first?
  - b) How do you end the meeting?
  - c) What about when you are in a group meeting setting?
- 25) Thanks for sharing all your insights about your relationship with C1. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your relationship with C1?

*Now we'll go to the next coworker you mentioned, going through the same set of questions.*

### **Coworker #2 - ~20 minutes**

- 26) What do you work on together?
- a) How does your role interact with his/her role?
- 27) How long have you worked together?
- 28) Do you ever interact outside of work?
- a) What do you do?
- 29) In terms of C1's fluency in English/LANGUAGE mentioned earlier, what would you rate C2's fluency on a scale of 1 (barely able to communicate) to 5 (native-like proficiency)?

### **Grounding – Quality of Relationship**

- 30) On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the relationship between you and C2?
- 31) What makes the relationship a (#)?
- a) What would improve the relationship?
  - b) What's the most difficult part of the relationship?
  - c) What's the most rewarding aspect of the relationship?
- 32) If C2 were to rate this relationship, would you expect him/her to give it the same rating or a different rating? Why or why not? (Perceived Mutuality)

### **Culture Specific – Behaviors Supporting Relationship Quality**

- 33) What (if any) aspects of your relationship are shaped by your differences in cultural background?



- a) What habits or tendencies does C2 exhibit that you appreciate?
  - b) What habits or tendencies does C2 exhibit that you find frustrating?
  - c) How do you manage differences due to cultural background?
  - d) How did you learn or notice these differences existed?
  - e) How have you negotiated differing work preferences?
  - f) What compromises or tradeoffs do you make?
  - g) How have you/C2 been flexible?
  - h) Where do you/C2 not compromise? Why?
    - i) What do you do instead?
- 34) How does your cultural background influence how you build the relationship?
- 35) How does C1's cultural background influence how he/she builds the relationship?

### **Broad – Behaviors Supporting Relationship Quality**

- 36) What does C2 do that's important in your relationship?
- a) What kinds of things does C2 do to impact how you see the relationship?
- 37) What do you do to facilitate the quality of the relationship with C2?
- a) Why are these behaviors important to do?

### **Workplace Specific – Behaviors Supporting Relationship Quality**

- 38) Tell me about a recent project you worked on with C2. How did it go?
- a) How do you partner on projects or assignments?
  - b) How do you decide who does what?
  - c) How do you make decisions?
  - d) How do you manage timelines?
  - e) How do you get the project done (e.g., establish accountability)?
  - f) How would you assess the success of your partnership on a project?
  - g) What do/would you do if C2 performs poorly on a project you did together?  
(How do you give each other *feedback*?)
  - h) What do/would you do if C2 performs well on a project you did together? (How do you give each other *feedback*?)
- 39) Tell me about a typical one-on-one meeting between you and C2.
- a) What about when you are in a group meeting setting?

- 40) Thanks for sharing all your insights about your relationship with C2. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your relationship with C2?

### Summary Questions – 5 minutes

*To wrap up, I'm going to ask you the same questions we opened with today, and see if there is anything you'd like to **add or clarify or modify based on our conversation.***

*\*Remind them of what they said at the beginning\**

- 41) Would you like to add or clarify or change anything to your original responses based on our conversation today?
- 42) What should people do (or not do) to facilitate quality intercultural relationships at work?

### Ending the Interview – 1 minute

*Thank you for meeting/speaking with me today. In about 10 days, I would like to follow up to ensure I understand and have accurately recorded your answers, as well as give you an opportunity to share anything else you think of after we wrap up today. When might be a good time for me to call? If you need to check your schedule, I will send you an email to get a time on our calendars. You may also recall that the second component of this study is a brief questionnaire. If you would prefer to complete it online, I will send you the link in 10 days. If you would prefer to fill out a paper version in 10 days and mail it back to me, I have materials available for you to do it that way as well.*

**Appendix E: Survey****(Page 1 – Cultural Intelligence Scale)**

Instructions: Below are 10 statements about one's experience when interacting with people from other cultures. Please indicate to what extent each of the following statements describes you from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely well*).

1. I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different.
2. I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on.
3. I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.
4. I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures.
5. I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.
6. I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people.
7. I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.
8. I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture.
9. I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different.
10. I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people.

**(Page 2 – Multicultural Personality Scale)**

To what extent do the following statements apply to you? Rate each item 1 (*totally not applicable*) to 5 (*completely applicable*).

1. Pay attention to the emotions of others
2. Am inclined to speak out
3. Am a good listener
4. Am often the driving force behind things
5. Sense when others get irritated
6. Make contacts easily
7. Get to know others profoundly
8. Am reserved
9. Enjoy other people's stories
10. Worry
11. Notice when someone is in trouble
12. Get upset easily
13. Sympathize with others
14. Am nervous
15. Set others at ease
16. Am apt to feel lonely
17. Work according to strict rules
18. Keep calm when things don't go well
19. Work according to plan
20. Am insecure
21. Work according to strict scheme
22. Am under pressure
23. Look for regularity in life
24. Am not easily hurt
25. Like routine
26. Try out various approaches
27. Want predictability
28. Look for new ways to attain my goal
29. Function best in a familiar setting
30. Start a new life easily
31. Have fixed habits
32. Like to imagine solutions to problems
33. Take the lead
34. Am a trendsetter in societal developments
35. Leave initiative to others to make contacts
36. Have feeling for what's appropriate in culture
37. Find it difficult to make contacts
38. Seek people from different backgrounds
39. Take initiative
40. Have a broad range of interests

**(Page 3 – Coworker Exchange Scale)**

Keeping in mind Coworker #1\*, discussed in the interview answer the following questions.

