

**DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS: THE ROLE OF CULTURAL  
INTELLIGENCE AND CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES  
DURING INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT**



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Thematic paper  
entitled  
**DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS: THE ROLE OF CULTURAL  
INTELLIGENCE AND CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES  
DURING INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT**

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Thanyaporn Limkriangkrai

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**ABSTRACT**

Experience in the international assignment is a significant opportunity for staff working in multinational companies. Analysing experiences of 8 mid-level managers and above for their cultural intelligence levels; motivational CQ (drive), cognitive CQ (knowledge), meta-cognitive CQ (strategy) and behavioral CQ (action), are utilized during each stage of the international assignment: preparation stage, assignment stage, and repatriation stage. This research studies how those experiences develop the dynamic cross-cultural competencies through cross-cultural experiences and related personal characteristics that effectively impact on work performance to be future leaders. The results suggest the companies to provide intensive preparation training both language and cultural aspects for the staff to reduce unnecessary barriers.

**KEY WORDS:** Cultural Intelligence/ International Assignment/ Cross-cultural Experiences/ Future Leaders/ Cross-cultural Competencies

42 pages

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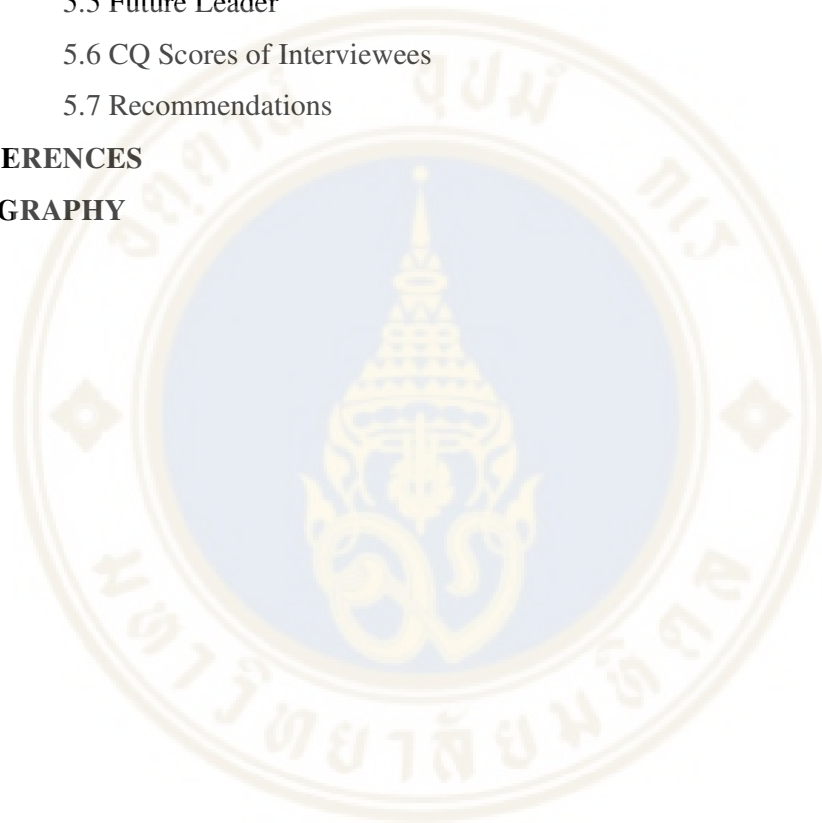
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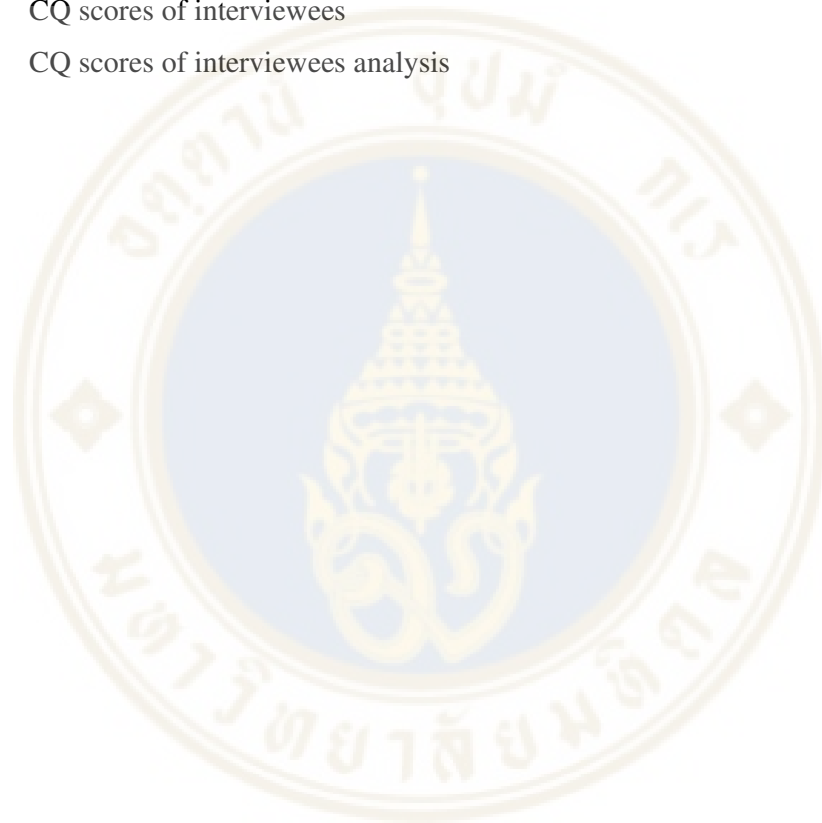
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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many multinational companies provide the opportunities for staff to work in an international assignment program. This is one of the strategies to encourage staff to work in the global environment and prepare them to be future leaders. However, there is still a limitation to select staff in the program. The duration of the program covers a few months to several years depending on the destination. Some staff successfully complete the program. Some do not finish the entire program and need to be repatriated before the assignment end, while some finish the program but have a difficult living and working life during their assignment. During selection process, technical and language skills are examined via a test and an interview session. Working with other aspects is gathered from the candidates' coaches and an overall confirmation from the program committee. However, the understanding and the perceptions of the differences in cultures, norms, working styles have not been investigated in each candidate leading to a lack of preparation in the cultural diversity aspect. On the other hand, the company itself also welcomes international assignment manager and above from other member firms from many countries under the international assignment program. Comparing to the Thai staff, most of the expats under the international assignment program have been successfully completed a program without a complication in living and working. Therefore, this paper will find the linkage of cultural intelligence (CQ) level that affects the cultural learning via experiences of international assignees, who have an international assignment experience. The program is also an advancement for a talent to be a future leader. Cultural competence is one of the important competence to be an effective leader in the global working environment. If the importance of cultural competence in the global working environment is in a high level, the program should facilitate the proper cultural training to future Thai staff to succeed in an international assignment as a future leader.

Nowadays, working environment limits not only in a person's country of origin, neighboring countries having close social norms and beliefs, but also other

countries all over the world with cultural diversity. Specification of each culture cannot be taught in school to prepare the youngling for the future global working environment. One way to learn and understand those differences is learning from experience. The more they see, the more they interpret and reflect through their own action.

Working in the multinational company is the advantage to observe, involve, and see the different points of view from various nationalities of mid-management to top management level. As leaders perform their jobs in many different countries, it is not only their best performance or providing huge profit to the company to make them survive in the business world, but also their perception and deep understanding of cultures, which are different from their cultural intelligence, to understand and accept others whom they are working with which will affect them to be global leaders effectively.

This study focuses on the importance of cultural intelligence that impacts on learning of international assignees who were and have been being in the international assignment program to be the effective global leader. The study aims to find the key cross-cultural experiences that the international assignees learn from their international assignment, the factors that they adapt to survive during their international assignment, and cross-cultural experiences they bring back and adapt to use as the future leader.

