

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND LAW

Business School

**The measurement and effectiveness of supply chain partnering relationships in
international joint venture groupings in the Chinese Automotive sector**

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

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**THE MEASUREMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNERING
RELATIONSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL JOINT VENTURE GROUPINGS IN THE CHINESE
AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR**

Weixi Han

This thesis explores how to measure an effective supply chain partnering relationship in international joint venture groupings in the Chinese automotive sector. The three key objectives are (1) identifying an initial framework for the supply chain partnering relationship context; (2) defining the key criteria of relevance to a partnering relationship; and (3) refining the initial framework and analysing the impact of multicultural collaborators on the partnering relationship.

Given that research on measurements for the effectiveness of the multicultural supply chain partnering relationship is still in its infancy, an initial framework is constructed by reviewing the existing literature regarding the supply chain partnering relationship, partnering relationship performance, and multicultural international joint venture relationships. A cross-sectional case study approach using examples of the Chinese automotive sector is then adopted to obtain an in-depth understanding of the framework in a multicultural business environment.

As a result of this initial focus, considerable time was spent determining what a partnering relationship is, and collecting data to compare the different criteria in multicultural collaborators'. These criteria are included as a guide for fellow researchers and to reflect the entirety of the research process undertaken. There are two processes involved in the redefining of the relevant criteria: first, manufacturers and suppliers select the key criteria under the framework components' categories; second, if the empirical data identified a criterion that is not summarised within the framework, there will be a new finding recorded under the category. These findings are also described in later chapters of this thesis and contribute to the development of the multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship.

The conceptual framework incorporates effective SCPR processes and practices within the multicultural business environment, and the conceptualisation of relationship performance evaluation provides a viable framework for ongoing research and practice. This thesis and the empirical data collection undertaken while conducting the research concentrated on a strategy process perspective in addressing linkages inherent in multicultural cooperation through partnering relationship management, utilising evaluation and refining criteria while examining processes of renewal and business advantages. There are three contributions of the thesis: (1) examination of the partnering relationship theory in new business relationships in China; (2) explored and established a framework for evaluation of performance in multicultural collaborative; and (3) evaluation of current and possible future practice in managing a multicultural collaborators' business, and offering guidance for practitioner behaviour.

This study is the first to propose a comprehensive framework that measures the effectiveness of the multicultural supply chain partnering relationship while existing studies tend to focus on either specific measures or individual organisations. The multicultural international joint venture perspective provides a further unique view on how an effective multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship could be responsive to the dynamics in practice.

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Author's declaration

I, WEIXI HAN.....

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

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INTERNATIONAL JOINT VENTURE GROUPINGS IN THE CHINESE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR.....

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:
 1. Han, W., Huang, Y. and Macbeth, D. (2017), 'Performance measurement of cross-culture supply chain partnership: a case study in the Chinese automotive industry', *International Journal of Production Research*, (published online).

Signed:

Date:.....

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Definitions and Abbreviations

Definitions:

- 1 Manufacturers—Vehicle manufacturers, which are multicultural international joint ventures. The international parties are major automotive vehicle manufacturers from Europe, the United States, Japan, Korea and others; the Chinese domestic parties are state-owned vehicle manufacturers.
- 2 Suppliers—Vehicle suppliers, which provide components to manufacturers. Suppliers have multi-types, such as international joint ventures in China, Chinese domestic companies and international-invested companies in China. In this thesis, suppliers are considered as international joint ventures and international-invested suppliers.
- 3 Partnering relationship—The supply chain partnering relationship is a close cooperative relationship that is formed by two separate companies such as manufacturers and suppliers who work closely to plan and execute supply chain operations toward common goals, thereby achieving more benefits than they would by acting independently.
- 4 Multicultural collaborators' business environment—Chinese automotive industry, which includes multicultural manufacturers, suppliers and other organisations. International-invested brands of manufacturers occupy over 90% of the market in China as joint venture manufacturers and suppliers.

Abbreviations:

- 1 IJV—International joint venture
- 2 SCPR—Supply chain partnering relationship
- 3 PMIs—Performance measurement indicators
- 4 SOEs—State-owned enterprises
- 5 IDI—International direct investment
- 6 IMP—Industrial marketing and purchasing

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

Partnering relationship operations management and measurement have been theorised as a crucial means for a company to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance (Lee, and Whang, 2004; Hult, Ketchen and Arrfelt, 2007; Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2008; Gligol and Holcomb, 2012; Vanpoucke, Vereeckbe and Boyer, 2014). In recent years, the manufacturer-supplier partnering relationship has drawn a tremendous amount of attention from practitioners and academics, resulting in its promotion by a steady stream of literature (e.g., Ellram, 1991; Graham et al., 1994; Macbeth and Ferguson, 1994; Landeros et al., 1995; Maloni and Benton, 1997; Towill, 1997). The linkage between the partnering relationship and sustainable performance is emerging as an important topic that deserves investigation. This has led to a call for a change in focus of operations management (OM) research (Power, Schoenher and Samson, 2010).

China is the largest emerging economy and the world's leading manufacturing centre for consumer products (Jiang, Frazier and Heiser, 2007; Zhao, Flynn and Roth, 2007; Liu and Bucket, 2009). As a result, great competitive pressures and escalating customer expectations are being exerted on the country, which are forcing manufacturers to rely on producers in order to develop attractive products and take advantage of market opportunities (Ambler, Styles and Wang, 1999; Boyer and Lewis, 2002; Zhao et al., 2008;). The automotive industry is an important indicator to measure the development level of a country (Holweg, Luo and Oliver, 2008; Zhang and Chen, 2006), and it has made a great contribution to China's economic development (Holweg et al., 2008; Zhu, Sarkis and Lai, 2007).

As a country, China currently has the world's largest volume of auto production and sales, as well as the greatest market potential. Following implementation of a policy to actively attract international capital into China, international direct investments have entered most industries in the country and, in particular, the automotive vehicle manufacturing sector. International investment in automotive international joint venture (IJV) manufacturer brands (illustrated in Figure 1) occupies over 90% of the market in China (Holweg et al., 2008; Richards and Yang, 2007). The country has gradually become the regional manufacturing centre for multinational corporations, and the strategic focus for their global expansion (Lockström et al., 2010). However, this research focuses on IJV business relationships. 'Since the Chinese government published its 'Automotive Industry Policy' in 1994, Chinese government aimed to build up the automotive

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industry as a 'pillar' industry. The policy had a number of aims, including the encouragement of car ownership, the establishment of a number of large-scale car producers to improve the components industry and the creation of an indigenous automotive product development capability. To be allowed to operate in China, international automotive manufacturers had to establish international joint ventures with Chinese car makers. China essentially made technology transfer to local manufacturers a condition of access to its potentially huge market' (Holweg and Oliver, 2015, p.34). The formation of international joint venture (IJV) initiatives has been mandated by the Chinese Government (Holweg et al., 2008), so the parent companies do not play a role in the selection of IJV partners operating in China.

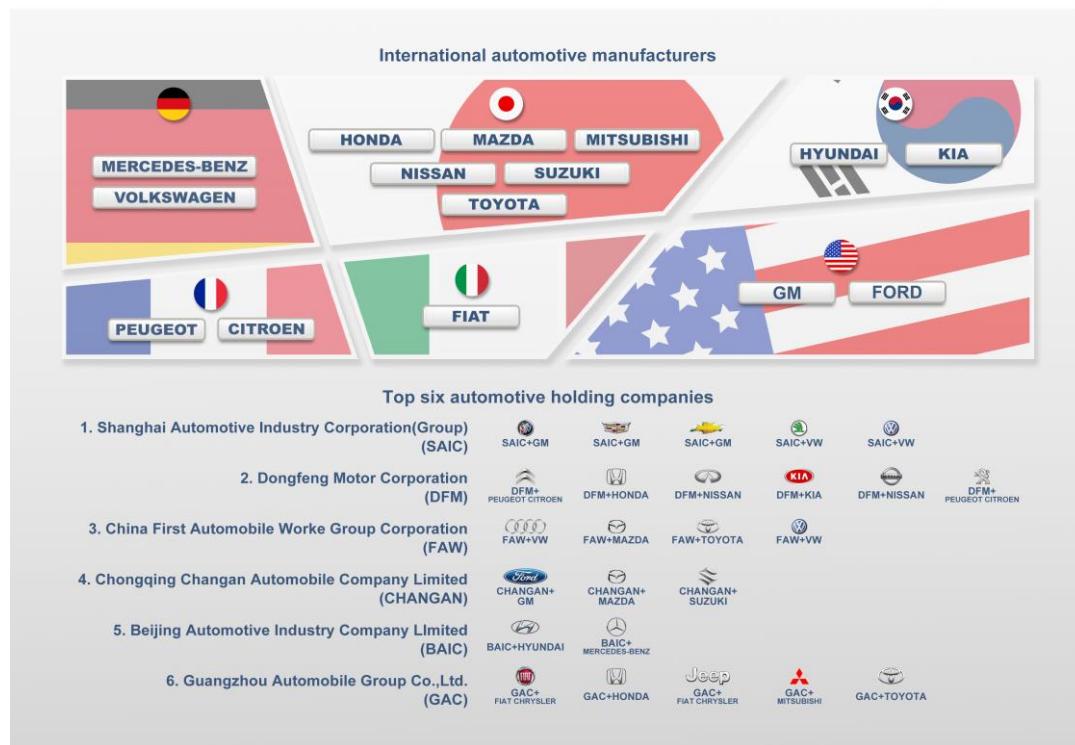


Figure 1 Major automotive international joint venture groupings in China

Within this context, together with the strong policy support from the Chinese Government, the IJV model has become dominant in the country's automotive industry (Boisot and Child, 1999; Lockström et al., 2010). To understand (and appreciate) growth in the automotive industry in China, it is important to understand its evolution within the wider context of the country's industrialisation—which, unsurprisingly, has been centrally driven and shaped by very distinct industrial policies. In conjunction with the entry of international manufacturers into the market, supply chains in the Chinese automotive industry are also largely managed by international manufacturers, and they are integrated to realise mutual gains. Some differences do exist between the role the automotive suppliers play in China and the role they play in the contexts of

Europe, America and Japan. Consequently, differences in the specification of the supply chain systems have attracted the attention of researchers (Larson, 1994; Sardinha et al., 2009).

1.1.1 The Chinese automotive industry

The Chinese automotive industry has a history extending back to 1949 enabling an assessment of the industry's growth (The history of the Chinese automotive industry is summarised in Appendix A.1, p.219). The Chinese automotive industry has made rapid progress in terms of its usage of imported technology, following the introduction of market reforms by the Government, and guided by the general principle of a wide engagement in IJV cooperation initiatives (Appendix A.2 The development stages of Chinese automotive industry, p.220). Statistics have revealed that China's automotive industry was once highly decentralised, with over 100 manufacturers, more than 700 refitting and specialist manufacturers and nearly 2000 suppliers (Veloso and Rajiv, 2002). China cooperated extensively with Germany, the United States, Japan, Korea, France, Italy and other major automotive powers, as a result of its reform and opening-up policies instigated in 1990 (Appendix A.3 Six major domestic automotive industry cluster in China, p.224). The rise of emerging markets is a significant development for the global automotive industry which first began in the 1990s, and has developed significantly throughout the 2000–2010 period, the most significant of which, to date, has been China (Holweg and Oliver, 2015). The Chinese market, in particular, was a major driver of global growth within the industry, and the revenues earned in China by many manufacturers were crucial to their financial health. However, not all ventures were successful. The manufacturers with the largest sales in China tended to be those that had been early movers.

The evolution of the automotive industry in China must reflect upon the social, energy and environmental implications created by such a rapid growth in the number of vehicles in a country. In this respect, government policy aiming to establish a modern automotive industry in China has been very successful, although challenges still remain. Most crucial of these challenges has been the formation of the relationship between manufacturers and suppliers, where the latter have remained in a passive position over the long term. This has been attributed to the fact that most products are produced in accordance with the requirements of manufacturers, thus making it difficult for suppliers to participate in genuine research and development work. The cooperation mode between the manufacturers and their important suppliers is at the early stages, but is proving very stable. At present, the SCPRs mainly centre on the relationship between manufacturers and suppliers. These relationships have important implications for manufacturers,

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in ensuring the smoothness of their upstream and downstream channels, and can provide them with the necessary funds and personnel. At the same time, these relationships are established on the basis of ensuring ease of supply and distribution, and could be used by their competitors; therefore an unstable, weak relationship exists. The importance of the relationship between manufacturers and suppliers should be established on the basis that the two parties share key resources; however, the long-term technical cooperative relationship between manufacturers and suppliers is relatively stable which is helpful to retain sustainable competitive advantage.

The manufacturers should be clear about all aspects and criteria involved in the partnering relationship, and be cognisant of any defects/deficiencies in the internal resources which might limit any advantages to competitiveness, to the increase of profits, and to improving performance. This is particularly important at the first stage of recognising the partnering relationship issues – the demand analysis stage. Meanwhile, the status of the existing partnering relationship should be analysed, and any existing problems should be identified and addressed, in order to ensure continuous improvement of the partnering relationship performance.

The automotive industry in China is in transition. While designs are still being imported, over time the amount of locally sourced content has been growing, with a range of contracts awarded to only Chinese suppliers, or alternatively to IJV arrangements between international and Chinese suppliers. In conjunction with the entry of international manufacturers to the market, some supply chains in Chinese automotive industry are managed by the parent companies of international manufacturers, and they are integrated to realise mutual gains. Currently, there are three typical supply chain approaches being implemented in the automotive industry in China, which are European, American and Japanese supply chain approaches. These are influenced by the home regions of the international invested companies (China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, 2012), thus there are three sets of roles or behaviours which can be observed for multinational IJV manufacturers and suppliers.

Important suppliers have been cooperating with the incoming manufacturers for between one and ten years. That is because manufacturers are currently undergoing a transition period, and the relationships between manufacturers and suppliers are now being extended or are newly established. In combination with the escalation of reforms within state-owned enterprises (SOEs), manufacturers and suppliers will be regarded as independent legal entities, and therefore the relationship is likely to last longer. The closeness of the relationship between manufacturers and suppliers is positively correlated with the extent of current cooperation time. As there are financial implications associated with the sourcing of new partners, manufacturers are frequently reluctant to instigate change. Manufacturers and suppliers will have already engaged in

comprehensive discussions, prior to agreeing to cooperate with one another. There are risks associated with manufacturers selecting other suppliers with which to collaborate. Thus, when selecting important suppliers as partners, the manufacturers generally will participate in extensive communications in order to establish a particular business relationship. When the relationship has developed to a certain stage, then they will form an important partnering relationship. The manufacturers will subsequently jointly develop the market with the suppliers, taking full advantage of the connections formed between both parties. In China, all top global tier-one suppliers have set up operations and have engaged in multiple IJVs with local suppliers (China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, 2012). Alternatively, they have already established manufacturing operations in China, both to supply domestic manufacturers, as well as to benefit from the low labour costs (Howleg and Oliver, 2015). Automotive suppliers in China can be categorised into four groups (Howleg and Oliver, 2008):

- (1) First, there are the leading independent supplier and component groups. These large supplier groups insist upon implementing self-reliant strategies in relation to technologies and management, they possess economies of scale, and are relatively competitive internationally.
- (2) The second group are suppliers affiliated with local large SOEs. These suppliers are established by separating and integrating the divisions within the large SOE suppliers. The second group is less competitive, yet their affiliation to large national vehicle manufacturers is a key advantage in securing their business.
- (3) The third group are small suppliers (there are approximately 3,000 in existence, according to KPMG's Component Industry Report, 2004). These small suppliers have neither economies of scale, nor R&D capabilities, and have largely focused on supplying the aftermarket.
- (4) Finally, the fourth group are involved in IJVs with international suppliers or their wholly controlled subsidiaries. This group have access to advanced production technologies and possess R&D capabilities (mostly abroad). These international suppliers have often engaged in IJVs with local suppliers, yet some remain independent. These suppliers serve domestic manufacturers in China and are also exporting a significant proportion of their product lines.