1. Do you know where you usually stand with Coworker #1\*...do you usually know how satisfied he/she is with what you do?

Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
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2. How well does Coworker #1\* understand your job problems and needs?

Not a Bit	A Little	A Fair Amount	Quite a Bit	A Great Deal
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3. Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has built into his/her position, what are the chances that Coworker #1\* would use his/her power to help you solve problems in your work?

None	Small	Moderate	High	Very High
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4. Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority Coworker #1\* has, what are the chances he/she would “bail you out,” as his/her expense?

None	Small	Moderate	High	Very High
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5. I have enough confidence in Coworker #1\* that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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6. How would you characterize your working relationship with Coworker #1\*?

Extremely Ineffective	Worse than Average	Average	Better than Average	Extremely Effective
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**(Page 4 – High Quality Connections Scale)**

To what extent do the following statements apply to your relationship with Coworker #1\*? Rate each item 1 (not at all applicable) to 5 (extremely applicable).

1. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I do not have any difficulty expressing our feelings to one other.
2. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I are not afraid to express our unpleasant feelings at work.
3. Whenever, Coworker #1\*, expresses an unpleasant feeling, he/she always does so in a constructive manner.
4. If I get upset with, Coworker #1\*, I know he/she will try to understand me.
5. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I cope well with the conflicts we experience at work.
6. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I cope well with the tensions we experience at work.
7. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I cope well with the pressures experienced at work.
8. Even during times of stress and pressure, my co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I always manage to find effective solutions.
9. Even when we are very busy and under pressure at work, my co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I maintain a good relationship.
10. After my co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I overcome major crises or periods of tension together, our relationship is stronger, not weaker.
11. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I are always open to listening to each other's new ideas.
12. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I are very open to diverse influences, even if they come from unconventional sources, such as new employees, customers, etc.
13. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I are attentive to new opportunities that can make our system more efficient and effective.
14. My co-worker, Coworker #1\*, and I know how to accept people who are different.

\*Repeat for Coworker #2 as applicable.

**(Page 5 – Financial Interest Scale)**

Below are several things that people sometimes do. Please indicate HOW FREQUENTLY you have done each of them using the scale below.

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1	2	3	4	5
NEVER in my life	Not in the past year	ONCE or TWICE in the past year	THREE or MORE times in the past year, but not more than 15 times	MORE THAN 15 TIMES in the past year

1. Obtained stock market prices.
2. Read a book on a financial topic.
3. Bought or sold stocks or bonds.
4. Bought or sold real estate.
5. Purchased a commodity as an investment.
6. Worked on a retirement plan.

**(Page 6 – Social Desirability Scale)**

To what extent do the following statements apply to you? Answer “true” if the statement describes you, or “false” if the statement does not describe you.

1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
3. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener
4. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
5. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
6. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
7. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
8. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
9. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
10. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable
11. I have never been irked when people express ideas very different from my own.
12. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
13. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.
14. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.



**(Page 7 – Demographic Questions)**

The following information will only be used for classification purposes:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your marital status?
  - a. Divorced
  - b. Married
  - c. Separated
  - d. Never married/Single
  - e. Widowed
4. With what race(s) do you most closely identify?
  - a. White
  - b. Hispanic or Latino
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Native American or American Indian
  - e. Asian / Pacific Islander
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. With what national culture(s) do you most closely identify?
  - a. *(drop-down list of 196 countries)*
6. If you do not identify with the country's culture where you currently reside (e.g., U.S. American working in Mexico),
  - a. How long have you lived there?
  - b. How long have you worked there?
7. What languages do you speak, including your native language?
  - a. *(drop-down list of 50 most widely spoken languages)*
  - b. Please rate your proficiency to speak each language you noted above.
    - i. 1 – Elementary proficiency
    - ii. 2 – Limited working proficiency
    - iii. 3 – Professional working proficiency
    - iv. 4 – Full professional proficiency
    - v. 5 – Native or bilingual proficiency
8. Please indicate your highest level of education completed:
  - a. High School or equivalent
  - b. Vocational/Technical School
  - c. Some college
  - d. Bachelor's Degree
  - e. Master's Degree
  - f. Ph.D., M.D., or J.D.
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your current employment status?
  - a. Full-time
  - b. Part-time
10. How long have you been working for your current employer?
11. What is your role in this organization? Please select all that apply.