## **CHAPTER II**

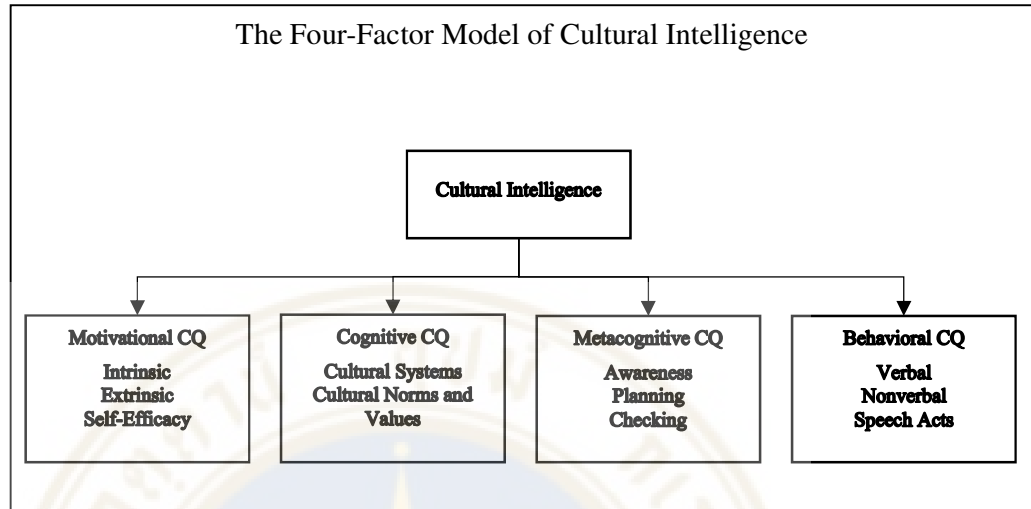
### **LITERATURE REVIEWS**

Working in the multinational companies allows working across countries, particularly the international assignment program. In a global environment, meeting people having different nationalities, languages, habits, traditions, beliefs, mindsets, etc. is unavoidable, especially leaders who play an important role in the multinational companies. Ng (2009) reported that the emphasising on the international assignment in many multinational companies was a part of the global leadership development programs. The study also mentioned about how to make the best leadership development out of staff who has been assigned in the international assignment. This has led to the study of learning process to cope with the cultural diversity. However, there is still an unclear process of how leader learns from international experience. The work discussed deeper about the processes of interpreting international experience to a person's learning and enhancing their effectiveness. The factors of leader also increase individual in learning process. Thus, it has the relationship between the experiential learning theory and cultural intelligence framework. Learning from experiences also shape leaders to enhance their effectiveness in international assignment. Global leadership competence includes the high level of culture understanding and affects the global leadership effectiveness.

#### **2.1 Cultural Intelligence (CQ)**

The word IQ stands for an intelligence quotient which is measured from one's cognitive capability while EQ (emotional intelligence) tells the capability of mindfulness of a person in their emotion. The cultural intelligence or CQ is an effectiveness of a person to understand and the ability to adapt to the difference of cultural diversity. The understanding of cultural diversity is rooted in a four-factor framework of cultural intelligence consisting of motivational CQ, cognitive CQ,

metacognitive CQ and behavioral CQ as shown in Figure 2.1 (Van Dyne, Ang, & Livermore, 2010).



**Figure 2.1 Four-factor model of Cultural Intelligence**

### 2.1.1 Motivational CQ

Self-interest of a person in the cultural differences motivates the person to understand and adapt to the different cultures. It is the confidence to accept the change that relatively happens in each person's life including the drive inside and outside of a person to adopt cultural diversification. Motivational CQ comprises of intrinsic motivation – the pleasure of a person to face a cultural diverse situation, extrinsic motivation – an external plus tangible thing that drives one gain an advantage in facing the diverse cultural situations, and self-efficacy – a belief of a person in their capability to pass the diversified cultural confrontation effectively (Van Dyne et al., 2010).

### 2.1.2 Cognitive CQ

A knowledge dimension relates to cultural diversity. It is how a person understands the differences in cultural diversity and the role of culture to form the way to process in such cultural differences. On the other hand, the understanding of the different societies of cultural norms and values in each culture can be emphasized on time, economy, family matters, educational systems, politics, languages, and religious beliefs, etc. Knowledge of cultural diversity includes culture-general knowledge – major

factors that form each culture, and context-specific knowledge – how those cultures demonstrate effectively in a specific society (Van Dyne et al., 2012).

### **2.1.3 Metacognitive CQ**

Metacognitive CQ is the capability of a person to strategize when facing cultural diversity. This CQ includes awareness (awareness of oneself, others and situations happened in real-time) and planning (preparing a suitable approach to cope with cultural diversity situations). To strategize an effective planning, person needs to plan ahead for themselves to reach what they want, plan ahead for others to reach what others want, plan ahead for the action resulting in such situations and plan ahead for checking to assure whether a plan executed and expectation anticipated are suitable (Van Dyne et al., 2010).

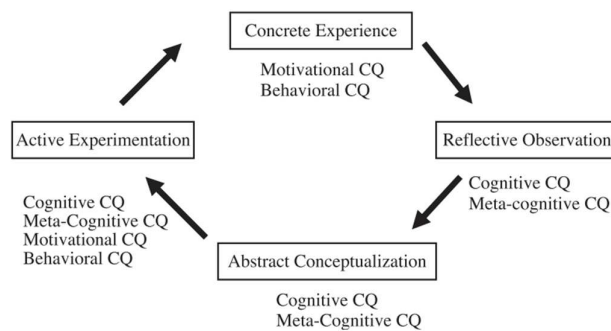
### **2.1.4 Behavioral CQ**

Behavioral CQ is the action of both verbal and non-verbal which changes appropriately when involving and interacting in cultural diversity. This includes the capability to communicate more flexible both verbal and non-verbal (Van Dyne et al., 2010).

More details in the impact of CQ capabilities on a learning from experiences of global leaders are described in the next section. According to Ng's research (2009), experiential learning theory can be mapped with cultural intelligence.

## **2.2 Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and CQ relationship**

The ELT model presents two factors (grasping and transforming experiences) with four learning stages as shown in Figure 2.2. Grasping experience contains concrete experience (CE) and abstract conceptualisation (AC) (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). Transforming experience contains reflective observation (RO) and active experimentation (AE). Figure 2.2 shows that the ability of global leaders to learn from experience is impacted by their CQ capabilities (Ng, 2009).



**Figure 2.2 Learning stages in the experiential learning theory and enabling CQ capabilities**

### 2.2.1 Concrete Experience (CE)

CE is a learning of each person from their experiences in interaction with tangible things and a trust of their sensing. Those experiences through tangible things and sensing build a solid or concrete experience to that person. CE matches with motivational CQ through the effectiveness of interaction in cross-cultural environment. CE also matches with behavioral CQ in the ability to show appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions in the cultural diversity situation. These will create a positive belief and will develop significant intercultural experiences becoming a concrete experience (Ng, 2009).

### 2.2.2 Reflective Observation (RO)

RO is learning from observing others. It relates to cognitive CQ and meta-cognitive CQ. A person who has high cognitive CQ will have an effective understanding and right interpretation in the cultural context, whereas a high meta-cognitive CQ person will think thoroughly of a cultural interaction process. Both CQs will reflect their learning from within themselves to an external environment (Ng, 2009).

### 2.2.3 Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)

AC is perceiving experiences or information via symbolic presentation as an abstract concept in their learning process. AC also relates to cognitive and meta-

cognitive CQs which emphasize thinking more than impression. Thus, both CQs develop the ideas of cultural context which is abstract, on the other hand, conceptual interpretation (Ng, 2009).

#### **2.2.4 Active Experimentation (AE)**

AE is a transformation of the experiences through a person's action by absorbing themselves into a situation and begin doing things on their own. AE includes all factors of CQ, starting from cognitive CQ — a person with high cognitive CQ is likely to understand more in a culture, combining with a high meta-cognitive CQ, a clear goal and a clear process to deal with cultural diversity. The motivational CQ will also drive an effective interaction in cultural context. Then, the behavioral CQ will interpret and implement both verbal and non-verbal actions in the cultural diversity situation (Ng, 2009).

A study of (Ng, 2009) shows a linkage between the four-factor of CQ and ELT that if a leader has a low in one factor of CQ, it will impact the effectiveness of the experiential learning of that leader.