'The sustainable growth of Chinese automotive industry is determined not only by the wider economic situation, but also by factors such as government policies, the generation of wealth outside the metropolitan areas and the stability of the currency' (Howleg and Oliver, 2015, p.34).

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These are the most important learning experiences drawn from the development of the automotive industry in China over the past few decades.

Currently, the Chinese automotive industry has gained the ability to take a key role in the local market. However, higher requirement standards are proposed for the management of this government-regulated industry. A fair, effective and gradually maturing competitive market environment should be established, which is more competitive than ever before in an increasingly globalised marketplace.

China is an emerging market economy, characterised by less rational behaviours than main markets and immature markets. Holweg and Oliver (2015) concluded that the Chinese automotive domestic market is likely to continue to grow, albeit at a slower rate, and this highlights the challenges imposed by a growing over-capacity and the continued dependence on international technology and product design. Based on the current characteristics of the Chinese automotive industry, it is necessary to analyse the SCPR process. This research will be widely applicable, particularly in the future development of the Chinese automotive industry. Being fully cognisant of the current situation and characteristics of SCPRs in Chinese automotive industry, as well as exploring the management and measurement of these relationships, will contribute greatly to improving the degree to which Chinese manufacturing management can modernise and enhance their international competitiveness. This can be achieved in the following ways:

- (1) Sharing the same vehicle platform and integrating tier-one suppliers;
- (2) Promoting an ethos of continuous updating and improvement within the industry; integrating the manufacturing systems and technology; enhancing performance;
- (3) Participating in earnest in research studies so as to develop and enhance competitiveness;
- (4) Clarifying the structure of the automotive industry; reducing entry standards to the sector; enhancing industry promotion.

With the significant differences that exist in relation to market environments, technology factors and so on between Chinese and international parent companies, exploratory research into the nature of Chinese automotive SCPRs is of substantial value. In addition, conducting a measurement of this sector will be an important contribution to both theory and practice. It helps to advance our understanding of the significance of multicultural factors in an era of globalisation.

1.2 Research problem

1.2.1 Problem statement

An effectiveness supply chain partnering relationship stresses the importance of clearly defined, long-term associations and advanced mutual planning and problem-solving processes. However, in IJV relationships with multicultural partners, the patterns of behaviour and performance expectations are inconsistent across the international partners. The IJV managers, therefore, have the problem of what priorities to focus on with their different partners. Underpinning this is the lack of a coherent set of performance indicators to establish the links between behaviours and effectiveness against business objectives.

Zhao, Flynn and Roth (2006; 2007) provided an overview of trends in the Chinese economy and broad areas for future research. Based on their investigations, they considered China to be an excellent research site, which is the context for this study. Furthermore, because the Chinese automotive industry has undergone relatively recent developments, it has yet to be examined in a considered and comprehensive manner. Despite the rapid growth of the Chinese automotive industry (Argote, McEvily and Reagans, 2003; McEvily, Perrone and Zaheer, 2003; Zhu et al., 2007), its competitiveness is not only determined by productivity at the manufacturer level, but also driven by the high degree of value sourced through suppliers, as well as by the component suppliers (Womack et al., 1990; Oliver et al., 1994; 1998; Holweg and Pil, 2004). Therefore, manufacturers and suppliers have increasingly paid attention to enhancing the effective of supply chain cooperation (Burkink, 2002; Humphreys and Schmitz, 2002; Leng and Parlar, 2008). Problems in relation to the manufacturer-supplier or vertical partnering relationships in the supply chain have attracted academic attention over several decades, with the automotive industry being used as a reference site for most of these studies. These partnering relationships emphasise the importance of direct, long-term associations, as well as promoting the benefits of mutual planning and problem-solving exercises. This provides evidence to support the fact that it is no longer sufficient to merely focus on the individual performance of either the manufacturer or the supplier.

In Chinese automotive industry, a complex IJV structure was developed, as illustrated in Figure 2. This is not without its problems. While this structure has helped to drive the initial development of manufacturers, and fostered the growth of suppliers, the transfer of product development capabilities to the manufacturers did not occur largely due to the fact that there was almost no product development activity within these IJVs. Furthermore, complexities surrounding the multicultural partnering relationship also meant that considerable difficulties were encountered

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in managing operations. One problem was that some holding companies had several sub-IJVs, and also had initiated IJVs with the international party who were their direct competitors (Figure 2). Honda, for example, has two sub-IJVs, one in Guangzhou (Guangzhou Automobile Group, China), and the other in Wuhan (Dongfeng Motor Corporation, China). Both sub-IJVs are competing for new products, but Honda has a limited product range for the Chinese market, and thus potentially unhealthy competition is emerging between the two IJV operations. In addition, manufacturers such as Guangzhou and Dongfeng have independent operations, which are in direct competition with their own IJV companies.

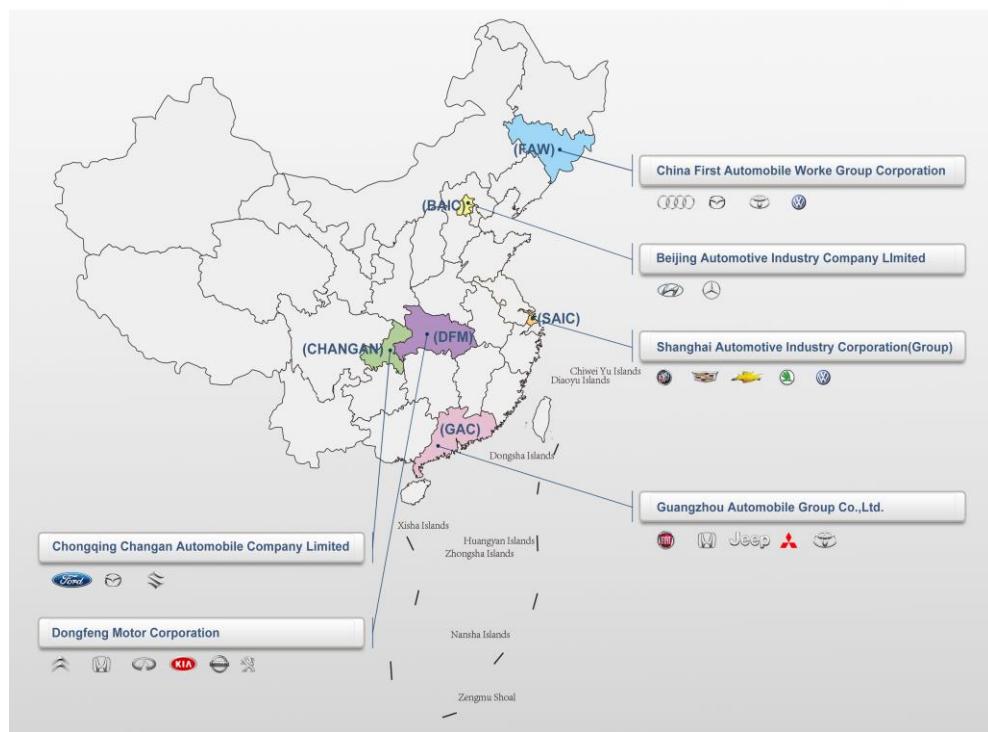


Figure 2 Major automotive international manufacturers' sub-IJVs in China

Recent dynamics occurring within the global automotive industry have several implications for the academic study of this sector (Oliver, Holweg and Carver, 2008; Kim, Rhee and Oh, 2011). This industry has experienced the diffusion of innovation – including high-performance workplace practices along the supply chain – and offers the potential to examine different dimensions of collaboration simultaneously (Cao and Zhang, 2011). Supply chain collaborations in the automotive industry are difficult to implement. Lockström et al.'s (2010) research results indicated that partnering relationships between manufacturers and suppliers are generally developed gradually at a very senior level, and that the degree of trust and commitment increases incrementally over time. Within the context of the Chinese automotive industry, multicultural management skills are essential in order to make sound decisions and also to anticipate potential problems when enhancing the manufacturer-supplier relationship.

The current research is cross-sectional, whereby the results only provide a static picture of the current situation. Thus, one of its limitations is that it fails to capture the dynamic nature of SCPRs in emerging economies such as China. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, it is the first attempt to investigate the research field in this way.

Within this environment, manufacturers and suppliers with international competitive advantage have yet to be determined. The lack of SCPRs in this favourable business position seriously restrains the growth of the Chinese automotive industry (Lockström et al., 2010), and it requires further development and improvement.

This research aims to develop a model to support this further development and improvement.

1.2.2 The research questions

Research on effectiveness supply chain partnering relationship in multicultural collaborators' business environment is still nascent. Furthermore, little research has been conducted regarding the dynamic relationship framework and assessing it with reference to multicultural organisations. Due to this, a measurement of the partnering relationship will elucidate the concept. This research expands on the existing knowledge in the field through exploring how the multicultural manufacturers select and manage their suppliers, and measures the partnering relationship according to the relationship performance perspective. Accordingly, to the best of the author's knowledge, this study is the first to examine supplier selection and management in the multicultural partnering relationship through the use of relationship performance.

Most importantly, multicultural partnering relationship measurement is a crucial aspect of this research, which seeks to explore and establish a framework for performance measurement indicators in order to assess how effectively multicultural collaborators or networks are functioning in business-to-business partnering relationship systems in Chinese automotive groupings.

Based on the research problem and question, the sub-questions to be addressed (which are clarified in session 3.2)

- (1) How can multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship performance be measured?
- (2) How effectively are multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationships?

(3) How can the criteria on which multicultural supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined?

The objective of the thesis is: first, to identify an initial framework for the supply chain partnering relationship context; second, to define the key criteria of relevance to a partnering relationship; and third, to refine the initial framework and analyse the impact of multicultural collaborators on the partnering relationship.

1.3 Justification for the research

1.3.1 Research boundaries

The research boundaries are clearly outlined below in Table 1. They summarise the relevance of the key issues, practical problems identified, justify the research gaps, explain why this thesis needs to resolve these problems, set out clear research questions, and define the expected contributions.

Table 1 Research Boundaries

1.1 Research backgrounds (Key issues)	1.2 Research problems	1.3 Research gaps	1.4 Research (sub) questions	1.5 Justification of the research questions	1.6 Expected contributions
Supply chain partnering relationship performance measurement process	Defines an efficient and sustainable SCPR within a multicultural context	A complete framework does not currently exist which identifies criteria to be incorporated into SCPR measurement and performance	How can multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship performance be measured?	A definition of a well-performing supply chain is required	Examination of partnering relationship theory in new business relationships in China
Multicultural collaborators in the Chinese automotive industry	Managers in manufacturing companies have encountered the problem of which priorities to focus on with their various partners	Limited research is available within a specific context, namely multicultural collaborators and the need exists to explore how they are functioning in business-to-business partnering relationships	How effectively are multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationship?	Defining key criteria in multicultural collaborators' SCPRs	Explore and establish a framework for measurement of performance in multicultural collaborative SCPR activities and identify new research agendas
Multicultural collaborators' supply	Patterns of behaviour and performance expectations	There is a lack of a coherent set of performance indicators to establish	How can criteria on which multicultural	Defining relationship performance in	Evaluation in current and possible future practice in

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chain partnering relationship performance	are inconsistent for manufacturers with international multicultural partners	the links between behaviours and effectiveness against multicultural collaborators' business objectives	supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined?	multicultural partnering relationships	managing multicultural collaborators' business, and offering guidance for practitioner behaviour
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1.3.2 Significance of academic results

Having first come to the attention of supply chain researchers, empirical studies in relation to supply chain management have flourished. Despite the growing trend toward supply chain partnering relationships, though, a dearth of literature exists in several important areas.

This thesis offers two important insights from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Firstly, the development of partnering relationship tensions between a manufacturer and a supplier is influenced by the multiple and overlapping relational linkages embedded in the relationship network (Dyer and Nobeoka, 2000; Choi and Wu, 2009; Wilhelm, 2011). Secondly, the relationship network structure alters relational dynamics and influences manufacturers' sourcing and partnering relationship strategies (Kim et al., 2011). Theories of partnering relationships describe both their behaviour and the overall pattern of these complex relationships (Pathak, Wu and Johnston, 2014). A limited number of studies have looked beyond the dyad and have examined co-operation within a broad range of SCPRs (Choi and Hong, 2002; Kim et al., 2011).

When considering the multicultural SCPR process, however, a complete framework does not exist to integrate a variety of relevant factors. Few scholars have researched the interactions between horizontal (joint venture) and vertical (manufacturer-supplier) relationships (Zhang and Goffin, 2001; Wu and Choi, 2005; Cheung et al., 2010; Lockström et al., 2010; Mesquita and Lazzarini, 2010; Kim et al., 2011; Anand and Bahinipati, 2012; Jia and Lamming, 2013). Additionally, only one study by Zhang and Goffin (2001) undertook IJV background research, but this was solely based on an existing supplier management arrangement. Therefore, a complete framework needs to be explored and established in order to identify criteria to be incorporated into multicultural effectiveness SCPR measurement.

Regardless of the increased popularity of the partnering relationship as a business model, a dearth of academic commentary exists in relation to a number of aspects. Some research on partnering relationships pertains to the relative competency in performance (Carr and Pearson, 1999; Benton and Maloni, 2005; Bititci et al., 2005; Paulraj, Lado and Chen, 2008; Yeung, 2008; Nyaga, Whipple and Lynch, 2010; Liu et al., 2012; Narayanan, Narasimhan and Schoenherr, 2015); however, only Ribbink and Grimm (2014) have investigated cultural differences through the lens of the supply chain relationship.

A number of studies have explored the impact of various factors on partnering relationships from an empirical research perspective. Thus, refining SCPRs in a multicultural collaborators' business

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environment requires consideration of both the structural characteristics of the network and the behaviour of individual companies (Lejeune and Yakova, 2005; Wu and Choi, 2005; Li et al., 2011; Nair and Vidal, 2011). In particular, there are no measurement tools or evaluation processes to monitor multicultural partnering relationship performance. The above-mentioned framework provides such as a process (discussed in chapter 4) and is defined within the empirical data (in chapter 5) in managing multicultural collaborative business to business relationships' practitioner behaviour.

The diverse results emerging from the literature review suggest that research is necessary in order that multicultural manufacturers can obtain empirical evidence to form the basis for a comprehensive and reliable understanding of the SCPR. Therefore, some insights may be gained by measuring the SCPR from a multicultural perspective.

1.3.3 Significance to practice

Summary of research questions and their justification is provided in Table 1. The conceptual framework (to be developed in Chapter 2 and pictured in Figure 4, p.65), incorporates effective SCPR processes and practices within the multicultural collaborators' business environment, and relationship performance measurement, and conceptualisation, which overall, provides a viable framework for ongoing research and practice.

The successful SCPR is a key element for both manufacturers and suppliers to become successful in China and other markets. Besides classic measurement criteria such as cost, quality, delivery and flexibility, more attention has been paid to 'softer' criteria, as well as a level of trust between manufacturers and suppliers, in order to integrate suppliers at the required performance level. These are attributes of supplier collaboration readiness that were identified in this thesis. Therefore, these are critical to influencing the mindset of the suppliers as a first step. Put differently, it might be inappropriate to only focus on classic supplier performance metrics in a market that is highly dynamic and immature. The concept of supplier readiness and continued supplier development activities ought to be of high relevance. The stringency of certain quality and material standards in the automotive industry is another key aspect that requires state-of-the-art process management skills.