- a. Administrative/Support Staff
  - b. Skilled Laborer
  - c. Individual Contributor/Trained Professional
  - d. Junior Management
  - e. Middle Management
  - f. Senior Management
  - g. C-Level Management
  - h. Partner
  - i. Owner
  - j. Other\_\_\_\_\_
12. In what department do you work?
- a. Accounting
  - b. Administrative
  - c. Customer Service
  - d. Marketing
  - e. Operations
  - f. Human Resources
  - g. Sales
  - h. Finance
  - i. Legal
  - j. IT
  - k. Engineering
  - l. Product
  - m. Research & Development
  - n. International
  - o. Business Intelligence
  - p. Manufacturing
  - q. Public Relations
  - r. Other \_\_\_\_\_
13. Which of the following best describes the industry in which you work?
- a. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
  - b. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
  - c. Computer and Electronics Manufacturing
  - d. Construction
  - e. Finance and Insurance
  - f. Health Care and Social Assistance
  - g. Hospitality, Hotel, and Food Services
  - h. Information Services and Data Processing
  - i. Legal Services
  - j. Media and Advertising
  - k. Mining
  - l. Manufacturing
  - m. Publishing
  - n. Real Estate, Rental and Leasing
  - o. Retail
  - p. Scientific or Technical Services

- q. Software
- r. Telecommunications
- s. Transportation and Warehousing
- t. Utilities
- u. Other Industry\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your cooperation and support of this study.  
I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you have expended to respond.**

## Appendix F: Category Tables

<b>Category 1: Workplace Context</b>				
<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Multicultural Work Environment</b>	Multicultural workforce	Dispersion of multicultural diversity		Low to High Dispersion
		Multicultural diversity of coworkers		Low to High Coworker Diversity
	Multicultural diversity of customers			Low to High Customer Diversity
	Multicultural diversity of organizational leadership			Low to High Diversity
<b>FIT Culture</b>	Fairness of work policies and procedures	Procedural justice		Low to High Justice
		Distributive justice		Low to High Justice
		Informational justice		Low to High Justice
		Interpersonal justice		Low to High Justice
	Inclusive workplace practices			Low to High Inclusion
	Transparency of organizational goals			Low to High Transparency

<b>Category 2: Personal Characteristics</b>				
<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Property</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
<b>Multicultural Connectedness</b>	Multicultural connectedness in personal life			Low to High Connectedness
	Multicultural connectedness in professional life			Low to High Connectedness
<b>Motivation</b>	Social connection			Low to High Motivation
	Achievement			Low to High Motivation
	Personal growth & development			Low to High Motivation

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<b>Interpersonal Practices</b>	Cultural self-awareness			Low to High Awareness
	Empathy	Skill-based empathy		Low to High Empathy
		Personality-based empathy		Low to High Empathy
	Humility			Low to High Humility
	Dependability			Low to High Dependability

<b>Category 3: Interdependent Contribution</b>				
Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
<b>Work-related Effort</b>	Intentionality			Low to High Intentionality
	Tenacity			Low to High Tenacity
<b>Work-related Talent</b>	Skills			Low to Highly Skilled
	Knowledge			Low to High Knowledge
<b>Work Intersection</b>	Goal support			Low to High Level of Support
	Role clarity			Low to High Clarity
	Work success			Low to High Success
<b>Work Value</b>	Organizational value			Low to High Value
	Personal value			Low to High Value

<b>Category 4: Investment</b>				
Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Affective Investment				Low to High Investment
Behavioral Investment				Low to High Investment
Cognitive Investment				Low to High Investment

<b>Category 5: Development of a Shared Understanding</b>				
Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Tabula Rasa (Level 0)	Assumption of unfamiliarity			Low to High Unfamiliarity
	Willingness to delay drawing conclusions			Low to High Willingness
	Acknowledgment of potential cultural differences			Low to High Acknowledgement
	Acknowledgement of shared humanity			Low to High Acknowledgement
Authentic Interest in Coworker (Level 1)	Cultural learning	Learning strategy		Simple to Advanced
		Learning motivation	Curiosity	Low to High Curiosity
			Challenge	Low to High Challenge
	Respectful empathy	Perspective taking	Consideration of culture	Low to High Consideration
			Consideration of individual differences	Low to High Consideration
		Concern		Low to High Concern
Reconciliation of Differences (Level 2)	Respectful discussion of differences			Low to High Respect
	Leveraging differences for a purpose			Low to High Leveraging
	Mutual flexibility			Low to High Flexibility
Norms for Interaction (Level 3)	Communication style	Clarity		Low to High Clarity
		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence
	Use of language	Clarity		Low to High Clarity

		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence
	Behavioral norms	Clarity		Low to High Clarity
		Alignment		Low to High Alignment
		Practical adherence		Low to High Practical Adherence

<b>Category 6: Comfort</b>				
Subcategory	1 <sup>st</sup> Level Property	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level Property	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Property	Dimensions
Openness in Communication	Transparency			Low to High Transparency
	Accessibility			Low to High Accessibility
Mutually Desired Closeness	Alignment			Low to High Alignment
	Personal disclosure			Low to High Personal Disclosure
Congeniality				Low to High Congeniality
Interpersonal Trust	Work values alignment			Low to High Alignment
	Integrity			Low to High Integrity
	Positive intent			Low to High Positive Intent