### **2.3 Typology of Organizational International Career Logics**

As per Mayrhofer's explanation, the multinational company sends staff to international assignment program for three reasons; exchanging technical skills (e.g. know-how and qualification), developing managerial efficiency via international opportunities, and human capital investment. There are two aspects to define expats, i.e. sending them for control and management, or sending them for development. For sending staff to the international assignment program for control and management aspect, headquarter usually sends staff to control relationship and influence managerial strategy both formal and informal approach between headquarter and foreign subsidiaries and among subsidiaries themselves (Mayrhofer, 2001).

In case of sending staff for development aspect, it has three focuses as follows:

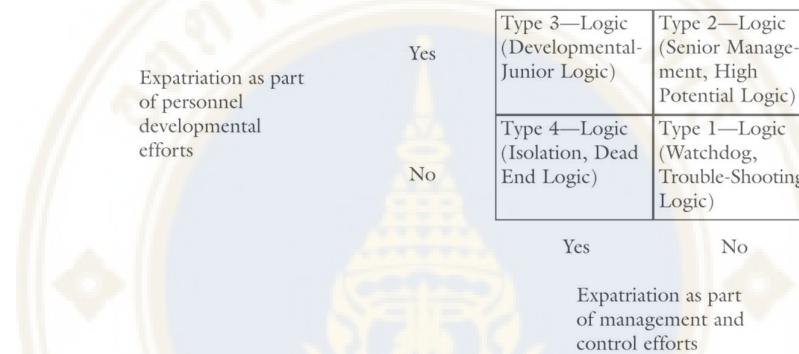
1. an impact on expat's qualification – from the enhancement of learning day-to-day jobs



2. a development on intercultural competence – staff can learn from the differences of people in various nationalities as well as actions and behavior of those people.

3. a development on career and promotion in the future – staff can learn not only technical skills, but also managerial skills which prepare them for a career development (Mayrhofer, 2001).

According to two aspects defined expats as mentioned above, there are four ideal types of Organizational international career logics (OICLs), as shown in Figure 2.3 (Mayrhofer, 2001).



**Figure 2.3 Typology of organizational international career logics (OICLs)**

Type 1 logics – expats who are under this type are primarily assigned for management and control aspect with little personnel development. However, management and control efforts have been executed just in line with the business because under this logic, a situation is under crisis. Thus, this OICL is called as a Watchdog or Trouble-Shooting logic (Mayrhofer, 2001).

Type 2 logics – expats need immediate integration and coordination task with a personnel development. Parts of these assignments acquire mid-level leadership aspects from expats. This logic is for expats from headquarter assigned to another country to gain more relationship, social network and coordination, and to develop their leadership competence. This OICL logic is called as Senior-management or High-potential logic.

Type 3 logics – both personnel development as well as management and control efforts are emphasized. Personnel development has been expanded through international experience and relationship with others while management and control efforts are essential. This logic is for junior expat managers from headquarter and is called as Developmental or Junior logic.

Type 4 logics – both personnel development as well as management and control efforts have nothing to do with them. A logic of this assignment is a kind of punishment to the expats or whom are politically dangerous rivals to the company. This logic is called as Isolation or Dead-end logic.

The multinational company can send staff to the international assignment to enhance the cultural aspect which is one of the competencies that make a global leader successful (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012).

## **2.4 Global Leadership Competencies**

Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) mentioned that the successful global leaders in global working environment were in the global leadership development program and were in the international assignment. The one goal was to develop global leadership competence related to the performance of global leadership tasks. Dynamic cross-cultural competence also drive the performance of global leaders which impact the global leadership effectiveness. Global leadership competencies include as follows:

### **2.4.1 Dynamic cross-cultural competencies**

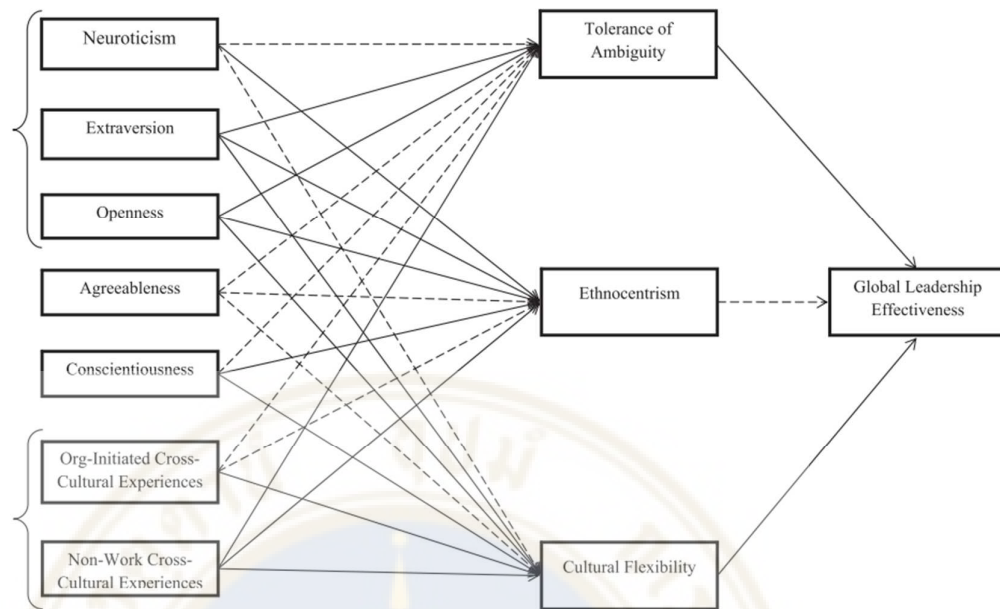
Dynamic cross-cultural competencies comprise of three solid competencies including a reduction in ethnocentrism and respect cultural diversity, cultural flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity. Ethnocentrism is an individual's nationalistic self-centeredness. Cultural flexibility is a person who can enjoy other activities in the host countries. The high level of cultural flexibility can increase global leadership effectiveness. Tolerance of ambiguity is the degree of one to handle an uncertainty, whether it is new, unlike, or unexpected situation (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012).

### **2.4.2 Cross-cultural experiences**

A cross-cultural experience from a study of Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) presents two ways of learning cross-culture experiences consisting of non-work cross-cultural experiences and organization-initiated cross-cultural experiences. Non-work cross-cultural experiences are found for example in family matters — how well a person has been raised in family diversity, and daily life experiences, whether that person has an opportunity to study or travel abroad which can reduce ethnocentrism but increase cultural-flexibility. Organization-initiated cross-cultural experiences are learning from a specific task assigned from the organization, e.g. listening, noticing, dealing with uncertainty, dealing with others and transforming complicated ideas.

### **2.4.3 Personality characteristics**

Characteristics of individual impact directly to a person's personality when dealing with an international context. As cited by Caligiuri and Tarique (2012), Costa and McCrae (1992) mentioned that personality characteristics were marked by the big five personalities, but in the study of Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) the personality characteristics were marked by three personalities: openness to experience, extraversion and neuroticism, as shown in Figure 2.4. Openness to experience is a character of a person who is original, thinking forward, curious and not afraid of taking risks. Extraversion is the sociable level, gabby and searching social activities of individuals. Naturally, extroverts are easily sociable and determine to lay the effort and interact with others effectively. Neuroticism is the tolerance of a person that individually deals with stress, anxiety and unsafety. The high neuroticism person is more likely than average to be stressful, anxious, feeling unsafe and nervous while the low neuroticism person tends to be calmer and more unflappable.

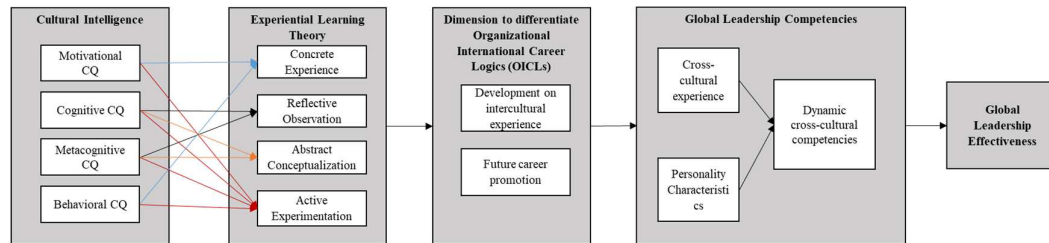


The variables in brackets include the hypothesized relationships. The variables in the upper brackets are the personality characteristics included in the hypotheses and the lower brackets include the cross-cultural experiences included in the hypotheses. Solid lines indicate statistically significant relationships and dotted lines indicate non-significant relationships.