The thesis indicates that multicultural manufacturer and supplier relationships are generally built up gradually at a very senior level and that the levels of trust and commitment increase incrementally over time, with relatively little reliance on contractual agreements unless

necessary. Within the context of the Chinese automotive industry, multicultural management skills are essential in order to make sound decisions and also anticipate potential problems when ramping up business to business relationships. This thesis and empirical data collection conducted concentrated on a strategic process perspective in addressing linkages inherent in multicultural cooperation through partnering relationship management utilising measurement and refining criteria, renewal and the creation of mutual advantages.

Within the context of the Chinese automotive industry, this thesis explores another perspective which is how different nationalities and organisations compare in their business practice and focus, and how they perceive the SCPR and its effectiveness.

1.4 Research methodology

The focus of this study is on SCPR which connects several multicultural manufacturers with suppliers in the Chinese automotive industry. Its goals are to contribute to refining partnering relationship theories in respect of the multicultural SCPR, explore and establish a complete framework of the process of the SCPR in a multicultural collaborators' context, refine the framework using empirical data, and suggest how the framework can be used in practice.

Given the complexity of multicultural SCPRs, empirical evidence is essential to develop theories to support this phenomenon (Boyer and Swink, 2008). Following the proposed framework advanced to measure SCPRs, a cross-sectional case study approach was adopted. As explained in chapter 3, research on SCPRs within a multicultural collaborators' business environment is still relatively nascent. The case study method is particularly suitable for exploratory purposes (Voss et al., 2002). More specifically, a case study research design enables 'why' and 'how' questions to be answered, and provides an in-depth understanding of phenomena that are not fully known (Eisenhardt, 1989; Barratt et al., 2011).

This research achieved this by analysing empirical data gathered through a qualitative case study methodology. This research proposes a conceptual framework to inform the data collection process; explores multicultural collaborators' business relationships' management; and measures the partnering relationship utilising the selected examples drawn from the international joint venture groupings in the Chinese automotive sector. The research investigated how partnering theories operate in existing partnering relationships, using a combination of qualitative case studies and interviews conducted in the Chinese automotive industry. The author sought to address the research gaps identified in previous partnering relationship studies by analysing the

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partnering relationship literature, along with the theoretical perspectives of operations management. Furthermore, multiple nationality IJVs were contextualised in terms of how their supply chain partnering relationship approaches are viewed by both manufacturers and suppliers within the relationship. The aim was to focus on dynamic relationships as the unit of analysis.

A framework on which to analyse the data was defined. This involved engaging 5 types of supply chain partnering relationships with the China-based subsidiaries of an IJV automotive manufacturer and four or five of its 19 China-based IJV company managers, along with a selection of their tier-one suppliers and four of its 15 China-based IJV or IDI company managers. The study instruments were administered to managers representing each of these organisational groupings. Through in-depth case studies and interviews with multiple Chinese and international managers, the researcher was able to acquire an understanding of the different dimensions of partnering relationships, identify how these relationships operated, and undertake a measurement of partnering relationships within a multicultural collaborators' business environment. Lastly, suggestions are made for future research. This research examined the effects of extra- and inter-organisational relationships, reviewed from the perspective of a historical pattern of exchange and producing a variety of business outcomes.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis is organised as follows: Chapter 2 provides a literature review, examining the SCPR process and partnering relationship performance alternatives available to practitioners, as well as assessing the applicability of these criteria within the multicultural collaborative automotive industry. This is achieved by revisiting and measuring effective SCPR performance and classifying them against established criteria, along with analysing the insights gained into the SCPR process, based on approaches presented in the literature. The rationale for this research is to determine whether multicultural collaborators' partnering relationships remain an effective option for the automotive industry. This will validate the continuation of this intended research direction. The conclusion of Chapter 2 proposes a detailed description of the conceptual framework of SCPRs and the different branches of this type of research. This includes outlining various stages in the SCPR development process arising from different cooperative behaviours and characteristics. Partnering relationship performance, within a multicultural collaborators' business environment, was investigated. The connotations and perspectives of effectiveness SCPRs, within theoretical models, were also explored.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodologies applied in this thesis, covering a range of approaches, such as an exploratory literature review and case study research (including semi-structured interviews). The chapter also describes some of the alternative types of research methodologies conducted in the field of SCPRs to justify the approach, which was selected.

Chapter 4 provides a description of the companies selected as case study examples, used as a test bed for multicultural collaborators' SCPRs and partnering relationship performance processes. The applicability of the concept of SCPRs to specific companies is also evaluated using the initial framework. This chapter highlights a number of multicultural partnering relationship criteria presented in the literature, develops new criteria for SCPRs, and describes how these were applied in companies participating in the case studies. The outcomes of the multicultural collaborators' SCPR process and its performance are described at the end of this chapter. By applying the multicultural collaborators' SCPR arrangements to manufacturers and suppliers, the research seeks to refine this concept and review whether this approach is effective in light of the practical requirements that need to be met within the automotive industry.

Final conclusions are highlighted and limitations and future research directions are discussed in chapter 5. The abstract, table of contents, tables, figures and appendices contribute to providing a comprehensive overview of this research area.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The importance of an appropriate supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) was highlighted in Chapter 1. In the literature review, searching and choosing the literature, in the process of SCPR and the multicultural collaborators' business environment, therefore, could be a crucial strategic decision. In the context of this thesis, reviewing and determining the applicability of the efficient SCPR approaches presented in the literature of the multicultural automotive industry in China formed a key motivation for undertaking this work. However, determining the applicability of multicultural SCPR approaches is a complex process. The number of alternative concepts is increasing, and multicultural businesses are inclined to suggest that any such approach is universally appropriate. The recommendation for a universal approach is driven by a lack of multicultural collaborators on the part of the automotive industry, which hopes to benefit from a particularly effective SCPR and thus gain wide applicability. However, aiming for such wide applicability means it is inevitable that the automotive industry's multicultural collaborators' business to business relationships are not adequately met given that business environments are diverse in terms of supplier selection, partnering relationship management, partnering relationship performance, confusing the priority of relationships, and so on. The performance of SCPR is often an ill-informed strategy based on SCPR rather than on the selection of features designed for a specific business.

From the structure of the literature review, the definitions of SCPR and the performance of SCPR are defined in section 2.2. The analysis of the motivation for the research and formative theoretical basis of the SCPR process are clearly stated in section 2.3 and the chapter reviews the applicability of each SCPR within its relevant industry and investigates the different approaches that may be adopted. The previous section's review evaluates and categorises the applicability of the approaches, in order to assist practitioners in their choice of SCPR approach and ensure the validity of the research pursued in this thesis. The need to address the specific requirements of the multicultural sector has been increasingly acknowledged in the recent research literature, which is explained in section 2.4. The underlying reasons for the multicultural collaborators' relationships are set out below. The contemporary literature presents a number of concepts that claim to cater for complex business relationship settings, such as the IJV manufacturer. The measurement of partnering relationship performance is defined in 2.5. However, further guidance is required to determine when each approach should be practically applied. As a result, a critical assessment of SCPR's key findings and methodologies from a multicultural collaborators' business

viewpoint is necessary to aid this SCPR process and improve performance for practitioners. This helps to identify research gaps and design the initial framework. Section 2.7 summarises the literature covered in the earlier sections in tabular form and highlights some broad areas in need of further research. Finally, the main theoretical framework propositions are presented.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Supply chain partnering relationships

A definition of a 'partnering relationship' has been established, based on a range of descriptions of supply chain and partnering relationships available in the literature (Lamming, 1993, p.149; Szwajczewski, Lemke and Goffin, 2005; Ellram, 1991; Lambert et al., 1996; Macbeth, 1998). The supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) is a strong cooperative relationship that is formed by two separate companies, such as manufacturers and suppliers, who work closely to plan and execute supply chain operations in order to attain common goals, thereby achieving more benefits by collaborating than when acting independently.

Veludo, Macbeth and Purchase (2004) asserted that partnering is a type of relationship that has to be defined and targeted by the parties involved, at the start of a learning process, leading to meeting previously agreed objectives. This agreement must first be reached between parties who perceive that an economic advantage exists in collaborating, and wish to commit formally and emotionally to construct a relationship in which mutual benefits will be gained. Although collaboration is needed within a partnering relationship, this essentially occurs in a less developed form. There will be occasions within every relationship when both cooperation and competition will be present. The Industrial marketing and purchasing (IMP) groups (e.g., Ford, 1990; Miles and Snow, 1992; Håkansson and Johanson, 1992) attempted to define the dimensions and characteristics of partnering, which translate into activity links, actor bonds and resource ties.

Child, Faulkner and Tallman (2005) suggested that partnering relationships comprise two dimensions, which may result in management difficulties, as compared to overseeing a single authoritative organisation. The first dimension is that the partnering relationship is headed up by more than two authoritative sources, resulting in a situation where multiple managers assume responsibility. Therefore, in partnering relationship operations management, the expectations of a number of parties need to be taken into consideration or satisfied. The second dimension is that cultural differences may exist between the partners, and this problem is likely to be more serious in international partnering relationship arrangements. Partnering relationships can face dilemmas based on these two elements.

Studies of partnering relationships are underpinned by some well-established frameworks, such as transaction cost theory, political economy theory, social exchange theory and resource dependency theory (Robicheaux and Coleman, 1994). In addition, empirical models, drawing on a variety of management disciplines, have been advanced and investigated in the literature. These include the industrial marketing and purchasing group interaction model (Håkansson, 1982), network models (Jarillo, 1990), channel models (Heide and John, 1988) and partnering relationship models (Helper and Sako, 1995). These studies differ somewhat in their approach to research purpose (descriptive versus theoretical), research design (cross-sectional versus longitudinal), unit of analysis (company, dyad or network), and schools of thought (European and North American). Empirical models of manufacturer-supplier relationships, while divergent in many respects, complement each other in terms of the relationship dimensions being considered. In their review of seven of the most influential studies of the relationship paradigm, Wilson and Moller (1991) identified the following dimensions, which comprise trust, satisfaction, adaptation/transaction-specific investments, power/dependence, communication, commitment and cooperation.

According to research conducted by Veludo et al. (2000) and Child et al. (2005), the researcher classifies the SCPRs by definitions, dimensions and characteristics in Table 2.

Table 2 Definitions of supply chain partnering relationship

2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4
Categories	Key criteria	Descriptions	Select author (s)
Dimensions	Adaptation	A process whereby suppliers are able to accommodate particular crucial customer requirements, and customers can also make adjustments based on the abilities of individual suppliers.	Hallén, Johanson and Seyed-Mohamed, 1991
	Power	Refers to the degree to which two parties are reliant upon one another to achieve their objectives, along with the origin or centre of each individual member's power.	El-Ansary and Stern, 1972
	Dependency	A company's requirement to attain its aims and aspirations by continuing to support an exchange relationship.	Frazier and Roby, 1991

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Trust	Based on an assumption that one company will engage in activities which will lead to positive results for another, and conversely where it will not abruptly initiate measures which would produce adverse effects for the other.	Anderson and Narus, 1990, p.45;	
Commitment	A direct or indirect undertaking by exchange partners to sustain their ongoing relationship.	Dwyer et al., 1987 p.19	
Characteristics	Sharing of information	Two parties work together, share market demand information, resources and share risks and rewards. Two parties can make joint decisions to accomplish mutual beneficial outcomes.	Aulakh, Kotabe and Sahay, 1996; Lambert, Emmelhainz and Gardner, 1996; Spekman, Kamauff and Myhr, 1998; Bowersox, Closs and Stank, 2003; Johnston et al., 2004; Lui and Ngo, 2005; Angeles and Nath, 2001; Green and Inman, 2005; Holweg, Luo and Oliver, 2008
Synergic relationship	The partnering relationship is defined as a synergic relationship. An organisation can develop a partnering relationship by partnering with a buyer or a supplier for cost reduction, and this can include a supplier's participation in the new product development, distribution and logistic management.	McIvor and Mchugh, 2000	
Co-operation	Accomplishment of mutual goals through collaborative arrangements.	Anderson and Narus, 1990;	
Communication	The prompt exchange of important information between companies through both official and unofficial channels.	Anderson and Narus, 1990,p.44;	

Satisfaction	Aspects viewed as gratifying, lucrative and beneficial, or, alternatively, deemed to be expensive, discriminatory or infuriating by a company.	Rukert and Churchill, 1984; Ping, 1993
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Based on the definitions of partnering relationships put forward by the aforementioned academics, they can be summarised to indicate that they refer to a close cooperative relationship formed between two separate companies, sharing the need to adapt, build trust, gain mutual benefits, manage power and dependence, provide commitment, and reduce costs. Partners must also be compatible in terms of a number of considerations, including culture, synergy, cooperation, sharing of information, effective performance delivery, business communication and achieving satisfactory outcomes.

A SCPR is typically formed based on long-term and strategic policies, which frequently entail a very long and arduous process (Gunasekaran, Patel and McGaughey 2004). Claycomb and Frankwick (2005) believed that a good relationship must be established following a process of knowing, exploration, expansion and commitment. At each stage, several critical processes are involved, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 Main development stages of a partnering relationship

3.1 Stage	3.2 Critical development process
Knowing	Evaluate the qualifications of the partner Investigate the benefits of aligning with the partner
Exploration	Attract Communicate and negotiate Develop and utilise powers Develop regulations and expectations
Expansion	Improve the added value from the partnering relationship and enhance mutual reliance
Commitment	Be loyal Share values, objectives and expectations Be willing to overlook partner's one-time mistakes Trust Be future-oriented

Christopher (2000) identified that a SCPR is mainly formed through five key steps: (1) defining a balanced set of relationships; (2) developing the right interface structure; (3) cooperating across systems; (4) managing people through change; and (5) monitoring the relationship.

Choy, Lee and Lo (2002) argued that the process of a partnering relationship is divided into five stages: (1) selecting a partner; (2) defining the target; (3) setting the relationship boundaries; (4) creating a relationship value; and (5) maintaining the relationship. Choy et al. (2002) also put forward some variables that can influence a successful partnering relationship. These include reputation, performance satisfaction, trust, social contract, degree of similarity between alternative partnering relationships, common goals, power or rights, technology, non-recoverable investment, adaptability, structural contract, cooperation, and commitment. These variables may be necessary at any one stage, and have the potential to influence all other stages.

Based on the definitions advanced by the aforementioned academics of a partnering relationship, SCPR describes a close cooperative connection that is formed between two separate companies that share congruent strategic objectives, complementary resources and capabilities. They are also compatible in relation to aspects such as partner culture, organisational structure and business management and operations, as well as being capable of developing mutual trust, a high level of commitment, information sharing, risk sharing and the acquisition of interests. The goals that cannot be independently achieved by a single member of the relationship should be achieved by joint efforts, and this is generally the key point of establishing a supply chain management arrangement.

2.2.2 Partnering relationship performance

Performance can be defined as a metric used to quantify the efficiency and/or effectiveness of an action (Neely et al., 1995). It plays a critical role in organisational management (Melnik et al., 2014). Within the context of a SCPR, one single company no longer affects performance. Instead, all partners involved contribute to the overall performance of the entire supply chain. This is the key point of this study. It is recommended that all participants be effectively integrated into a SCPR (Chan and Qi, 2003), and managed in its entirety. Therefore, the supply chain is not merely a group of independent, self-focused manufacturers and suppliers. Organisation of the interface between them avoids the disjointed stages of the supply chain. Cousins et al. (2008) stated that supplier performance is vital to the success of the manufacturer-supplier relationship, when measuring each individual participant's input into the supply chain management process. On the other hand, manufacturer performance is narrower and assesses the prospective relationship and

organisational capabilities in relation to company's performance (Koufteros, Verghese and Lucianetti, 2014). The collaborative supply chain may use a decision support environment to improve the performance of a collaborative supply chain (Angerhofer and Angelides, 2006).

To increase the functioning of a collaborative supply chain, specific areas for improvement must be determined (Jonsson and Lesshammar, 1999). By its very nature, a supply chain should be viewed as one single entity and managed as a whole, in which all the members are functionally integrated and synchronised with mutual goals (Chan and Qi, 2003). Accordingly, the supply chain is neither solely a collection of independent, self-centred manufacturers and suppliers operating through the partnering relationship, nor the coordination of interfaces between the fragmented functions of the supply chain components. Tier-one suppliers have taken on an increasing level of responsibility for developing and producing components rather than simply making predesigned parts (Lockström et al. 2010, p. 241; Petersen et al., 2004; Pil and Holweg, 2004; Quesada et al., 2006).

Bititci et al. (2012) illustrated the performance measurement challenges of tomorrow, which define performance measurement trends. They also reveal the challenges facing the performance measurement systems of collaborative companies, and how theoretical and practical multicultural collaborators should be effectively investigated. With this in mind, this research focuses on partnering relationship performance. Chan et al. (2003) classified performance measurements into two types: qualitative (e.g., measuring customer satisfaction, flexibility and effective risk management) and quantitative (e.g., cost, customer responsiveness and productivity). McAdam and Bannister (2001) proposed that two measures of partnering relationship performance existed, both of which were considered to be perceptual and qualitative: (1) relationship effectiveness—how productive and worthwhile the partners view the relationship in terms of commitment, productivity, rewards, satisfaction and increased levels of supplier expertise; and (2) cost reduction benefits—how the relationship enables parties to generate benefits through reduced operational costs, in terms of end-product manufacturing costs, coordination costs and streamlined practices.

The main aim of the above discussion has been to identify antecedent conditions and emergent processes which can influence performance (Pansiri, 2005). This can vary and includes, but is not limited to, raising questions in relation to alliance progress (Harper, 2001); alliance strength, autonomy and flexibility (Bleeke and Ernst, 1995); flexibility in management of the alliance; building trust with partners; regular information exchange with partners; constructive management of conflict; and continuity of boundary personnel responsible for the interface between the company and the alliance and managing partner expectations (Gulati and Singh,

1998). This study considered these and other different aspects when exploring and assessing cultural background performance during various stages of the overall partnering relationship process. Partnering relationship performance provides a relatively direct indication of the effects of the relationship between the various supply chains' constructs.

2.3 The process of the supply chain partnering relationship

2.3.1 Introduction

Relationships between manufacturers and their suppliers are typically called 'manufacturer-supplier relationships', which is a somewhat broad term (Goffin et al., 2006). The relationship between manufacturers and suppliers is a form of business relationship which is often described as a partnering relationship. This does not imply that they have the same legal basis as a formal business partnering relationship or alliance (Goffin et al., 2006).

There is a rich body of knowledge capturing the many aspects of partnering relationships, although little distinction is made between transactional and strategic relationships (Johnston and Staughton, 2009). Many authors (e.g., McIvor and Mchugh, 2000; Angeles and Nath, 2001; Mentzer et al., 2000; Frazier and Roby, 1991) have written about the specific and discrete criteria of 'relationships' which possess mutual objectives and a focus on open decision making and problem solving as well as continuous improvement.

Partnering relationship literature is the parent discipline of this study, which focuses on the process of the SCPR. How manufacturers select and manage their partnering relationship(s) with suppliers has interested many researchers (e.g., Heide and John, 1998; Helper, 1991; Youssef, 1992; Ellram and Hendrick, 1995; Holm et al., 1999).

Studying the whole lifecycle of the SCPR – from the initial demand analysis of manufacturers and suppliers to the establishment and continuation of the relationship and finally termination – means a complete management process needs to be established to explore the relationship. This reflects Cleland and King's (1983) argument that research project life cycles are often characterised by four phases: conceptual, planning, execution, and termination. In general, the fundamental steps involved in a SCPR consist of: (1) recognising the partnering relationship; (2) supplier selection; (3) partnering relationship management; (4) SCPR termination (only if necessary will at the end of the list); (5) partnering relationship performance; and (6) multicultural collaborators' business environment. The entire process includes many elements that are critical to the success of the SCPR.

2.3.2 Recognise the partnering relationship

2.3.2.1 The necessity of the supply chain partnering relationship

While managers of supply chains face many challenges, as Johnson et al. (2004) note, one of the hardest is establishing good partnering relationships. Many scholars, such as Goffin et al. (2006), fail to contemplate the elements, which affect the success of supply chain relationships and suggest that companies must always focus on building friendly connections with their suppliers.

Others have argued that companies should focus on ascertaining exactly when special relationships are necessary and for which types of products (Brennan, 1997). For instance, Ziropli and Caputo (2002) argued that automotive companies should base their relationships with suppliers around factors such as their role in innovation, the type of goods they supply and their relevance to overall car performance, and how long it takes them to deliver. In summary, there are many advantages to manufacturers if they can build strong bonds with their suppliers (Johnson et al., 2004). These can include better quality, lower costs and reliable delivery. This demonstrates that manufacturers who enjoy good relationships with their partners experience many benefits, which is a necessity if they are going to be competitive (Goffin et al., 2006).

Studies have suggested that companies must evaluate whether partnering relationships are really necessary or achievable (McCutcheon and Stuart, 2000). Whether a relationship is necessary is related to the supplier's technical abilities and whether the partner is able to complement the needs of the company. Meanwhile achievability depends on how each company sees the potential benefits of their relationship and the extent of goodwill and trust the companies feel for each other. Good partnering relationships require that each side understands how they will benefit from their association. Good partnering relationships are based on a number of different elements, including the use of contracts to boost confidence, knowledge distribution, and the use of methods such as target costing (Ziropli and Caputo, 2002). A lack of confidence and the presence of transaction-specific assets are two reasons why companies develop deeper partnering relationship with each other (Williamson, 1985; Heide, 1995). Companies in a partnering relationship can communicate with each other, which can be useful for collaborators and are more open to sharing information with each other. As Prashant et al. (2000) observed, the partnering relationship means companies are able to take advantage of the ability to gain new knowledge from the other party.

Cao and Zhang (2011) noted that good relationships with suppliers can grant companies a competitive advantage over other companies in the marketplace. This is called partnering

relationship necessity. As Vangen and Huxham (2003) observed, the 'necessity' advantage of a relationship refers to the desired synergistic outcome which occurs when companies work together and which no company could obtain by itself. Working together means each company can gain more than the sum of its parts, obtaining an advantage that they could not gain by themselves (Jap, 1999). Companies can obtain a range of benefits, and could save money by sharing ideas on effective, improve the abilities of their managers, and come up with better ways to develop new ideas. Min et al. (2005) argued that while the advantages of developing close relationships may take some time to develop, they can be very worthwhile. Simatupang and Sridharan (2005) found that these relationships must benefit both parties if they are to be successful. Similarly, Fisher (1997) found that partners can profit by boosting their openness, particularly for new and ground-breaking goods. Lambert et al. (2004) also argue that companies can save money in partnering relationships as they can reduce duplication of efforts. Madhok and Tallman (1998) found that companies which cooperate with each other are able to achieve better results and obtain synergistic rents. Singh and Mitchell (1996) and Park et al. (2004) argued that building good relationships with other companies can have a number of advantages, as it allows companies to lower expenses, gain information, and access greater resources than they could do by operating alone. Uzzi (1997) argued that good relationships can help companies quickly take advantage of market openings, while Simatupang and Sridharan (2005) noted that such relationships make it easier to fulfil customer needs. Companies which exchange resources can reduce costs, while complementary resources can increase the value of the company's products (Tanriverdi, 2006). The extent to which companies can communicate with each other simultaneously, and to which extent they share the same goals, can affect how responsive they are (Fisher, 1997).

2.3.2.2 Differences in joint venture relationships

Business relationships are a term which summarises the many different words used to define the many different partnering relationships between companies across and within supply chains (Johnston and Staughton, 2009). Many studies have investigated these types of relationship, although there is controversy regarding their definitions. Henderson (1990) noted that partnering relationship or alliances between companies have been defined as contracts that are intended to benefit both parties (Mohr and Spekman, 1994). Partnerships can last for a long time, or only a brief period. Johnston and Staughton (2009) stated that partnering focuses on creating closer links between companies; meanwhile, 'Partnering involves the parties working together in an environment of trust and openness to realise the project efficiently without conflict' (Black et al.,

2000, p.423). Partnering can be defined as two or more companies that are working towards a number of goals which will improve the manner in which the companies involved function (Bennett and Jayes, 1995, 1998).

These partnering relationships focus on the completion of a common objective. This generally requires the use of techniques to deal with any conflicts which arise and to efficiently resolve any issues which do emerge (Larson, 1995; Black et al., 2000). Bresnen (2007) noted that while partnering may involve one short-term piece of work, companies can gain greater advantages when they adopt long-term commitment strategic partnering (Bennett and Jayes, 1995). Egan's (1998) study suggested that companies wishing to enter a strategic partnership must be willing to create a stable and lasting association, while Gill and Butler (2003) noted that joint ventures are a type of partnering relationship which may involve companies paying to create new and independent affiliates which they own together (Stafford, 1994). These joint ventures often use the abilities offered by each partner to take advantage of new opportunities which have become available. Doz and Hamel (1998) found that formal agreements are made which clarify the contribution made by each partner.

Many studies have been written on how partnering relationships can management. These consist of various fields of study which focus on a range of areas, including operation management, supply chain management, logistics and purchasing (Fynes et al., 2005). A few of these investigations have been subject to criticism, including complaints that studies on best practice have not been based on empirical evidence but on hearsay, and that they have not focused on a broad enough array of issues (Bresnen, 2007).

More recent studies are using more evidence-based methods and have identified a number of issues with partnering relationships. For example, Bresnen (1996) has questioned whether these relationships can really reduce risk and costs, while Staughton and Johnston (2005) have studied the manner in which relationships are measured. Bresnen (2007) focused on the flaws of the partnering approach, and Kelly et al. (2002) investigated challenges facing companies with very new relationships. Finally, Phua and Rowlinson (2003) concentrated on cultural differences and whether business relationships were really worth the scene for continuing since it seems at the moment that there are concerns about the use and benefit of partnering. The summary of recognise the partnering relationship is defined at Table 4.

Table 4 Recognise the partnering relationship

4.1 Categories	4.2 Key criteria	4.3 Select author(s)

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Necessity of partnering relationship	Overall car performance	Fisher, 1997; Ziropli and Caputo, 2002
	Performance advantages of manufacturers	Johnson et al., 2004
	Better quality	Goffin, Lemke and Szwejczewski, 2006
	Lower costs	Singh and Mitchell, 1996; Jap, 1999; Lambert et al., 2004; Park et al., 2004; Goffin, Lemke and Szwejczewski, 2006; Tanriverdi, 2006
	Reliable delivery	Goffin, Lemke and Szwejczewski, 2006
	Technology development trajectory	Fisher, 1997; Jap, 1999; McCutcheon and Stuart, 2000
	Extent of goodwill and trust	McCutcheon and Stuart, 2000
	Potential benefits	McCutcheon and Stuart, 2000; Prashant, Harbir and Howard, 2000; Min et al., 2005
	Target costing	Ziropli and Caputo, 2002
	Information sharing	Singh and Mitchell, 1996; Lado et al., 1997; Ziropli and Caputo, 2002; Park et al., 2004
	Strategic benefits	Min et al., 2005; Cao and Zhang, 2011
	Synergistic outcome	Lado et al., 1997; Jap, 1999; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Simatupang and Sridharan, 2005
	Reduce duplication of efforts	Lambert et al., 2004
	Fulfil customer needs	Simatupang and Sridharan, 2005
	Capitalise quickly on market opportunities	Uzzi, 1997
	Mutual support and interdependence	Johnston et al., 2004
	Complementary resources	Tanriverdi, 2006

Alignment between joint venture relationship and supply chain partnering relationship	Joint ventures format a new separate subsidiary, jointly owned by the partners	Stafford, 1994, p.65; Gill and Butler, 2003
	Partnering relationship purposive agreements between independent companies	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Johnston and Staughton, 2009
	Partnering involves the parties working together in an environment which based on projects	Bennett and Jayes, 1995, p.2; Black et al., 2000, p.423; Bresnen, 2007

2.3.3 Supplier selection

Supplier selection is crucial to the supply chain partnering relationship. In this study, 'supplier selection' refers to identifying, qualifying, selecting, evaluating, developing and certifying suppliers. This is a process that occurs over a period of time and is designed to ensure the company has a pool of suppliers large enough to provide the materials and services needed by the company. The purchasing staff may therefore identify and qualify many suppliers, but select, develop and certify only a few to meet the needs of the manufacturer. A partner's organisational characteristics, business concept, strategy orientation and similarity to the other's own organisation must be considered when they are selected. Since long-term partnering relationships are often maintained through informal means in the supply chain network system, partners cannot be exchanged easily. A long-term partnering relationship cannot be maintained if the mutual organisational characteristics, such as scale, technical capabilities, business concept and partner's culture, differ significantly between members.

Child, Faulkner and Tallman (2005) suggested that complementarity is a main principle for selecting a partner. If complementarity is lacking between partners or if a partner's expectations cannot be understood or supported, the result can be a failure of cooperation. Kelly, Schaan and Joncas (2002) pointed out that a good choice of partners must consider compatibility, meaning complementary advantages and disadvantages. Partners must have the ability to resolve differences of opinion, and partners must also have capacity and capability; sufficient capacity to contribute to cooperation. Partners should have a commitment, which means that both partners

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in the process of cooperation have a commitment to complete targets. Walter et al. (2003) proposed that commitment, trust, and satisfaction are 'relationship quality' measures (describing commitment as a lasting intention to build and maintain a long-term relationship). Morgan and Hunt (1994) emphasised the role of trust and commitment in relationship marketers is crucial. The marketers understood about the relationship before the supply side did and therefore their literature is valid in the research context. Also, Cox (2001) asserted that supply chain relationships should be approached as long-term collaborations based on trust. Austin and Seitanidi's (2012) research indicated that the compatibility between partners is also an important factor affecting the partnering relationship. Brouthers, Brouthers and Wilkinson (1995) pointed out that in the choice of a partner, partners who have complementary skills should be considered, there should be a culture of cooperation between manufacturer and supplier, and they should have compatible targets, which are commensurate with the level of risk. The relationship cannot only be expounded with a complementary balance concept but also can be described by common interests, consistency, interdependence and other concepts (Douma et al., 2000). Austin and Seitanidi (2012) believed that the operating system is the key to supporting more effective mutual cooperation. The cooperation activity of partnering relationship can be assessed, communicated and coordinated if partners have similar management systems. Therefore the capability compensation and status between partners should be considered when the manufacturers select suppliers.