**Figure 2.4 The hypothesized relationships of personality characteristics (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012)**

## 2.5 Conclusion

As per above mentioned literature reviews, the research model of this paper will use cultural intelligence or CQ, which impacts experiential learning in the cultural aspects, from staff's experience in international career. One part of the dimensions to differentiate organizational international career logics is to invest in human capital which is developing them in the intercultural experience and promoting them a future career. The effect of the cross-cultural experience and the personality characteristics development also forecast the level of dynamic cross-cultural competencies that drive performances. Those performances indicate the effectiveness of the global leader.



**Figure 2.5 Literature framework**



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Primary Collection Data Method**

This study conducted using qualitative methodology technique with an in-depth interview to discover human behavior. The qualitative methodology is known for interpreting words more than collecting numbers. On the other hand, the questions will focus on the word “What”, “How” and “Why” more than “How many” and “How much” (Nouria Bricki, 2007).

#### **3.2 Interview Method**

The in-depth interview was applied to focus on the interviewees' experiences and their impacts on those experiences (Kothari, 2004). The interview method was as follows:

##### **3.2.1 Sample Selection**

Eight interviewees of Thai people and expats who have experienced international assignment (international assignee) were selected. The list of interviewees is shown in Table 3.1. The interviewees have worked under the same multinational company in different countries in the period of time. The international assignment program of the sample multinational company had the purpose to enhance staff's career growth to prepare them for the next career level, and the assigned staff could learn cultural differences that they would acquire broaden experiences to handle more complex work environment.

**Table 3.1 List of interviewees**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Country of Assignment</b>	<b>Duration of international experience</b>	<b>Gender</b>
A	American	Partner	Thailand	2 years	Male
B	Japanese	Manager	Thailand	2 years	Male
C	Japanese	Manager	Thailand	2 years	Male
D	Malaysian	Senior Manager	Thailand	8 months	Male
E	Thai	Manager	Singapore	8 months	Female
F	Thai	Director	USA	20 months	Female
G	Thai	Senior Manager	Canada	18 months	Female
H	Thai	Manager	Germany	2 years	Male

### **3.2.2 CQ self-assessment questionnaire**

This part used questions to assess interviewees' basic CQ which is an effectiveness of a person to understand and the ability to adapt to the cultural diversity (Dyne et al., 2010). The questions were asked to reflect the basic CQ scores of interviewees in 3 areas: cognitive CQ (knowledge of cultural diversity), behavioral CQ (Physical CQ, an action to interact with cultural diversity), and motivational CQ (motivation to understand cultural diversity). These questions would help them recollect their past experiences to be beneficial for an interview. A score equal to 3 or below is considered as an area for improvement while score 4 and 5 are considered as CQ strength (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

Rate the extent to which you agree with each statement, using the scale:  
**1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.**

---

\_\_\_\_\_ Before I interact with people from a new culture, I ask myself what I hope to achieve.

\_\_\_\_\_ If I encounter something unexpected while working in a new culture, I use this experience to figure out new ways to approach *other* cultures in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan how I'm going to relate to people from a different culture before I meet them.

+ \_\_\_\_\_ When I come into a new cultural situation, I can immediately sense whether something is going well or something is wrong.

Total \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 4 =  **Cognitive CQ**

---

\_\_\_\_\_ It's easy for me to change my body language (for example, eye contact or posture) to suit people from a different culture.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can alter my expression when a cultural encounter requires it.

\_\_\_\_\_ I modify my speech style (for example, accent or tone) to suit people from a different culture.

+ \_\_\_\_\_ I easily change the way I act when a cross-cultural encounter seems to require it.

Total \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 4 =  **Physical CQ**

---

\_\_\_\_\_ I have confidence that I can deal well with people from a different culture.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am certain that I can befriend people whose cultural backgrounds are different from mine.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can adapt to the lifestyle of a different culture with relative ease.

+ \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident that I can deal with a cultural situation that's unfamiliar.

Total \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 4 =  **Emotional/  
motivational CQ**

**Figure 3.1 CQ questions (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004)**

### 3.2.3 Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are designed for interviewees to revert to their convenient responses and their own words (Kothari, 2004). The questions aim to focus on interviewees' experiences. Thus, the open-ended questions were used in the interviews in this research. The list of open-ended questions used is shown in Table 3.2.



**Table 3.2 List of open-ended questions**

<b>International Assignment Stages</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
Preparation Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have you ever experienced living in other countries before going to international assignment program?</li> <li>2. Why did you decide to enrol in international assignment?</li> <li>3. What was the purpose of your assignment from the company perspective?</li> <li>4. How did you prepare yourself for the assignment?</li> <li>5. Was there anybody whom you can talk to about the assignment, role and responsibility, and life and family preparation?</li> <li>6. Did you research information about the assigned country before or any training you prepared for the assignment?</li> </ol>
Assignment Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Was it the same or different from what you had prepared yourself?</li> <li>8. Was it easy to work in other countries?</li> <li>9. Could you give a sample of any situations in facing cultural diversity (whether they were bad or good) in international assignment?</li> <li>10. How did you cope with those?</li> <li>11. Did that change your perspective on those people?</li> </ol>

**Table 3.2 List of open-ended questions (cont.)**

Repatriation Stage	<p>12. Do you think that experiencing the different cultures impact your assignment? Any burdens or benefits?</p> <p>13. Did you bring any experiences in cultural diversity to use in the home/current work country?</p>
Future Leader	<p>14. In your perspective, does international assignment help you grow faster in your career?</p> <p>15. Do you think the international assignment help you in leadership skill? How?</p> <p>16. How does cultural experience impact the way you work?</p> <p>17. What are the important competencies if you want to be a global leader?</p>

#### **3.2.4 Interview techniques**

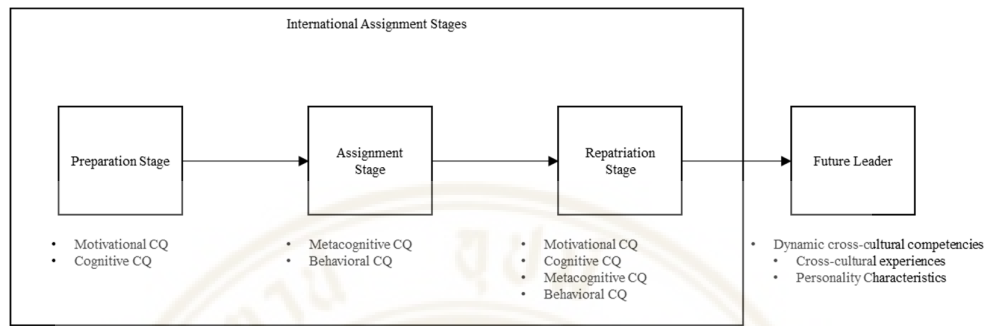
Probing technique was used in this research. This technique asks the interviewees to clarify each of their answers during an interview (Carbone, Campbell, & Honess-Morreale, 2002); it suits the questions that ask about experience.

### **3.3 Research Framework**

The research framework focuses on the cross-cultural experiences that happened in each stage of the international assignment and how those cultural experiences helped the interviewees to be future leaders (Figure 3.2).

To gather and interpret information from the interviews, study of Van Dyne et al. (2010) was used to explain every stages of an international assignment: the preparation stage, the assignment stage and the repatriation stage. Global leader competencies of the study of Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) would explain that future

leaders gained from cross-cultural experiences plus their personality characteristics that built the dynamic cross-cultural competencies.



**Figure 3.2 Research Framework**

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study aims to discover the cultural diversity experiences of the international assignees and how the international assignees learnt from those experiences and adapted themselves to survive during the assignment period. The study conducted using an in-depth interview. The questions that interviewees were asked were focused on the level of cultural intelligence of each interviewee that they were before their assignments and reflected 3 out of 4 factors of cultural intelligence. Moreover, the study investigates a relevance that interviewees brought those cultural experiences to use after they were repatriated to their home countries as a future leader in their roles and responsibilities.

After the interviews, the qualitative data was analyzed into 5 topics: motivation to go abroad, preparation for working abroad, barriers, adaptability, and key take-away. 5 topics have been summarized from the common and interesting aspects that interviewees received from their assignments in each country.