Both the popular press and academic research from different perspectives emphasise the supplier selection criteria, such as trust, coordination, interdependence, participation, information sharing, conflict resolution, commitment, comprehensive, integration, product quality, product performance, delivery reliability, cost and inventory (e.g., Geringer, 1991; Mandal and Deshmukh, 1994; Vokurka, Choobineh and Vadi, 1996; Krause and Ellarm, 1997; Jayaraman, Srivastava and Benton, 1999; Motwani et al., 1999; Park and Krishnan, 2001; Tracey and Tan, 2001). Following (Melnyk et al., 2014, p. 173)'s research that 'what the company wants to achieve (as communicate by its strategy) and what the company measures and rewards are not synchronised with each other (i.e., there is a lack of 'fit')' we structure the supplier selection criteria into relationship strategy and operation measurement criteria as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Supplier selection

5.1 Categories	5.2 Key criteria	5.3 Descriptions	5.4 Select author(s)
Relationship	Strategy	The strategic orientation is an essential	Stafford, 1994
Strategy	orientation	condition for the success of a strategic partnering relationship. Partners will have	

	different responses to the events and actions if there is no working consensus on the cooperation goal. Strategic orientation within the supply chain partnering relationship is vital to remaining competitive in the market.	
Management style	A particular management style is explained by the influence of organisation structure on its distinct methods, control systems, decisions format and communication styles. A management system is the key to supporting more effective mutual cooperation. The management style capability and status between and among partners should be considered for the relationship performance measurement.	Covin and Slevin, 1988; Datta, 1991; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012
Interdependence	Interdependence between companies and their partners fosters cooperative goals, which refers to instances in which partners combine mutual forces to reach a common objective.	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; ; Andaleeb, 1996; Wong, Tjosvold, and Zhang, 2005
Mutual organisational characteristics	Mutual organisational characteristics explain when a business is determining whether it should enter a partnering relationship, which forces partners to develop skills that will minimise the interpersonal and organisational differences between them. It is important to consider whether the two businesses are similar enough to work together efficiently.	Zaheer and Venkatraman, 1995; Mahlendorf et al., 2012
Common goals	Cooperative partnering involves multiple partners working together to achieve a common goal that is mutually beneficial for the partnering relationship. The	Zhang and Goffin, 2001; Pidduck, 2006

<p>common goal between partners should be considered in the strategic perspective.</p>			
Complementarity	<p>It is vital that the issue of complementarity is extensively considered at the partner selection stage.</p> <p>The extent to which two companies are complementary will impact on how effectively aspects of their businesses, such as competencies and activities, can be integrated. Complementarity is the main principle underpinning the relationship strategy.</p>	Ohmae, 1989; Spekman and Sawhney, 1990	
Operation measurement criteria	<p>It is contended that commitment describes when a partner views the partnering relationship as crucial enough to allocate substantial resources to maintaining it. Further, the concept of commitment is fundamental to the relationship between a company and its partners. Commitment as a lasting intention to build and maintain a long-term relationship, commitment within a relationship measurement is proposed as a relationship quality measure.</p>	Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Walter et al., 2003; Kwon and Suh, 2004	
Trust	<p>Trust describes the situation where a company is confident that another company will act in its own interests when taking action and will not act unpredictably to their disadvantage. The benefits that the companies obtain from the partnering relationship itself are regarded as a significant portion of the trust-related benefits. Supply chain relationships should be approached as long-term collaborations based on trust. This specific area of dyadic relationships has been the subject of much research.</p>	Anderson and Narus, 1990; Gulati, 1995; Cox, 2001; Cai et al., 2013	

Communication behaviour	Inter-organisational communication enhances the manufacturer-supplier performance. Inter-organisational communication can be viewed as a critically important relational competency that can be leveraged for mutual gains within collaborative manufacturer-supplier relationships. It is on these grounds that the partnering relationship will be attained.	Paulraj et al., 2008;
Information sharing	Information sharing that is effective and methodological in nature can assist partners in their managerial roles and will ultimately impact on the overall success of the partnering relationship. Relationship between the supply chain performance and information sharing can be further clarified.	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Angeles and Nath, 2001; Simatupang and Sridharan, 2005; Sheu, Yen and Chae, 2006; Elofson and Robinson, 2007; Fredendall, Letmathe and Uebel, Emden, 2016
Participation decision	Participation decision concerns how active a particular partner is in the formulation of business strategy. It affects how satisfied each partner is with the relationship. Using participation decision as a criterion to measure the performance relationship is a crucial factor in determining whether a partnering relationship will be successful. It is also likely to affect how satisfied each partner is with the relationship.	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Cao et al., 2010
Quality	Manufacture of products with high quality and performance standards.	Leong, Snyder and Ward, 1990
Delivery	Meet delivery schedules or promises. React quickly to customer orders.	Leong, Snyder and Ward, 1990
Cost	Production and distribution of the product at low cost.	Leong, Snyder and Ward, 1990

Supplier strength	Size, scale, sales, industry relationship.	Paulraj et al., 2008
Production performance	Improve products quality; reduce customer time; production design and operational efficiencies.	Paulraj et al., 2008

Above all, the literature emphasises the criteria of supplier selection, which are summarised in Table 5. It can be seen the critical criteria of the supplier selection enables both manufacturers and suppliers to more effectively capitalise on the potential for development. There is little doubt that supplier selection is critical for a successful SCPR measurement, however, what is needed for achieving in both high-level (relationship strategy category) and detailed (operation measurement criteria) criteria requires more in-depth understanding and exploration in the empirical research.

2.3.4 Partnering relationship management

Partnering relationship management is one future research direction for supply chain partnering relationships (Croom et al., 2000; Arshinder et al., 2008). According to an analysis of several SCPR stages, partnering relationship management is more important than the actual formation of the relationship (Gunasekaran et al., 2004). A partnering relationship requires a solid and powerful foundation, whose sustainability is based on suppliers with competitive potential and effective operations management. At present, many manufacturers have reduced the number of suppliers, and regarding this as part of their overall supply chain plan, have developed a partnering relationship with competing potential suppliers (Vokurka et al., 1996; Lee and Whang, 2004). Manufacturers believe in keeping several reliable suppliers available and maintaining long-term cooperative relationships with them, which is more efficient than cooperation with many suppliers across every project (Altenburg and Meyer-Stamer, 1999). The effectiveness of the partnering relationship can be affected by the adjustment ability between partners (Child and Faulkner, 1998).

Partnering relationship management is based on the effective use of complementary or different partner resources, thereby creating a comprehensive performance. Meanwhile, differences or conflicts between partners should be reconciled or resolved, thereby ensuring consensus on relationship strategic objectives and maintaining mutual long-term support of partners for the

common goal (Spekman et al., 1998). Partnering relationship management mainly aims to create and ensure collaboration between partners.

Partnering relationship management is the business process that provides the structure for how relationships with suppliers are developed and maintained (Lambert and Schwieterman, 2012). Such management has become a critical business process as a result of competitive pressures and the need to consider sustainability and risks and achieve cost efficiency in order to be cost-competitive. Also crucial is the need to develop closer relationships with key suppliers who can provide the expertise necessary to develop innovative new products and successfully bring them to market (Lambert and Schwieterman, 2012). Kanter (1989) asserted that all partners should understand any mutual gaps, overcome obstacles and reduce the mutual gaps using a learning and cooperation approach.

Good management of relationships with suppliers can have significant benefits and can improve performance, as demonstrated by Swink et al. (2007), Singh and Powers (2009) and Flynn et al. (2010). The ability to co-create value is a further advantage of cross-functional collaborative relationships with suppliers (Enz and Lambert, 2012). An opportunity to manage the success of strategic sourcing and conventional procurement initiatives is represented by partnering relationship management (Lambert and Schwieterman, 2012). Narus and Anderson (1987) also believed that a successful partnering relationship should be maintained by mutual adjustment action.

Crane et al. (1999) argued that manufacturers and suppliers both construct a SCPR. Both parties entering the relationship should reach a consensus and sign the relevant contracts. The relationship between each party can be affected by changes in the environment, or by mutual differences such as culture, during the partnering relationship process. Mohr and Spekman (1994) believed that a high degree of commitment, coordination, interdependence, trust and other characteristics are required to build successful partnering relationships. Both parties should have common goals and be willing to work together for mutual benefit by assisting each other and dedicating themselves to the assurance of mutual benefit in order to maintain the cooperative relationship. Borys and Jemison (1989) pointed out that managing conflict in the partnering relationship is an important topic of debate, since conflict cannot be avoided. Prashant et al. (2000) proposed that partners could generate conflict because of their interdependent interactive relationship when both parties establish a bilateral partnering relationship. Types of conflicts between partners include conflicts of interest and operational conflicts. A conflict of interest occurs when the motivation and willingness to cooperate between both parties decreases while they have differing and competitive interests during the establishment of their partnering

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relationship. Meanwhile, operational conflicts arise when it turns out that organisational cultures and operational practices between partners are incompatible. These can reduce the effectiveness of cooperation, and both types of conflict can affect partnering relationship management.

Prashant et al. (2000) proposed the use of six indicators following their investigation of conflict resolution methods: clear mechanisms, tight surveillance, two-way communication, dealing with cultural barriers, joint conflict resolution, and high-level participation.

Crane et al. (1999) made it clear that the key influencing factors during SCPR management are relational factors, communication behaviour, conflict resolution, and power relations. Both parties need to stabilise relational factors at this stage, communicate with each other and coordinate over mutual differences, and rationally resolve friction and conflict. This will allow them to maintain and improve their SCPR management. The partnering relationship can thus develop stably and continuously, and the partners can engage in continuous management.

Table 6 Partnering Relationship management

6.1 Categories	6.2 Key criteria	6.3 Descriptions	6.4 Select author(s)
Stabilise	Independence	The stability independent of the privatisation to the supplier, which strengthened further relationship.	Pilkington, 1999
	Trust	Interaction and cooperation against a background of mutual trust are the foundations of a successful alliance. A stable source of supply can be provided through a stable partnering relationship when organisations face the dilemma of deficient technical resources.	Niederkofler, 1991
	Information sharing	A continuous partnering relationship is beneficial for information exchange between the partners, deeper and wider involvement and interaction between partners, and complex and dynamic transactions between partners. Close staff interaction between partners provides channels for learning about the abilities of partners.	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Gulati and Gargiulo, 1999
	Tight interaction	Relationships can be stabilised through the tight interaction of staff between partners at all levels, as well as mutual trust, respect and friendship between partners. Honest and open communication is beneficial	Prashant, Harbir and Howard, 2000

		for tightening the relationship between partners, and this can be established by long-term, mutual trust.	
Mutual goodwill		Mutual goodwill also has a stabilising effect on developing a partnering relationship in addition to the trust between partners. This is because it can increase partner tolerance of mutual behaviour, help to avoid conflict, and enhance the level of communication between the partners.	Niederkofler, 1991
Contract incentives		Contract incentives and information sharing play important roles in the coordination of the supply chain. The relationship between partners at all nodes in the supply chain has a dynamic evolutionary feature. In the case of supply chain dynamic coordination, it is critical to assess whether the partner with advantageous information can share that information with others and establish how partners in the supply chain can be motivated to share that information. A dominant supply chain contract imposes certain limitations on strategic space and the preferences of the supply chain partners by adjusting allocation model terms, supervision and encouragement terms, contract breach penalty terms, and specific rights and obligation terms. This guides supply chain partners to direct their efforts towards maximising the supply chain's overall interests, preventing opportunistic behaviour, and achieving the transition from 'individual rationality' to 'collective rationality'.	Prashant, Harbir and Howard, 2000
Coordination		Coordination between the two partners can maintain stable relations in an uncertain environment. Production will stall if a high degree of coordination is lacking, and the common interests of the plan will not be achieved.	Hillman and Dalziel, 2003
Adjust	Strategy target	The adjustments made to partnering relationship strategies and goals are an important indicator of partnering relationship adjustment. The interests and needs of partners may change over time, even if the partners have compatible interests and	Niederkofler, 1991

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complementary resources at the beginning. Partnering relationships between manufacturer and supplier may generate conflicts of interest, goal disagreement, no demand for partner resources, and so on.

Culture	Successful supply chain partnering relationship management demands mutual coordination between partners. Adjustment of the partnering relationship mainly refers to the adjustment of cultural differences. The influence of cultural differences on both parties can thus be reconciled if they understand their mutual cultural differences and are willing to compromise, even if the degree of fit in the relationship is low.	Child and Faulkner, 1998
Business environment	Partners can adjust to changes in internal and external environments by establishing a flexible partnering relationship. Adjustment within the partnering relationship involves three indicators: flexible adjustments due to partner change, environmental change negotiations, and renegotiation adjustments.	Parkhe, 1991
Solve conflict	Partners work together through the joint exchange of information and know-how, analysing and solving operational and strategic issues and problems to facilitate communication within the partnering relationship. Two-way communication between both partners is critical to successfully resolving conflicts. Conflict should be managed by the conflict resolution method of speedily contacting and communicating with partners.	Millar, Demaid and Quintas, 1997; Jean, Sinkovics and Kim, 2010
Cooperation	Conflict resolution is a method of eliminating or reducing disputes. There are five methods of conflict resolution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Forcing: one or both parties aim to meet their own needs only rather than considering the impact of their behaviour on their partners. (2) Cooperation: one or both parties try to meet the needs of all participants. (3) Avoiding: one or both parties feel conflict exists but choose to avoid or delay the occurrence of conflict. 	Byrnes, 1986

(4) Tolerance: one or both parties meet the needs of the other party by sacrificing their own interests.

(5) Compromise: one or both parties bear a partial loss to resolve the conflict.

However, conflict resolution by mutual cooperation between partners is better than the forcing and compromise models.

Joint solving and persuasion	Constructive conflict resolution techniques, including joint problem solution and persuasion. Destructive conflict resolution techniques such as domination, forcing and verbal provocation should be avoided. Results satisfactory to both parties may be reached when the partners take measures to solve the problem together, thereby maintaining the success of the partnering relationship.	Mohr and Spekman, 1994
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Partnering relationship management does not exist at the same level throughout in all partnering relationships; rather, this should be a multi-level capability structure based on the concept of the supply chain partnering relationship (see Table 6). Bucklin and Sengupta (1993) discussed how to manage the SCPR in order to increase a company's competitive advantage and alliance performance from the perspectives of strategic management-level planning, communication, and control, among others. Stabilising the relationship on the basis of mutual commitments, coordination, dependency and the trust of both parties in cooperation is the foundation of continuous management of the SCPR (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). Mutual differences can be adjusted on this basis, including strategic goal differences, partner cultural differences, and differences in organisational structure.

The partners should actively and carefully discuss any conflicts generated between them, and rationally solve any issues on the basis of continuous and stable relational factors. This will further ensure the continuity, development and improvement of the SCPR. Relationship measures are often referred to as 'soft' measures, and are used to track the activities and effectiveness of the partnering team (Crane et al., 1999). The processing ability of the supply chain partnering relationship can be continuously improved, continued and developed via such a cyclical process. Conflict resolution methods combine the approaches of the above scholars (Millar, Demaid and Quintas, 1997; Jean, Sinkovics and Kim, 2010; Byrnes, 1986; Mohr and Spekman, 1994), and

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conflict management methods include communication with partners, joint problem solution, and close contact.

In the SCPR management, changes in the external environment along with the distribution of internal interests will lead to objections, disputes or even conflicts between partners.

Manufacturers and suppliers must realise these problems have an objective existence and find corresponding solutions to adjust the cooperation mode and stabilise the partnering relationship.

From this way that they can maintain long and continuous SCPR.

2.3.5 Partnering relationship termination

Termination of the partnering relationship shall be deemed the last stage of the partnering relationship process. The relationship will eventually enter into the last stage after experiencing the process of establishing and maintaining (or knowing, exploring, extending and committing). In SCPRs, extant research on the underpinning legalities of partnering relationship termination in this area is scant and incomplete (Liu et al., 2012).

In the field of social psychology, Levinger (1979) put forward the concept of early relationship termination. He believed that the separation of partnering relationships refers to cancelling or dissolving the connection, relationship or alliance, and so on.

Halinen and Tähtinen (2002) proposed another process for terminating the partnering relationship. They provide the process model of relationship dissolution should be reflected in the partnering relationship, and suggested a process for terminating relationships with customers as the background. This is divided into six different stages; these are the evaluating stage, decision-making stage, communicating stage, terminating stage, latter stage, and the network communication stage. Of these, the evaluating and decision-making stages can be driven by one partner, while the communicating and terminating stages occur in the interaction between both parties. The criteria that influence the termination of partnering relationship is what the scholars mainly discuss at the termination stage, which include:

(1) Fairness. Peterson (1995) pointed out that the reason why the buyers join the transaction relationship is because of expectation based on fairness. Only if there is a positive relationship will the buyer continue to maintain the relationship. If a buyer feels they are being treated unfairly, they will decide to leave.

(2) Satisfaction. Kotler (2003) talking from a marketing viewpoint pointed out that the satisfaction degree from is the level at which people feel happy or disappointed. It is derived from cognition of the product's functions and characteristics and the expectations of the product. It is a feeling formed after making comparisons. If the functions and characteristics of the product or service are lower than expected, then the customer will be unsatisfied. Unsatisfied buyers lack loyalty, and will quickly change their selections

(3) Terminating/switching cost. Heide and John (1988) pointed out that switching costs can be incurred when an alternative relationship is sought after one party terminates the relationship. Termination costs refer to all possible expected losses and switching costs incurred when one partner terminates the relationship. Termination costs can be divided into two types: expected costs, such as those which arise during the termination of the partnering relationship, and real costs, such as relationship termination fees and substantial switching costs. Other costs of relationship termination include old relationship dissolution expenses, costs of searching and selection costs of a new relationship, and various costs of switching to a new relationship (Elfenbein and Zenger, 2014).

(4) Relationship commitment. Morgan and Hunt (1994) emphasised the role of trust and commitment in relationship marketers is crucial. The marketers understood about the relationship before the supply side did and therefore their literature is valid in the research context. They think that relationship benefits, relationship costs, common values, communications and conflicts will influence cooperation between partners and the leaving tendency of transaction partners through the medium of commitment and trust. If two parties disagree with the cognition of future cooperation, then the relationship will begin to deteriorate and the possibility that the relationship will end will increase significantly.

(5) Relationship trust. Trust, a critical element in social exchange relations, can be defined as the perception of confidence in the exchange partner's reliability and integrity (Hallen et al., 1991; Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

(5) Relationship duration. Jackson (1985) argues that the longer the relationship is, the higher the chance is that the supplier will show manufacturer capacity and establish a relationship with the manufacturer. If the relationship between the two parties lasts longer, it indicates that two parties have long-term interactions and communications, which will lead to a higher degree of trust and satisfactions. Ring and Van De Ven (1994) also think the longer the duration of the relationship, the lower the leaving tendency will be through relationship commitment. However, if the relationship has been brief, then commitment is low, and the investment in the relationship

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will also be low. In this case, only a small amount of dissatisfaction is needed to increase the possibility of terminating a relationship.

(6) Other factors. The relationship will also terminate if the service provider reduces the supply of product or service, the company goes into liquidation, or one party can't accept the relationship and thus have conflicts, etc.

The authors mainly discuss the criteria influencing the termination of a partnering relationship. On the other side, when the termination conducted in the supply chain partnering relationship, the subsequent action are also discussed.

Murray and Mahon (1993) divided the termination of SCPR into three types, these could be compared to a marriage situation:

(1) Renewal of vows for a different phase of life. The terminated relationship is to extend other common interests in other areas. Partners decide to expand different product fields and market scopes. This target cannot be achieved through the existing partnering relationship, so they terminate the current SCPR.

(2) Amicable divorce- going separate ways but staying friends. Two friendly parties separate from each other and terminate the partnering relationship under the circumstance that there is no further partnering relationship; that is, partners cannot identify any further common goals after achieving effective results through their existing partnering relationship. They choose to separate from each other in a friendly manner, and end the SCPR.

(3) High conflict divorce -mutual recriminations and costly court processes. Two parties separate from each other with hostility or pain. Cooperative parties unhappily terminate their relationship, perhaps because of conflicts or improper management.

The termination of the partnering relationship is one of the final outcomes of relationship development between partners. The partners should consider the long-term costs of terminating the SCPR before deciding to take this action. The establishment and maintenance of the length of a relationship will eventually depend on whether partnering relationship termination is chosen by one of the parties. The importance of academic research on the partnering relationship (including the consideration of termination) cannot be over-emphasised. While research may explore the criteria that influence the termination of the partnering relationship and subsequent actions of partnering relationship termination (Table 7), previous studies have rarely contained in-depth discussions. Such studies only discussed the decisive factor in the termination of the partnering relationship, or described the terminating procedure and behaviour. There is a lack of a complete

conceptual framework, and empirical studies on partnering relationship termination procedures need to be enriched and extended.

Table 7 Criteria of partnering relationship termination

7.1 Categories	7.2 Key criteria	7.3 Select authors
Criteria influencing termination	Fairness	Peterson, 1995
	Satisfaction	Kotler, 2003
	Commitment	Morgan and Hunt, 1994
	Switching cost	Heide and John, 1988
	Terminating cost	Elfenbein and Zenger, 2014
	Trust	Hallen et al., 1991; Morgan and Hunt, 1994
Subsequent actions	Relationship duration	Jackson, 1985; Ring and Van De Ven, 1994
	Renewal of vows for a different phase of life	Murray and Mahon, 1993
	Amicable divorce-going separate ways but staying friends	Murray and Mahon, 1993
	High conflict divorce -mutual recriminations and costly court processes	Murray and Mahon, 1993

2.4 Multicultural international joint venture relationship

2.4.1 Definitions of international joint ventures

International joint ventures (IJVs) occur when two or more legally-separate bodies form a jointly-owned entity in which they invest, and engage in various decision-making activities (Geringer, 1988; 1991). IJVs are separate entities owned by two or more partners. An IJV may be described as international where the venture is taking place, or if the IJV is based outside the country where

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the venture is taking place, or if the IJV is being administered on a wide level in more than one country (Geringer and Hebert, 1989).

IJVs have become more prevalent and important in the business world in recent years as it has become increasingly globalised and competitive (Christelow, 1987; D'Aveni, 1994). Importantly, empirical evidence has shown that announcements of and involvement in IJVs generally have a positive impact on a companies' value (Lee and Wyatt, 1990; Morck and Yeung, 1991; Hu et al., 1992). Zhang and Goffin's (1999) empirical research indicated that investments in IJV manufacturing are often thought worthwhile because of the strategic benefits they can bring to both local and international partners. Glaister and Wang (1993) showed that IJVs tend to be either small companies interested in exporting from China, or large multi-national companies focusing more on the Chinese domestic market.

As Hayes et al. (1996) noted, almost all automotive manufacturers have one or more IJVs. This is because these allow companies to acquire abilities in additional fields while dealing with the price of growth. IJVs represent the solution to a strategic quandary – namely, how to compete in ever more competitive and narrowing markets with rapidly converging technology and spiralling costs. As Porter (1990) and Ohmae (1989) have pointed out, automotive companies are facing increasingly fierce competition at a time when their outlays are increasing and industrial development is beginning to stagnate. IJVs allow companies to overcome these issues, although they should not be seen as part of the company's long-term overall plan.

To be effective, IJVs must:

- Be built with appropriate companions at the strategic and operational stages (Glaister and Wang, 1993);
- Be constructed with a well-defined purpose (Campbell, 1989; Teagarden and Glinow, 1990);
- Develop positive associations with a range of assets.

As Campbell (1989) and Martinsons and Tseng (1995a, 1995b) noted, it is crucial that the IJV builds positive associations with assets both outside and inside of itself, meaning the IJV must be able to work well with every one of its associates (Pan, 1994; Martinsons and Tseng, 1995a, 1995b; Chan, 1996). Chinese JVs are often more profitable, and tend to focus more on impending events while possessing an elastic structure and administration (Ashkanasy et al., 2004).

2.4.2 International joint ventures in Chinese automotive industry

Boisot and Child (1999) described international joint ventures (IJVs) in China as adaptive systems which operate in complex business environments. In order to reduce the environmental complexity, multinationals often choose initially to apply their standard policies and practices in China, and only subsequently absorb the environmental complexity of doing business there by enlisting the support of local allies. Salmi (2006) further explored the situation regarding social skills and also identified an understanding of Chinese cultural knowledge as key competencies for IJV investment companies aiming to overcome physical distance and develop relationships in China. Li et al. (2010) posited that IJVs could lead to co-specialisation in tacit knowledge and the building of strong, shared trust required for the formation of a long-term commitment. Cultural aspects provide grounds for the interpretation of actions within a context (Rivers and Lytle, 2007). The culture of a business can be defined as the combination of usual qualities that impact on how a group will respond to its environment (Hofstede, 1980).

The establishment of IJVs was initially a strict requirement by the central Chinese government for international parties wishing to operate in China, forcing external inwardly investing manufacturers to establish their operations as IJVs with SOEs.

Organisational culture and national culture represent various cultural facets. National culture is established through the culture that prevails within an organisation, which, in turn, influences the formation of organisational behavioural standards (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 1991). Inevitably, in today's economic world, diverse cultures exist in various countries and nationalities; which increases the likelihood that cultural clashes will arise. A number of studies have argued that business partners may encounter a 'culture gap', the consequences of which include variations in relation to the application of corporate ethics, decision making by management, and organisational procedures (Hofstede, 1980; Schein, 1985; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Kogut and Singh, 1988; Tse et al., 1988; Hewett et al., 2006). Furthermore, culture can also affect performance within a company. Studies exploring the dynamics of organisational culture have acknowledged that culture provides direction, while also influencing the behaviour and attitudes of every employee (Hofstede, 1980; Schein, 1985; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986). This further reinforces the notion that culture impacts upon performance. Culture may be expressed in numerous ways, including mutually agreed-upon principles and viewpoints, as well as common characteristics. It offers subscribers a series of standards and recommendations to adhere to, which can aid their understanding of individuals and their actions, as well as the circumstances in which they find themselves (Hofstede, 1985; Brett and Okumura, 1998). Nowadays, the phenomenon of global outsourcing has led to growing stakeholder expectations, with the result

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that increased strain from extrinsic sources is now being brought to bear on organisations to adopt an ethical approach. Consequently, sourcing managers are not solely accountable for their own activities, but are equally liable for supplier behaviour (Goebel et al., 2012). Jia and Lamming (2013) proposed that cultural adaptation, as a learning process, can mitigate the negative impacts of cultural differences in SCPRs by generating benefits for the organisations engaging in those relationships. The supplier skill complementarity, supplier goal compatibility, supplier financial soundness and information systems compatibility are accessed once partners confirm they are ready to cooperate.

Against this background, particularly with regards to China's access to the World Trade Organisation, major international automotive manufacturers from Europe, the United States, Japan, Korea and other regions have improved the investment level and reduced the prices of their products by expanding investment, upgrading technology and increasing the input of new products (Chalos and O'Connor, 2004). The phenomenon of major automotive groups joining IJVs with multinational companies has emerged in recent years as a result of the limitations of the development stage, dependence on the historical paths of the existing IJV model and the inertia effect, and China adopting support for the IJV model as their main policy towards automotive industry development (Kamminga and Meer-Kooistra, 2007; Shan and Swaminathan, 2008). The main policies supporting the IJV model as China's basic orientation towards automotive industry development, automotive products and Chinese consumption of automotive are closely linked with existing policies and regulations, which have become the direction of the establishment, growth and development of China (Kim et al., 2011). The narrow scope of the alliance between the Chinese and international parties provided a manageable research site to investigate key aspects of success (Lockström et al., 2010).

The relationship with suppliers is a complex and crucial part of IJV management, IJVs relationship can be concluded that sourcing of materials and components is a serious issue for IJVs in China (Martinsons and Tseng, 1995a; 1995b; Tsang, 1995). As investment in manufacturing is moving to global zones, the importance of understanding the factors driving competitive advantages is amplified (Power et al., 2010).

2.4.3 Motivation for international joint ventures by international direct investment with Chinese manufacturers

Most of the literature - for example Harrigan (1986), Fey (1994) – states that IJVs are a key form of international business. The main rationale for using IJVs over other forms of international direct

investment (IDI) is that they normally have lower transaction costs and offer strategic or specific local business advantages (Baran et al., 1996). For example, IJVs enable their parent companies to share the risks in industries where high capital investments are necessary (Hennart, 1988).

Another instance where IJVs offer a significant advantage is in the potential transfer of knowledge, such as production 'know-how' and management skills (Hennart, 1988). The perceived main advantage of IJVs for international companies is the access they provide to the Chinese domestic market (Davies, 1994).

IDI in China has increased over the past two decades, particularly in the form of IJVs, due to the introduction of open door and economic liberalisation policies (Luo, 2000). Various theories have been proposed which interpret the motivation for horizontal mergers, as well as their cause and effect (Williamson, 1968; Salan et al., 1983; Perry, 1984; Caves, 1994; Calomiris, 1999; Beamon, 2001; Choy, 2002). Early arguments based on internalisation theory (Hymer, 1976) and transaction cost economics (Teece, 1976; Williamson, 1987) emphasised the incentives and safeguard mechanisms involved in investment transfers with an underlying assumption of potential opportunism.

More recently, resource-based and evolutionary theories (Nelson and Winter, 1982; Kogut and Zander, 1992; Teece et al., 1997) have emphasised organisational cognitive abilities and activities over concerns about opportunistic behaviour. The main concern of such knowledge-based views is to understand the processes of IDI and coordination that occur across organisations. This research combines an investment approach with an emphasis on the motivations of IDI and the business environment of multicultural IJVs. The combination will help the researcher to acquire a deeper understanding of the motivation of investors operating in complex business environments. Mata and Portugal (2015) argued that some countries require or provide incentives for information on IJVs in the hope that local partners learn from their international counterparts (UNIDO, 2002; Desai et al., 2004).

The literature review suggests that a transfer of technology to new markets is the most important motivation for IDI. Markusen (1998) and Holweg et al. (2008) studied investing in developing countries, and found that the unique technical advantages and rapid growth of the industry of multinational IJVs in the markets such as China could be rapidly realised through capital transfer and investment. Cantwell and Barnard (2008) also demonstrated that IDI can speed up the technological progress of IJVs and the enhancement of market competitiveness, and the advantages of these IJVs in the international market can be enhanced.

International investment in China is increasing. There are possible technology spillovers, and Chinese parties can absorb more technology which will speed up their technological progress.

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International parties can enhance market competitiveness and support the exploration of the international market. In addition, it has been observed that IDI might also be motivated by knowledge-seeking, as China has rapidly emerged in the global arena (Artie et al., 2012). Rugman and Li (2007) realised that emerging economies have a compelling need to acquire critical knowledge in the form of technological capabilities, management and strategy skills. It can be seen from the literature that the international business dimension of entry modes into new markets has been considered both in terms of theory and empirical research.

Chinese initial response to globalisation in the late 1970s was largely passive, as the country focused on IDI inflows. The early years of the twenty-first century have witnessed a growing awareness on the part of both government and communist party leaders that globalisation offers China an opportunity to project its influence and power beyond the boundaries of the Chinese nation-state. China could operate on the global stage in a far more proactive and energetic manner than had hitherto been the case (Knight, 2008). Currently, IJVs are mainly concentrated in industries which are prioritised by Chinese government policy, such as foundation industries with wide-reaching market prospects or other strong industries. Chinese huge automotive market has always been a key target for international automotive manufacturers, and many Chinese automotive manufacturers currently have cooperative schemes in place in the form of IJVs (Luo, 2000), equity transfers and the like.

2.4.4 National cultural impact of relationship decision

Cultural characteristics provide grounds for the interpretation of actions within a SCPR performance measurement context. The culture of a business can be defined as the combination of usual qualities that impact on how a group will respond to its environment (Hofstede 1980). Organisational culture and national culture consist of different dimensional levels. National culture underpins the culture of an organisation and provides the basis for the norms of organisational behaviour (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 1991). Particular countries and nationalities tend to have their own distinct cultures, and this makes cultural clashes a probable occurrence in the modern economy. It is posited that a ‘culture gap’ between business partners can lead to very different organisational practices, managerial decisions and business ethics (Hewett et al. 2006; Hofstede 1980; Kogut and Singh 1988; O’Reilly and Chatman 1986; Schein 1985; Tse et al. 1988). Accordingly, it is further proposed that culture can impact business performance.