#### 4.1 CQ Characteristics of Interviewees

**Table 4.1 CQ scores of interviewees**

<b>Interviewee List</b>	<b>Cognitive CQ</b>	<b>Behavioral CQ (Physical CQ)</b>	<b>Motivational CQ</b>
<b>A</b>	3.5	3.25	3
<b>B</b>	3.5	4.75	5
<b>C</b>	4	4.5	4
<b>D</b>	3.75	4.75	3.75

**Table 4.1 CQ scores of interviewees (cont.)**

<b>E</b>	4.5	4	4
<b>F</b>	2.75	4	2.75
<b>G</b>	3.5	3.75	4.75
<b>H</b>	3.75	3.5	4.25

Table 4.1 shows summary results of CQ scores of interviewees. Score range is from 1 to 5; score of 3 is in a middle, score below 3 refers to a need for improvement, and score above 3 is a strength. According to the results, most of the interviewees' scores in each CQ were in the middle to strength. Among 8 interviewees, only interviewee F had cognitive CQ and motivational CQ in the need for improvement area. This was because interviewee F had no time to prepare herself much because of many tough jobs before leaving the home country.

## **4.2 Preparation Stage**

To push themselves in an international assignment, what did push the interviewees to cross over the challenge from the inside and outside? What did motivate them to make a decision and go for an international assignment? How open were they to the unknown information of the countries? Concerning the preparation stage, the following topics were mentioned in the interviews.

### **4.2.1 Motivation to go abroad: Career growth**

One of the motivations that drove interviewees to enrol in an international assignment was the long-term growth in the career path. All interviewees recognized the advantage of having international working experience would help them go faster and longer in the career. The faster is to compare at the same job level, it tends to who has an international working experience will go faster in the career. The longer is such international experience will carry along with staff which can be used anytime to maximize work in the company.

6 out of 8 interviewees discussed about changing their work environment for their career growth. Interviewees noted about expanding their opportunities for the next career step when they were repatriated to their home country. Interviewee A mentioned “it is a great deal to move to the next level”. Back in 2004, interviewee A had been advised by his supervisor that there were not so many American staff to enrol in an international assignment especially in Southeast Asia countries while European countries were more popular. Many multinational clients also have expanded to Southeast Asia. Thus, his international experience would give an advantage to his future career path, unlike any others. Interviewee B mentioned that “in my work industry, if you have both technical skill and English skill, especially from working abroad experience, they will be an advantage for your career in the future”. In Japan, several professions require a professional license specifically in their work area before working in any company. Thus, technical knowledge is required as a foundation. However, from interviewee B’s point of view, English skill from working abroad experience cannot be found in general. Therefore, an advantage in career growth will be enhanced from international assignment experience. Interviewee C also mentioned quite the same as interviewee B with an additional that “it is hard for my office to promote staff to the next level because of a limitation of a headcount in each position but I did my best to be eligible and capable of”. A limitation of headcount would restrain a career promotion in the case of interviewee C, however, he yet pursued an opportunity to be more advantageous and be the potential candidate for future career growth in the company.

Interviewees E and G noted the same that situation to experience working life in other countries proved that they were ready for the next level. Interviewee F mentioned that “to gain more experience in other countries proves that I can do anything no matter they are tough assignments”. Interviewee F had been assigned to the United States. In her opinion, the United States is one of the toughest countries to work and live. Thus, if she pass an assignment, she will be more than ready to the next level.

The interviewees pointed out determinedly the strong potential to grow in their career by experiencing in an international assignment. Thus, this theme is one of the main reasons that motivates interviewees to seek the opportunities to go to an international assignment.

#### **4.2.2 Motivation to go abroad: Challenging new experiences**

Apart from career growth, another motivation aspect from the findings was interviewees preferred to challenge themselves in the different environments, to live in different cultures, and to explore new experiences from living and working in other countries.

It was found that 3 out of 8 interviewees emphasized their high interest in cultural diversity, living in other countries with different cultures, and also challenging themselves to work in a new working environment. Interviewee A mentioned that “a country I enrolled need to have a different culture from the United States. I also did not pick a country in Europe because it is quite similar to the United States so in an application I picked the countries in Asia. The result was Thailand”. This shows a high interest in the cultural diversity of interviewee A. He would like to explore a new experience in the country he have never been before. Choosing a country in Europe is not his challenge because the environments of working and living are not much different from the United States. Interviewee C had the experiences to be a 1-year exchange student in the United States during high school and had a 6-week outbound training experience in Hong Kong before coming to Thailand. His outbound training program was a coordination on the job training between two member firms to work in a specific client which was the client of both member firms. He mentioned that “it was exciting to meet people in the environment you had no idea about. My previous outbound training in Hong Kong gave me a valuable time though I was inactive in this training from the start. I had later changed my mind as that country and the people were very nice to me and it was not too difficult to work and live in another country. That was one of the reasons to enrol for working in an international assignment”. Interviewee C is inactive because he have no high expectation to receive any other good experiences apart from a knowledge from a short training in Hong Kong. On the other hand, he receives a warm welcome and a motive training environment which make him change his mind about working in other countries. From those unexpected good experiences, he challenges himself to enrol in an international assignment afterwards. Interviewee D mentioned that “in the application form, I chose countries that people did not speak the same language as me as well as did not have similar work environment to mine because I wanted to explore myself in other cultures”. This interviewee had a one-year study

experience in the UK after he graduated Bachelor's degree. He came from Malaysia where people commonly speaks English and Chinese Mandarin same as Singapore. From his point of view, both Malaysia and Singapore cultures were almost the same. He showed his great interest to experience himself in the country he had never been before. That was a reason he picked Thailand in the first rank.

All interviewees clearly told their stories with excitement. It is noticed that interviewees who mentioned this theme have a personal interest to challenge new things that are different from what they are and what they have. This theme drives interviewees to enrol in an international assignment.

#### **4.2.3 Preparation for working abroad: information from trusted people with experience**

Apart from motivation to prepare themselves for the international assignment, interviewees need to seek advice and information of the assigned countries from the sources they feel comfortable to believe. It is not only to know those information but also how the interviewees understand the cultural differences of the assigned countries from those information and prepare themselves to confront the upcoming situations. There are many ways to gather information, however, the trusted sources are very important for them to digest information confidently. Those sources will be able to share in-depth information.

During a preparation period for an international assignment, many interviewees asked information about the host countries from their circles who experienced living in those countries. Interviewee A mentioned some good pieces of advice from a family member who lived in Thailand that "my family member showed me how to use sky train and where to buy food". One of the interviewee A's family member had lived in Thailand at the time interviewee A first arrived in Thailand. Thus, it is easier for him in this preparation stage. Interviewee B and C mentioned the fruitful advice from their colleagues in Japan who already finished international assignments from Thailand. Interviewee B mentioned that "my colleagues in Japan gave much information about accommodations, restaurants, travel spots, and golf courses". Firstly, interviewee B's perception of Bangkok was not much urbanized but after he received those information, he changed his mind. Interviewee C also noted that "I got the advice



from colleagues that Thai people give much respect to the elder so I have to be aware of that sensitive part”. During the interview, interviewee C also asked the respectful to the elder part from the interviewer. This shows his concern about this sensitive point which is different from Japan and it confirms that he will not make anything that will be harmful. Interviewee E noted advice from colleagues who already finished an assignment from Singapore that “Singaporean people normally speak very straightforward. They really work hard, but I do not think that Singaporean people will work harder than Thai people”. Interviewee E received a piece of information that is specific to the Singapore’s context that she needed to prepare ahead. Interviewee H quickly connected to his Thai high school friend at the host country. He mentioned “After I received a confirmation to go, I called my friend who lived in Germany immediately. I asked for information about accommodation, life there, weather, people, and how to travel”. Interviewee H promptly finds a channel to find information that he never knew before from his close circle.

One of the trusted information interviewees sought is from the close circle; family members, close friends and direct-experienced colleagues. This situation has tuned between interviewees’ knowledge of the assigned countries they have in mind and the direct information from close circle to prepare themselves for the coming assignment. This theme drives interviewees to seek a source of knowledge for their proper preparation.