Regardless of the increased popularity of the partnership as a business model, academic commentary is lacking in a number of aspects. Some research in the literature on SCPR concerns the relative competency in performance (Benton and Maloni 2005; Bititci et al. 2005; Carr and Pearson 1999; Liu et al. 2012; Narayanan, Narasimhan and Schoenherr 2015; Nyaga, Whipple and Lynch 2010; Paulraj, Lado and Chen 2008; Yeung 2008); however, only Ribbink and Grimm (2014) have investigated cultural difference through the lens of supply chain relationship. The diverse results suggest that additional research is necessary in order to obtain empirical evidence to form the basis for a comprehensive and reliable understanding of SCPR performance measurement systems by cross-cultural manufacturers.

The inter-organisation relationships already established between the parent parties and their current suppliers play important roles in their new IJVs as they bring their experiences with them to the new context. Few studies have considered the perceptions of both domestic and international parties with regard to management control issues (Groot and Merchant, 2000; Chalos and O'Connor, 2004; Kamminga and Meer-Kooistra, 2007; Liu, Vredenburg and Steel, 2014). Such an investigation is critical to developing an understanding of how each party perceives and uses controls in the management of the venture. Kamming and Meer-Kooistra (2007) pointed out that the inter-relationships between parent parties play an important role in IJVs. They examined the control patterns of many IJV parties who must monitor operations in settings with which they are barely familiar – market, distribution and legal systems, and so on – and who often have to deal with significant geographical and time differences.

Parent organisations not only have to focus operations management on the IJV itself, but also on the co-operating parent(s). Kamminga and Meer-Kooistra's (2007) research provided an in-depth insight into IJV operations management, and examined whether this model can explain how IJV partners' relationship management is carried out in practice. This included the characteristics of the IJV, its parent parties and the environmental context in which the IJV operated. Kamminga and Meer-Kooistra (2007) regarded joint venture operations management as dynamic. Changes may also take place in the IJV governance structure and in management control.

The relationships in IJVs are influenced by many factors (Luo, 2000), not least the complex social and cultural environment faced by cross-border mergers. However, previous relevant studies have not focused on the multicultural characteristics of IJVs in China in any great depth (Artie et al., 2012). This factor should be considered first in IJVs undertaken in China. Internal factors also affect operations management, and these can include the respective conditions of both parent parties in an international joint venture, the degree of association between the two parent parties, and the motivation and strategic orientation of the multinational IJV. IJVs often attach

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great importance to the valuation assessment, as well as the negotiation process and the political and legal risks of the host country, among other factors, throughout an IJV operations management (Lambert and Cooper, 2000). Extending such issues within an international business environment, Napier (2006) explored the phenomenon of reverse knowledge flows among multinationals and suggested the necessary cultural adaptations to facilitate learning.

Investments in manufacturing in China are often made because of the strategic benefits they can bring (Zhang and Goffin, 2001). However, IJV manufacturing operations in China do not always perform effectively, and problems have been reported at many manufacturing IJVs (Luo, 1995; Zhao and Zhu, 1998). Many international parent parties are dissatisfied (Beamish, 1993), and failures are common (Robb and Xie, 1999). Much of this dissatisfaction is related to problems in operations management of the IJV. For example, the parent parties of IJVs often have different expectations, while achieving high-quality production and finding good local suppliers can be challenging (Bruijn and Jia, 1993). Although researchers have investigated the strategic aspects of IJVs, they have largely ignored their operational aspects (Zhang and Goffin, 1999). Operational criteria, including supplier management, thus warrant investigation (Zhang and Goffin, 1999).

Studies on the automotive industry have examined a range of multicultural and 'country difference' criteria. Topics have included generic capabilities and practices across international boundaries (Vastag and Whybark, 1994; Flynn et al., 1999; Flynn and Flynn, 2004); the multicultural relevance of operations management criteria (Flynn and Saladin, 2006); cultural factors affecting supply chain systems (Zhao et al., 2008); and the consideration of country of origin as a moderator of operations management adoption and related performance outcomes (Sila, 2007). Partners often probe by asking questions to determine the other's goals and expectations and to understand the social context of the involved parties (Brett, 2007)' culture countries such as Germany and the United States focus primarily on their gains (Brett and Okumura, 1998). In contrast, Japan tends to stress a congruency of goals and close relationships with the partner while taking their partner's interests into account (Gelfand and Christakopoulou, 1999, p.263), such as relying on context and communication to provide the full meaning of the message, i.e. individual backgrounds, associations, values and position in society (Mintu-Wimsatt and Gassenheimer, 2000, p.1), and physical environment, status/power relationships, roles of participants, and even the nonverbal aspects of communication (Graham et al., 1994, p.77). Dyer and Singh (1998) observed that a US car manufacturer established a different type of relationship with its suppliers compared with a Japanese manufacturer, the former being less cooperative with limited information sharing between partners. The United States and China are important supply chain trading partners and provide a good example of multicultural business background (Ribbink

and Grimm, 2014), however misunderstandings are more likely occur, and it can be harder to attain mutually beneficial outcomes.

This research has proliferated across cultures, leading to comprehensive overviews documenting emerging research agendas within this specific national context. As Zhao et al. (2006a, p. 479) observed, 'there is a general paucity of research in Chinese manufacturing strategy formulation, content and implementation, which leads to some areas for future research, especially multicultural comparisons that lead to new theory'. The present research provides such a multicultural comparison by contrasting investment decisions in China with those in the industrialised world. This study's comparison is based on the multicultural IJVs relationships, practices, performance frontiers, and on validating and extending prior theory while providing valuable insight for practising managers.

The supply chain is an important component of business and operational strategy (Christopher and Towill, 2001; Petersen et al., 2005). Each supply chain does not exist in isolation; instead, they all have a close strategic partnering relationship. When an IJV occurs, the supply chains of both parent parties may undergo a significant change (Flynn et al., 2010). This may involve the member (or members) of the supply chain, the cost structure, the distribution of benefits, the strategic planning, and supply chain reconstruction (Anand and Bahinipati, 2012). In this environment, decision makers should not ignore the restructuring and integration (see Figure 3) of the supply chains after the joint venture, as this is directly related to the success or failure of mergers (Perry, 1984; Perry and Poter, 1985; McAfee and Williams, 1992; Fauli-Oller, 1997).

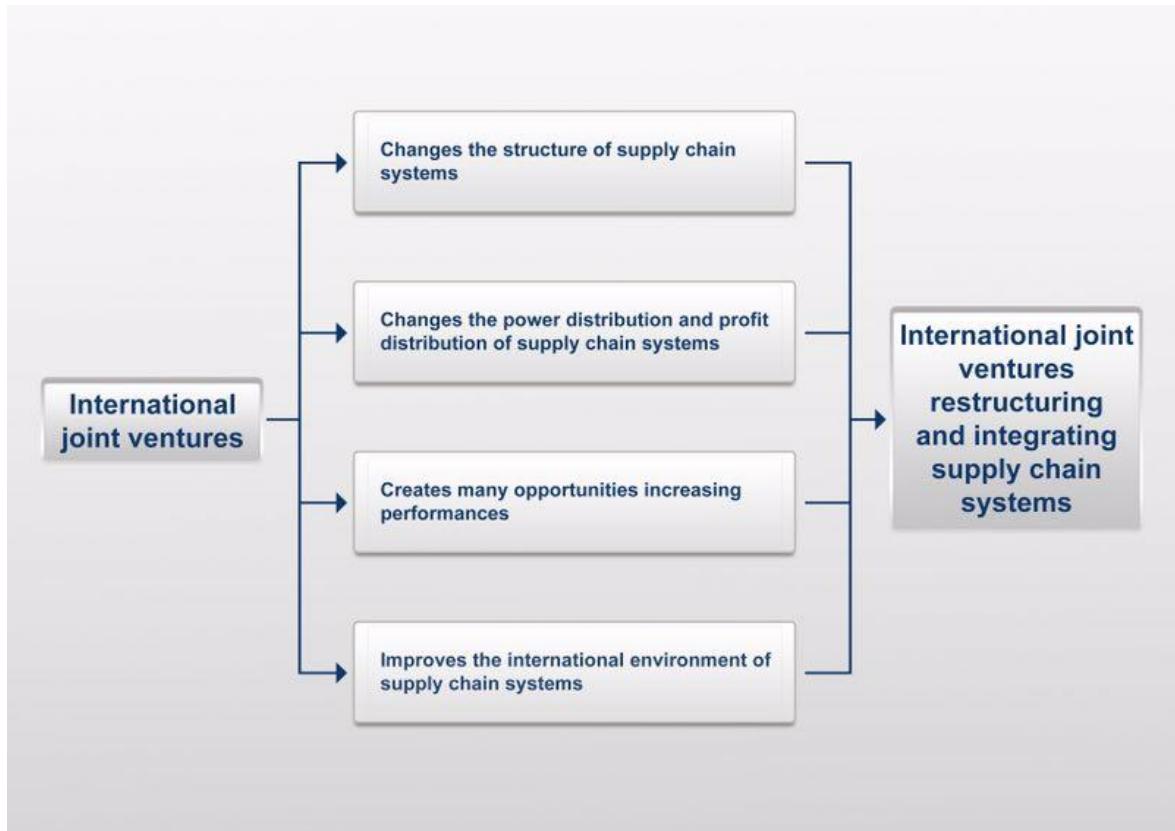


Figure 3 IJVs restructuring and integrating the supply chain systems

2.4.5 Uncertain business environment

Chinese complex and dynamic business environment makes the relationship-building process of IJVs an intricate task (Bruijn and Jia, 1993). For example, although an IJV is recognised as an international alliance under Chinese law (Teagarden and Glinow, 1990) regulations governing IJVs are not totally clear and regional areas do not always follow the laws passed by the central government (Chen, 1995). In addition, bureaucratic obstacles resulting from the various authorities are not unusual and can complicate, for example, both the formation of IJVs and their co-ordination with local suppliers (Pan et al., 1995), these criteria will be defined in chapter 4.

Manufacturers are encouraged to form IJVs with international partners. However, the both Chinese managers and International managers are recognised as having serious limitations as IJV partners, including being slow and ineffective at decision making, having too many employees, and possessing too much obsolete manufacturing equipment. IJVs bring together employees from different cultural backgrounds, which can also be problematic (Teagarden and Glinow, 1990).

These criteria make the formation of IJVs difficult (Pan et al., 1995), and only about 60% of manufacturing IJVs achieve full implementation – that is, successfully manufacture products.

Table 8 Criteria of multicultural collaborators' business environments

8.1 Categories	8.2 Key criteria	8.3 Select author(s)
IJV partners' relationship management	Management control issues	Groot and Merchant, 2000; Chalos and O'Connor, 2004; Kamminga and Meer-kooistra, 2007; Liu, Vredenburg and Steel, 2014
	Parent parties cooperation	Kamminga and Meer-Kooistra, 2007
	The degree of association	Artie et al., 2012
	Political and legal risks	Lambert and Cooper, 2000
	Reverse knowledge flows	Napier, 2006; Li et al., 2010
	Supplier management	Zhang and Goffin, 1999
	Positioning social skills and an understanding of Chinese cultural knowledge	Salmi, 2006
Alignment between China and other cultures	National culture underpins the culture of the organisation and provides the basis for the norms of organisational behaviour	Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 1991
	Countries' and nationalities' cultures make for cultural clashes	Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 1991; Naor, Linderman and Schroeder, 2010
	Culture gaps lead to very different organisational practices, managerial decisions and business ethics	Hofstede, 1980; O'Reilly and Schein, 1985; Chatman, 1986; Kogut and Singh, 1988; Tse et al., 1988; Hewett et al., 2006
	People are independent and their choice of behaviour has the potential to erase the effects of national culture	Adler and Jelinek, 1986
	National culture could affect organizational culture	Adler and Jelinek, 1986
	Law and regulations governing actions	Teagarden and Glinow, 1990; Chen, 1995

Business environment uncertainty	Bureaucratic obstacles resulting from the unusual and complicated nature of the various authorities	Pan et al., 1995
Cross-culture employees		Teagarden and Glinow, 1990; Business Asia, 1996c; Fan, 1996

2.5 Partnering relationship performance

Bititci (1995) asserted that performance measurement systems must be considered holistically and be relevant to the many stages in the manufacturing process. Regarding performance measurement systems, this self-centred outlook inspired local optimisation of an individual entity. It is thus evident that performance measurements should correspond with the holistic view and span organisational boundaries (Chan and Qi, 2003). In a supply chain, every contributor should share mutual objectives and collaboratively supply products and services that meet the needs of the consumer. Furthermore, supply chain performance needs to be examined across the organisations in order to increase global optimisation of the supply chain process.

Supply chain partnering relationships have gained a tremendous amount of attention from industries and researchers recently, resulting in a steady stream of literature promoting them (e.g., Ellram, 1991; Graham et al., 1994; Macbeth and Ferguson, 1994; Landeros et al., 1995; New, 1996; Maloni and Benton, 1997; Towill, 1997). Most of these studies stress the importance of the partnering relationship for better supply chain operations. Accordingly, an effective performance measurement of the manufacturer and/or supplier is not enough; the extent of the partnering relationship that exists between them also needs to be evaluated and improved (Gunasekaran, Patel and Tirtiroglu, 2001). An effort is needed to draw a clear picture of the partnering relationship in the supply chain network in order to prepare steps to increase efficiency and speed. When developing a performance measurement system, one must first determine what is to be measured and how to measure it (Jonsson and Lesshammar, 1999).

All the participants should be effectively integrated into a SCPR (Chan and Qi, 2003) and managed in their entirety. The supply chain is not merely a group of independent, self-focused manufacturers and suppliers, nor does the organisation of the interfaces lie in the disjointed stages of the supply chain. Cousins et al. (2008) stated that in relation to measuring each individual participant in supply chain management, supplier performance is vital to the success of

the buyer-supplier relationship. On the other hand, manufacturer performance is narrower and assesses the prospective relationship and organisational capabilities in relation to a company's performance (Koufteros et al., 2014). A collaborative supply chain may use a decision support environment to improve the performance of a collaborative supply chain (Angerhofer and Angelides, 2006). To increase the functioning of a collaborative supply chain, specific areas for improvement should be determined (Jonsson and Lesshammar, 1999). The implementation of manufacturing performance measures acts as a kind of productivity control, and it is necessary to show how improvement and competitive advantages can be maintained. It is claimed that the internal view is not conducive to an efficient supply chain, and in fact is actually a cause of the failure of the majority of performance measurements with relation to supply chains (Gunasekaran et al., 2001; Toni et al., 1994; Chan and Qi, 2003). Supply chain performance measures need to take into account a wider relationship assessing the interplay of performance measures; for instance, the partnering relationship. Interactive performance relies on dynamic tension to create that performance. Performance measurements are indispensable to ensuring action, and additionally allow manufacturers and suppliers in the partnering relationship to examine the standard of performance according to these vital measurements.

Akyuz and Erkan (2010) reviewed the literature relating to supply chain performance measurements, and found that today's research is failing to measure the degree of collaboration, and relevance of the strategies and measurements adopted. Gunasekaran et al. (2004) and Guanasekaran and Kobu (2007) pointed out that performance measurements have long lists of criteria, making it difficult to find trivial to cover every aspect of the performance key issues.