#### **4.2.4 Preparation for working abroad: Company support**

Not only asking information from a trusted circle, but also supporting from the company is another formal information and preparation that staff can receive. The home companies of each interviewee have their own arrangement and support for staff in an international assignment such as cultural training, language training, books and mentors.

From the interviews, interviewee A received support for cultural training and information from the home company. Interviewee A mentioned that “I attended a 3-day onboarding international course from my company in the United States before coming to Thailand. The course emphasized on the Asian culture. At that time, it was not easy to access the internet like today. Therefore, the company gave me a book about

Thailand for my preparation”. Interviewees B and C received an arrangement supported by the home company in Japan. They took a 3-week English language course in Sydney, Australia, arranged by their home company. They both mentioned “it is a normal procedure for every international assignment staff to study an English course before going to the host country”. Interviewee G received a booklet, relating to Canada information and Canadian culture, from the host company. She mentioned that “this showed a care of host country to an international assignee”. This is an impactful thought from the host company. Interviewee H also received the booklet from the host company in Germany. That booklet contains the information about living in Germany, tax schemes and how to contact government offices. Moreover, his boss used to work in Germany. Interviewee H mentioned that “I dared to enrol in Germany because of my boss. I had more confident because of her information, her guidance and her support. Furthermore she still keep in touch with her colleagues there. This made me feel more comfortable that if anything happens, I can talk to someone”. A big support from the supervisor in the company ensures interviewee H’s confidence. This is a strong mentality support he receives from his boss (the company’s representative).

The above findings are additional impressive arrangements of host and home countries that interviewees mentioned. The support from the company put the confidence towards interviewees indirectly. The company support theme is to prepare interviewees to be ready for the assignment with trusted information.

#### **4.2.5 Preparation for working abroad: Self-support**

No matter what others provide and support, interviewees still need to discover information of the host country and information for preparation by themselves as they know best what they are still missing for living and working in a different culture.

Except interviewee A, all of the interviewees searched for information about accommodation, food, working life, recreation, transportation, weather and many more via the internet. Interviewee D learned Thai language by watching Thai series and listening to Thai songs. He mentioned that “I watched the famous one on the internet and tried to memorize words that talked a lot in the series. I also tried to sing Thai songs and searched for meaning. It was easier to learn from songs I liked”. Interviewees E and

F took additional English courses by themselves. Interviewee E mentioned that “I was afraid that I could not listen and speak English quickly enough to work in Singapore so I took the English course before the assignment started”. From interviewee E’s point of view, the capability she needs is language. Interviewee F noted that “I thought it would be better to take additional English courses especially a conversation for everyday use. Though English test result when enrolled in an international assignment was good but I needed to be more confident when speaking”. Interviewee F does not feel confident enough because she have never lived in another country before. Thus, she fills additional knowledge by herself. Interviewee H also took additional German language course. He mentioned that “my boss told me that the host company used English at work because in the company there was a mix of many nationalities. Normally, in everyday life, German people, however, used their language. Therefore, I decided to take an additional German language course”.

The above findings show that interviewees have their own way to prepare and to load themselves with essential information from their self-assessment. Thus, the self-support theme indicates that each interviewee has their own way to boost their confidence and make prompt preparation to live in different cultures.

### **4.3 Assignment Stage**

During the assignment, interviewees faced many good and tough situations that they needed to embrace and resolve. Those situations can be either verbal or non-verbal. Thus, in the assignment stage, the findings will emphasize how interviewees are aware of the situations during assignments, how they plan to solve if they have any problems, and how they check to make sure that the same problems will not happen.

#### **4.3.1 Barriers**

Working in the international assignment, interviewees might face the conditions that make them difficult to live and work smoothly in the host countries. Those barriers will put them in difficult situations. However, interviewees need to be open-minded and understand those differences to diminish those barriers down.

#### 4.3.1.1 Language barrier

One of the most classic barriers is language. No matter which language interviewees have prepared themselves, if that language is not the formal language that the host country use or the interviewees themselves do not keen to use that language, interviewees would collect those uncomfortable and create a barrier to themselves. The findings will describe how the interviewees' verbal and non-verbal communication had gone rough.

The main barrier that most of the interviewees faced was language. At first, interviewees did not think that this would cause lots of problems but it had remained for a month or more. Interviewee A explained that “there were many times people reacted a blank-faced response when I had a discussion with them”. Since interviewee A is a native English speaker, speaking at his usual speed with Thai colleagues might create misunderstanding. Interviewee D had problems when ordering food and getting a taxi, “I need to pay more than others just because I cannot speak or understand their language”. Though interviewee D has prepared an informal basic Thai language through watching Thai series but in the real situation, things do not go easily. Interviewee E avoided to face the real situation with her team from her uncomfortableness to speak. She received a comment about lack of communication with a team several times, “why do not you just tell a team before the incidents happened”. Interviewee F noted that she had a hard time dealing with a client “the client looked down on me and spoke with a loud voice that what I was talking about. The client did not understand and blamed me how I could say that he was wrong”. Interviewee F's experience is quite a bit tricky because the client uses a bad communication reason which points to a problem in language with interviewee F. Interviewee G mentioned that a communication did not go well, “I had to communicate via email or chat program instead of talking or calling. I was wrong that I did not take any English course before going there”. Although interviewee G has a high confidence in her English, she still faces the language barrier, which give her a high impact on her work environment. She faces this problem because she does not prepare additional course before going on assignment and also does not have an international experience before. Interviewee H had been pressured by his direct boss in Germany to speak German. He noted that “my boss kept speaking German though he knew I could speak just basic words”. This

situation creates an uncomfortable feeling to interviewee H. A language challenge that has gone too far from his ability builds a barrier among them.

It can be noticed from the findings that the language barrier interviewees experienced does not only come directly from the language itself but also a reaction from surrounding people caused by a language misunderstanding. Thus, the language barrier theme can create verbal and non-verbal behavior in the cultural diversity circumstance.

#### 4.3.1.2 Cultural barrier

Another barrier is culture. People grow up in different contexts and different cultures. Those contexts builds them who they are today. Thus, such differences might cause asymmetric working and living styles that interviewees faced during the assignment. Cultural barrier findings will explain how interviewees absorb different cultures from their home country and blend themselves in those situations.

Interviewee B experienced the different working styles between Japanese and Thai. He mentioned that “Japanese working style is very strict to the deadline and wants to control over processes but Thai is more flexible and relates to the fact that happens. So I was like an intermediary between them. After working in Thailand, I understand Thai working style and Thai colleagues more”. Interviewee B absorbs the facts and problems happening in the Thai office. Thus, his action is to balance every party to be on the same page. Interviewee F faced the cultural barriers in her living. She noted that “American people take care of themselves and have a high respect for each individual privacy. It is extremely different from Thai culture that we like to stay in a group and ask some personal questions when we see each other. I first thought they did not care or pay attention to others but actually it was their culture so I needed to adapt myself to get used to this”. Interviewee F experienced cultural differences living in the United States. However, she tried to be open-minded and cross that cultural barrier.

The above findings show that interviewees have their own characteristics and behaviors affected by their home country cultures. Thus, at first they would find those differences could be their barrier to live or work. However, they need their action to blend themselves in those, unlike situations.

#### 4.3.1.3 Lifestyle barrier - Cold weather

Weather can be the fun and exciting part for some groups of people. However, if there is a huge gap between weather in the home and the host countries, it will cause a lot of problems for interviewees' living.

Interviewees G and H experienced the much different weather in their home country and the host country. Interviewee G, who had an international assignment in Canada, faced the hard winter time. She noted that "when the temperature was under zero Celsius, I wore many layers of jackets but I still did not get used to it and I did not want to go out for grocery shopping". Interviewee H also confronted with the cold weather. He mentioned that "it was extremely cold and I could not bear sometimes, but after a few months, I felt better". Both interviewees G and H are from Thailand where the weather is much hotter than Canada and Germany. Both interviewees have never lived in another country before. Therefore, the cold weather is hard for them to get used to it in the first place. Both need to adapt themselves to such an environment.

Interviewees have found many tough barriers in language and culture. However, the difference in weathers impacts their daily life living which they need to get used to it and to find a way to support themselves to pass their unfamiliar weather.

### 4.3.2 Adaptability

#### 4.3.2.1 Survival skill – adapting communication

Barriers might create difficulty for interviewees. On the other hand, learning from those barriers also increases survival skill to live happier during the assignment. The findings shown below will show how interviewees learnt, developed and actioned to survive in their situations.

Continuing from the language and cultural barriers, each interviewee had their own survival skills in their situations. Interviewee A noticed a blank-faced reaction and he mentioned that "I needed to change myself to slow down, repeat the sentences and be aware of any conversations". Interviewee A observed his colleagues' uncomfortableness and actioned right away to bring the situation back to normal. Interviewee D called his colleagues to help in a tough situation. He noted that "at that

time I did not know how to order food at the local food stall. So, I called my colleagues to speak with a shopper. The same thing happened when I got a taxi, a taxi driver tried to charge me higher, so I called my colleagues again to talk to the taxi driver". Interviewee D faces those problems as he can not speak Thai. His actions to survive such tough situations are calling his colleagues. Interviewee E tried to speak more with the team. She noted that "I joined a morning sharing session that everyone could share what happened with the assignment and how to prevent difficult circumstances with clients. It helped change my mindset to share more and help a team more, so a communication was getting better". Interviewee E observes how she can do better to solve her problem and she adapts herself to involve and communicate more with her team resulting better situations. Interviewee F mentioned that "I asked my team from what the client said, do I need to correct my English speaking. Surprisingly, an answer I got from my colleague was you spoke very clearly but the client tried to avoid the topics in the meeting". Interviewee F learnt from this situation and prepared herself more for every meeting. Interviewee G attended non-work activities, "I enrolled in a photo club and it helped me a lot because there was no pressure to speak. There was no need to be correct all the time and it helped a lot to improve my speaking". Interviewee G discovers her comfort zone where she does not have to be right all the time. She brings herself in a comfort situation. Consequently, she feels more confident to speak to improve her English skill. Interviewee H noted that "luckily the host company provided German language course for me. I also tried more to practice speaking German with other colleagues when I ordered food and went to the supermarket". Besides an opportunity to learn additional German language courses, he also practiced his German through other channels.

The interviewees learn from their experiences and adapt themselves to live smoother. The survival skill theme shows the ability of the interviewees to observe unusual situations and reflect through their actions to survive in cultural diversity situations.

## **4.4 Repatriation Stage**

After interviewees were repatriated to their home countries, there were a lot of experiences that changed them, shaped them and created the new version of themselves. For repatriation stage, the findings will focus on the key-takeaway that interviewees feel impressive and can bring back to enhance their career in the future.

### **4.4.1 Key take-away**

Each interviewee has faced many experiences, many obstructions, several achievements and some failures. There would be some situations that triggered them and brought them to a turning point, which gave them the solid key-takeaways to use in their future work and life.

### **4.4.2 More confidence, gained from the thought “they-are-all-human”**

Experience from working in an international assignment gives valuable experiences to whom experienced it. Interviewee E noted that “after overcoming the language barrier, I wanted to help the team by communicating more. They are all human and just speak English better than me”. After jumping over the language barrier, Interviewee E has more confidence to share her knowledge and her strength for her team’s benefit. These kinds of situations unlock her from hiding away from the back. Interviewee F also mentioned about a reduction in their fear to speak up their opinion that “They are all human but able to speak another language better than you. If you overcome that language barrier, we can show others our potentiality”. Since Interviewee F is confident with her work knowledge, thus what keep her from shining is only a language barrier. After she overcame such a barrier, she could communicate more effective and faster.

### **4.4.3 Sharing is not showing off**

Interviewee H emphasized presentation skill, “It is not a showing-off when you present in front of others. Those ideas can either be right or wrong because we are human. It is to gain different ideas and to brainstorm to find the best solution together”. Interviewee H struggled to share his idea with colleagues. First he tried to be humble, however, in different working styles in Germany it turned out that he was too humble.



He coped with this thought for a period of time and adapted himself to share more to his colleagues based on his key-takeaway that sharing is not showing-off, it is the way to present and let others think from what is shared.

The observation from this theme is, within the same work industry, the technical skills they have are almost the same. The differences or roadblocks are rooted in different cultures and different languages. If interviewees are able to tune in and understand those cultures and learn those languages, they can bring those solid thoughts to help them live and work after repatriation.

#### **4.4.4 Balancing**

To balance between technical skill and human skill and to balance perspective between people in a team were mentioned in the interviews. Interviewee B noted a balancing in the perspective of colleagues in a team, “they may have different backgrounds, working in different conditions with different cultures. The technical works are quite the same because we have the same goal for the client. So, if we can balance those different perspectives and let them see the compromising way to achieve the same goal, that will help working along the way better”. Interviewee B experienced the extreme different work cultures. He found the way to smooth all related parties in the work environment. Interviewee F also mentioned a balancing between technical skill and human skill, “If the leaders think only the benefits and do not think how hard their team put the efforts to achieve the leader’s goal, no one will work for such leaders; on the contrary if the leaders balance their goals and their team together, there will be a win-win situation”. What she experienced is a balancing from the leader perspective. A balancing from a leader’s personal achievement and team achievement will create a fair work environment within the company.

Balancing topic has been raised in different views from the interviewees. However, these bring the idea in any disagreeable situation; balancing is another good way to compromise and bring a compromising result to every party. This theme brings a solid view which is useful for interviewees’ future career.

#### 4.4.5 Active listening

Listening skill was mentioned in the interviews. Interviewee A noted “listen and collaborate with a team; we need to truly listen to staff what they really want, understand them, and they will feel comfortable to share with you”. From the language barrier, Interviewee A learnt to slow down his speaking which impacted his careful listening as well. At first, he listened carefully only to understand language, and afterwards it became he really listened to the meaning of those messages. Interviewee G mentioned about their impression during an assignment, “I met a supervisor that asked everyone to share their ideas in a meeting. Though everyone had many different ideas, the supervisor listened to everyone and guided them as well as filled the missing gap”. From interviewee G’s language barrier, she had a tough time communicating via writing instead of speaking, but when she could overcome such barrier with confidence, she met her supervisor who also listened to her. Thus, the active listening theme firmly touched her.

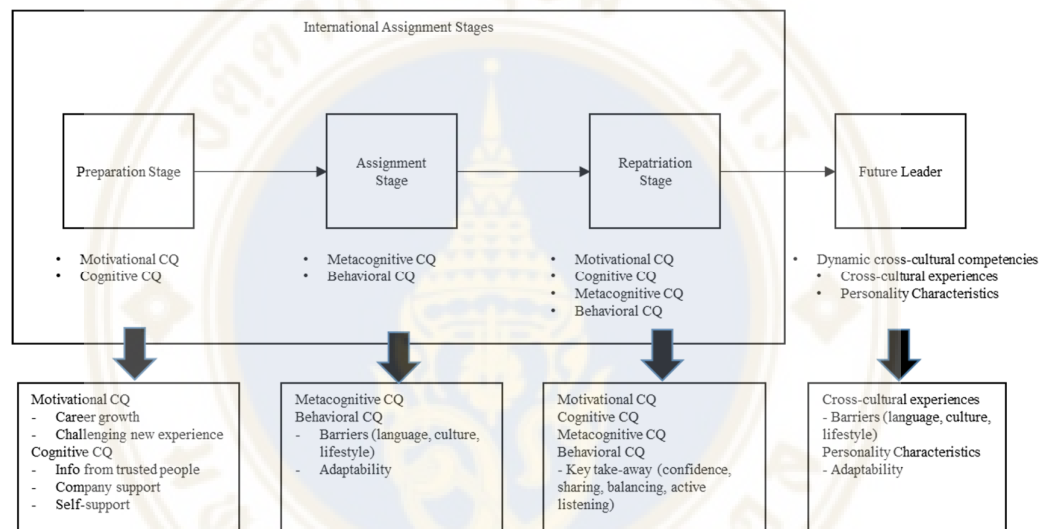
It is noticed that the active listening theme is not only to empathize others but also to reflect those understanding into thoughts, ideas, and processes that will be useful for listeners who can win the listener’s heart.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusion

From the research findings, the interviewees used their CQ in each of international assignment stages as shown in Figure 5.1. This study also elaborates on the relationship between the CQ questionnaires and the interviewees' experiences.



**Figure 5.1** CQ in each of international assignment stages

#### 5.2 Preparation Stage

In the preparation stage, the interviewees had the common motivations (career growth and challenging new experiences) that drove them to go for an international assignment. They gathered information to go abroad on their own as well as from company support and experienced people around them.

For motivation for career growth, the interviewees expected to go faster and longer in their careers. If they wanted to achieve career growth, they needed to have

something that others lacked which was the international assignment experience. Thus, the career growth drives the interviewees to gain an advantage from experiencing the international assignment, which is called *extrinsic motivation*. The findings also show new challenge experiences as a motivation to go for the international assignment. This aspect also gives a big impact on the interviewees' decision. The interviewees had their own personal interest to explore cultural diversity in living and working. This is the motivation from the inside called *intrinsic motivation*. All interviews did not show the interviewees' uncertainty or lack of confidence to go for the international assignment. They also did not show an unbelief to complete their international assignment though there were a bunch of obstacles. Thus, they believe that they have capabilities to pass the living and working in different cultures, which are called *self-efficacy*. The level of motivation from inside and outside plus a belief to pass the diversified cultural confrontation are comprised of the motivational CQ level of the interviewees that were used during their assignments.

Besides the motivation, the interviewees needed to prepare information of their assigned countries for a better understanding to live and work in cultural diversity. The sources of information were from experienced people, companies and themselves. Those sources of backgrounds with culture-general knowledge (e.g. weather, transportation, language), context-specific knowledge (e.g. people's character, working style and vat system) and behavior that should and should not do in those countries, made the interviewees understand more dimensions of the countries' cultural systems and cultural norms to improvise their own way to survive in those cultural diversities. This is called the cognitive CQ, another factor of the cultural intelligence.

Thus, the interviewees have utilized their motivational CQ and cognitive CQ level in a preparation stage of an international assignment.

### **5.3 Assignment Stage**

During the assignment stage, the interviewees faced many cultural diversity situations (both work and life) that they had to learn, adapt and solve in order to survive in those countries. They also had to put their actions (both verbal and non-verbal) appropriately to survive in their international assignments.

The barriers that the interviewees confronted from the findings were language, culture and lifestyle. The interviewees that faced language barrier were aware of the problems. However, they had their plan to step over those barriers whether they slowed their speaking, learned from optional ways to communicate easier, changed behavior, or recapped their speaking. When they improved speaking skill, they checked whether their plans were achieved and their goals to speak more effectively were accomplished in their assigned countries. For cultural barriers, the interviewees were aware of the conflicts that happened, e.g. the different expectations of the host country and the home country, and the different living styles between the two countries. Then, they planned to smoothen the conflicts and difficulties. Each interviewee had a particular way to survive and came across those barriers. Those barriers made interviewees aware of the difficulties that happened. However, they also discovered what was the reasons that brought those difficulties, how to ease those difficulties, and what to do next. Then, they checked whether the situations and difficulties were getting better from their action or not. To be aware, to plan and to check are combined as a strategy to face cultural diversity which is the metacognitive CQ level of the interviewees, another factor of the cultural intelligence.

Moreover, there were cultural diversity situations that the interviewees needed to act (both verbal and non-verbal) appropriately. From the findings, the examples of interviewees' actions when facing difficulties include showing the compromising behavior when speaking for their colleagues and being an intermediary to calm the host country and home country. The level of problem-solving in verbal and non-verbal is behavioral CQ. The levels of the interviewees' metacognitive CQ and the behavioral CQ have been utilized in the assignment stage.

#### **5.4 Repatriation Stage**

During the assignment, the interviewees received many impressions and key takeaways they experienced from other cultures. When the interviewees were repatriated to their home countries, they confidently brought these ideas to use in their home countries. This is the motivational CQ. Moreover, they turned the key takeaways (i.e. the more confidence from crossing the barriers, sharing is not showing off,

balancing, and active listening) into solid information and adapted them to use in their home countries' context. This is the level of cognitive CQ that they used.

However, the interviewees needed to have their own strategies to apply those key take-aways whether they were aware of what to apply, planned to blend those key take-aways within the home countries' context, and checked whether it worked, the metacognitive CQ had been utilized. Lastly, the interviewees actioned those key take-aways both verbal and non-verbal directly and indirectly to lead their team effectively. The behavioral CQ had been applied in the following stages.

### **5.5 Future Leader**

From the findings, the international assignment experience could drive the interviewees go faster and longer in their career paths, to be the future leaders. The interviewees also experienced cross-cultural diversities from the work environment and non-work environment, i.e. barrier from language, culture and lifestyle. The findings also showed that the interviewees developed their openness to experience challenges that they were not afraid of taking risks because they had abilities to tolerate, adapted and survived many difficulties and barriers. Those brought them forming the competence in dynamic cross-culture by reducing self-centeredness which impacted the more flexibility in their situations during the assignment, and prepared them to be ready in ambiguous situations.

The international assignment experience is one of the must-have experiences for staff in the multinational company to be the practical and adaptable global leader in the future.

### **5.6 CQ Scores of Interviewees**

The CQ questionnaires that the interviewees have been asked before the interview session began have an interesting connection between the score and the interviewees as shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 CQ scores of interviewees analysis**

<b>Interviewee List</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Country of Assignment</b>	<b>Cognitive CQ</b>	<b>Behavioral CQ (Physical CQ)</b>	<b>Motivational CQ</b>
<b>A</b>	American	Thailand	3.5	3.25	3
<b>B</b>	Japanese	Thailand	3.5	4.75	5
<b>C</b>	Japanese	Thailand	4	4.5	4
<b>D</b>	Malaysian	Thailand	3.75	4.75	3.75
<b>E</b>	Thai	Singapore	4.5	4	4
<b>F</b>	Thai	USA	2.75	4	2.75
<b>G</b>	Thai	Canada	3.5	3.75	4.75
<b>H</b>	Thai	Germany	3.75	3.5	4.25

According to the interviews, the interviewees rated these questions as they were before the assignment. The scores of the motivational CQ reflect the motivation level of the interviewees' to go abroad. The scores of 3 and below are considered as an area for improvement, however in my terms, they are the area for discussion. The scores of interviewees link to the behaviors and thoughts found during the interviews as follows:

Interviewee A – mentioned several times about family member lived in the host country. It reflects to the CQ score that the cognitive CQ is the highest among 3 factors.

Interviewee B – a passion for his career growth was extremely showed during the interviews and it was notable than others. The motivational CQ score is outstanding.

Interviewee C – had a few experiences abroad. Thus, the behavioral CQ is the highest.

Interviewee D – had a study experience abroad. The behavioral CQ is the highest as well.

Interviewee E – the closest of the host country and the home country was mentioned a lot during the interviews. Thus, the cognitive CQ is the highest among others.

Interviewee F – had the least preparation time. During the interview, she mentioned for career growth that she needed to go, it was not her choice. Thus the cognitive CQ and motivational CQ are low.

Interviewee H – the motivational CQ is high because the interviewee had his boss backed him up and career growth was mentioned several times during the interview. Referring to the findings during the interviews, these can be concluded that what is often mentioned or expressed the high impression directly reflects the highest CQ factor scores of the interviewees.

## **5.7 Recommendations**

From the research findings, the interviewees stuck with the language and cultural barriers. These were the pain points for the interviewees. They needed several months to cope with and solve the difficulties. Thus, the companies that send managers abroad has to provide language and cultural training supports to staff before they go abroad.

Language training support is crucial, especially if any home companies send managers to the countries that use English as a primary or secondary language because, from the findings, though the English examination results were one of the important criteria to select candidates in the international assignments, it did not guarantee that the interviewees had sufficient English knowledge to use in daily life and working life during their international assignment. For any other languages except English, the companies also need to provide a course for the daily life usage for the candidates to survive living in the host countries.

The cultural training support is also significant. Some cultural barriers gave the interviewees a hard time referred to the findings. Providing candidates official information from the companies will reduce confusion from several sources of information.



This paper observes the key-takeaways of the interviewees that they could bring to use as the future leader. However, the future study should elaborate more on the interviewees' working and living life after they are repatriated from the assignments as the interviewees have seen, adapted and survived many cultural diversity difficulties, and consequently they might have any difficulties or easiness when dealing with the colleagues at the home companies. Moreover, the expectations of the management from the staff repatriated from the international assignment should be discussed in the future research.



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