According to this performance measurement criteria research gap, the most relevant criteria need to be chosen for the 'what to measure' and 'how to measure a relationship' perspectives within this study. The criteria used to measure the partnering relationship and how measurement structures exist within the categories are discussed below.

Monczka et al. (1998) determined that the perspective of the buying company in the supply chain relationship has a significant impact on the success of the partnering relationship. It is the buying company's responsibility to promote trust and coordination, interdependence, participation, information sharing and collaboration on tasks, and not to implement harsh conflict resolution measures. Regarding industrial supplier relationships, Walter et al. (2003) stated that numerous different dimensions must be considered in order to measure their efficiency; for example, criteria such as commitment to developing a long-term relationship, trust, and satisfaction can be used to measure the relationship. Caplice and Sheffi (1995) evaluated how digital supply chain performance can be assessed digitally based on criteria such as whether it is comprehensive,

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casually orientated, vertically or horizontally integrated, or internally comparable and reliable. From the perspective of manufacturing technology and strategy development, Vonderembse and Tracey (1999) stressed the need to determine how manufacturers improve their performance by engaging suppliers in a partnering relationship. A number of factors have a significant impact on manufacturing performance, including product quality, product performance, delivery reliability and safe transit as well as production costs and inventory.

Johnson (1999) proposed the existence of a strategic partnering relationship when a business bases its long-term strategy on developing a strong, productive relationship with its partner. In other words, the probability increases that substantial performance will now be achieved from the SCPR in its entirety as opposed to its individual stages (Maloni and Benton, 1997). This indicates that the supply chain partnering relationship strategy will have many implications for measuring performance. In this field of discourse, the alliance partner is an issue that is relevant to both practitioners and researchers, and the criteria used to select suppliers are a fundamental component of the partnering relationship process. These criteria are extremely important, because the failure of many alliances can easily be traced to the planning stage (Pansiri, 2005), so it is vital that appropriate criteria be used to measure partnering relationship performance.

Good partnering relationships will promote lasting relationships while also encouraging meetings where the parties involved can discuss any issues they face while sharing in business strategizing work. Any assessments of purchasers as well as sellers must examine how well their partnering relationship works in addition to its scope. Gaining a better idea of how partnering relationships work within supply chains could allow productivity to increase, and performance measurement studies have attempted to do just this (Gunasekaran et al., 2001). Partnering relationships must be assessed using a list of expected standards. One such standard which supports the partnering relationship and demonstrates its quality is the amount of support each side provides when facing shared challenges. Assessments which use such standards will be able to develop further, increasing the effectiveness of the relationship.

Table 9 highlights a number of these assessment standards:

Table 9 Partnering relationship performance

9.1	9.2	9.3
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Categories	Key criteria	Select author(s)
Relationship performance measurement	Commitment	Monczka et al., 1998; Walter et al., 2003
	Satisfaction	Walter et al., 2003
	Prospective relationship and organisational capabilities	Koufteros, Verghese and Lucianetti, 2014
	Manufacturing productivity control	Gunasekaran et al., 2001; Chan and Qi, 2003
	The degree of collaboration	Caplice and Sheffi, 1995; Vonderembse and Trace, 1999; Akyuz and Erkan, 2010
How to measure relationship performance	Level and degree of information sharing	Toni et al., 1994; Mason-Jones and Towill, 1998
	Buyer-vendor cost-saving initiatives	Thomas and Griffin, 1996
	Extent of mutual co-operation leading to improved quality	Graham et al., 1994; Monczka et al., 1998
	The process and stage at which supplier is involved	Toni et al., 1994
	Extent of mutual assistance in problem-solving efforts	Maloni and Benton, 1997

Further, the measures must have been developed so that the multicultural supply chain partnering relationship data can be used efficiently. This may vary according to the system being used and its objectives. Conversely, the characteristics 'multicultural tendency' and 'in practice' denote the 'how to' question. Above all, the literature emphasises the importance of relationship performance measurements and the criteria that can be measured, which are summarised in

Table 9. It can be seen that the critical relationship performance issues enable both manufacturers and suppliers to more effectively capitalise on the potential for development. There is little doubt that performance measurements are critical for a successful supply chain

partnering relationship measurement; however, what is needed to achieve both high-level and detailed criteria requires more in-depth understanding and exploration by empirical research.

2.6 Gaps in the literature

The chapter has reviewed a wide range of key SCPR trends and highlighting reviews as well as works of particular interest to practitioners. The chapter has also highlighted multicultural collaborative business-to-business relationships. The contributing scholarship and the gaps identified have been categorised based on key contributions, with some classified under more than one heading (summarized in Table 10).

During this review and evaluation process a number of under-researched areas have been identified. In conclusion, several key areas for further research include:

- (1) Studying the whole lifecycle of the SCPR, from the initial demand analysis of manufacturers and suppliers to the establishment and management of the relationship. The complete termination process also needs to be established in order to explore the relationship. Research on the SCPR in multicultural collaborators business environment is scarce. This recognises three major gaps between the theoretical foundations for partnering relationship exploration.
- (2) An empirical study needs to divide the SCPR process into stages. It also needs to bring influence criteria into an overall framework, explore interaction relationships in a multicultural collaborators' business environment, and explore performance measurement.
- (3) This study takes the investigation of the partnering relationship literature into IJVs among multiple nationalities. It does so by contextualising in terms of how the effective partnering relationship impacts the partnering relationship performance, as seen by both the manufacturers and suppliers sides.
- (4) This is done via the development of a conceptual framework that examines how multicultural collaborators explore and measure the effective SCPR in the Chinese automotive sector.
- (5) The conceptual framework will then be used, tested and further developed by IJV manufacturers and their Tier-one suppliers.

For the purpose of this thesis, research is synthesised from different multicultural collaborators' business environments, supply chain partnering relationships and performance measurements to develop a comprehensive view of partnering sourcing theories. Further, the study has been structured to follow the SCPR measurement process in multicultural business environments from idea conception to commercialisation (Bhave, 1994; Cope, 2005). A framework is proposed that can be used as a guide to developing a SCPR process for each phase in the cross-difference businesses. The framework identifies and explores effective SCPR. The critical objectives for each category in SCPR development are investigated, and the prerequisite criteria, which the manufacturer and supplier must develop to achieve these objectives are identified. Both empirical and analytical findings from the literature are presented; these demonstrate how the partnering relationship improves the relationship performance.

Table 10 Summary of research gaps and justification

10.1 Research problems	10.2 Identify research gaps	10.3 Justify the Gaps	10.4 Research questions	10.5 Expected Contributions
Defines an effective and sustainable SCPR within a multicultural context.	A complete framework does not currently exist which identifies criteria to be incorporated into SCPR measurement and performance.	An empirical study needs to: divide the stages of the SCPR process; bring influential criteria into an overall framework; explore interaction relationships multicultural organisations; and explore performance measurement.	How can multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship performance be measured?	Examination of partnering relationship theory in new business relationships in China.
Managers in manufacturing companies have encountered the problem of which priorities to focus on with their various partners.	Limited research is available within a specific context, namely multicultural collaborators, and the need exists to explore how they are functioning in business to business partnering relationships.	This study takes the investigation of the partnering relationship literature into multiple nationalities JVs by contextualising the relationship performance in terms of how the partnering relationship measurement and impacts are seen by both the manufacturers and suppliers in one single market situation.	How effectively are multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationship?	Explore and establish a framework for measurement of performance in multicultural collaborative SCPR activities and identify new research agendas.
Patterns of behaviour and performance expectations are inconsistent for manufacturers with	There is a lack of a coherent set of performance indicators to establish the links between behaviours and	This is done by developing a conceptual framework that examines how cross-cultural organisations explore and evaluate SCPRs and relationship performance in the automotive industry.	How can criteria on which multicultural supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined?	Evaluation in current and possible future practice in managing multicultural collaborators' business, and

international multicultural partners.	effectiveness against multicultural collaborators' business objectives.			offering guidance for practitioner behaviour.
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2.7 Conclusion

The previous sections reviewed partnering relationship disciplines that are currently in focus in the SCPR process. Ways in which SCPRs can be explored and the criteria suitable for partnering relationships were also discussed. These criteria can apply across broader contexts, such as multicultural organisations. Through an in-depth review and analysis of relevant literature regarding the supply chain partnering relationship, performance measurement and the international joint venture relationship, a conceptual framework of the partnering relationship process and effective levels against different IJVs' backgrounds is proposed.

2.7.1 A visualisation of the theoretical framework

The primary focus of this thesis is to provide an answer to the research question, which explores and establishes a framework of supply chain partnering relationship performance measurement indicators (PMIs), as to assess how effective multicultural collaborators. The subsequent sections investigate all these criteria for the process of forming a partnering relationship under the context of a multicultural collaborators' business environment. While the topic is popular, what is clearly missing from the literature is a judicious examination of how partnering relationships orchestrate their responses: whether such a system does in fact enhance dynamic partnering relationship performance, and how multi-cultural aspects influence decision-making criteria.

The set of relationships is developed within the framework, based on the recognise the partnering relationship, supplier selection, partnering relationship management, partnering relationship termination, and partnering relationship performance under a multicultural collaborators' business environment. The framework includes some of the key driving forces that have been identified from the literature. Each of these categories and criteria were considered separately. Finally, the partnering relationship literature suggests that SCPRs may be a significant moderating factor to performance (Chen, Paulraj and Lado, 2004; Johnston and Staughton, 2009). Therefore, it is included it as a moderator in a supply chain partnering relationship, and the researcher investigates whether manufacturers and suppliers of different cultural backgrounds should be managed by the above stages during the process of establishing and managing a supply chain partnering relationship or not. The theoretical framework is shown in Figure 4.

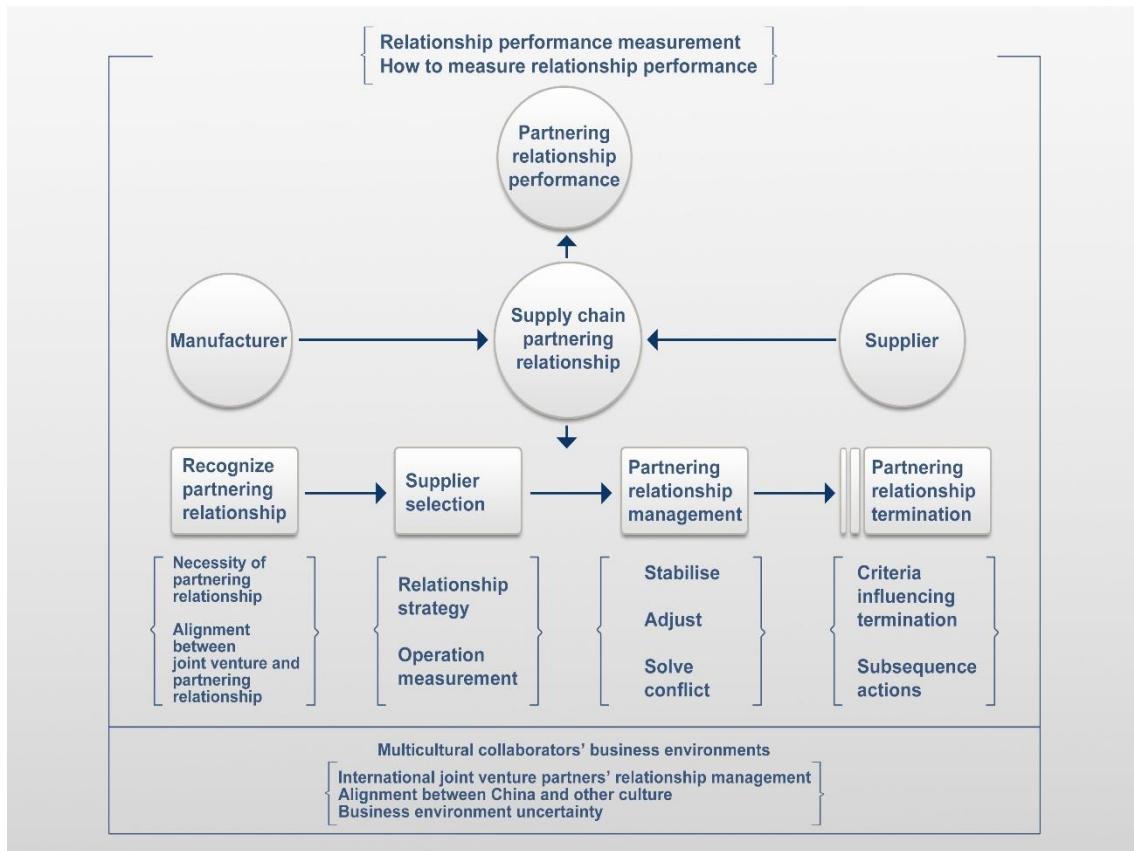


Figure 4 The measurement and effectiveness of multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship conceptual framework

The supply chain partnering relationship goes through different stages in its development process due to different cooperative behaviours between and characteristics of partners. The connotations and perspectives of SCPRs are explored. These explorations provide a base that supports the research method employed in each stage of the study. The framework is examined, critiqued, confirmed and developed where suggested by the data analysis during the process of identifying and analysing relationships between framework components and their influences on performance.

The supply chain partnering relationship recommends that manufacturers and suppliers should confirm their goals by establishing supply chain partnering relationship activities that can obtain more benefits through cooperation than through independent activities. The necessity of forming a supply chain partnering relationship is demonstrated in the literature. Subsequently, manufacturers will select suppliers from the perspectives of relationship strategy and operations measurement, which are beneficial for supplier selection and relationship establishment. The manufacturers and suppliers can reduce the chance of

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conflict through adjustment and cooperation between partners, and this corresponds to the management of the supply chain partnering relationship.

Manufacturers and suppliers in a supply chain partnering relationship will expend more effort in order to acquire valuable resources (Ireland et al., 2002). The stability of obtaining resources can be ensured through the partnering relationship (Niederkofler, 1991). The manufacturers should choose suppliers with complimentary and compatible products to reduce negativity between parties in the event of differences and so reduce the chance of conflicts, and increase cooperation feasibility and continuity of both partners in the supply chain (thereby improving the supply chain partnering relationship process). If both parties generate conflicts of interest, goal inconsistencies, and other negative situations during the process of the partnering relationship (Niederkofler, 1991) this can lead to a crisis of confidence. Friction and conflict can be created if manufacturers and suppliers in cooperation do not reconcile and solve their problems.

Deterioration of bilateral relationships will hinder the cooperating parties in attaining their ultimate goal of supply chain partnering relationship. From the conceptual framework, manufacturers and suppliers are advised to conduct an analysis of the existing partnering relationship, to attempt to reconcile the differences and contradictions between them, and solve the conflicts and crises encountered during the management of the partnering relationship. Conversely, although manufacturers or suppliers maintain a supply chain relationship, they may not be willing to expend much effort in solving the problem (or problems). In other words they may not be able to adjust to differences or, more importantly, stabilise and maintain the relationship and they may even consider a new selection process to identify another cooperation strategy if the supply chain partnering relationship is weak or inadequate, or if both parties in cooperation face conflict and crisis.

Supply chain partnering relationship termination refers to all related costs incurred during a relationship termination. Zineldin and Jonsson (2000) believed that the extensive relationship termination costs would positively affect the relationship commitment. The relationship commitment refers to the extent of the desire of the partners to maintain the relationship. If one partner feels that they can easily find an alternative partnering relationship, and they have no desire to maintain the existing relationship, that partner might feel that a new partner is a better option if the relationship termination cost is low. It also means that there is a reduced relationship commitment level. Expensive relationship termination costs can encourage the manufacturers and suppliers to make more of an effort

to maintain the partnering relationship (Dwyer and Schurr, 1987). Both parties will try to maintain the partnering relationship when there is more at risk in the relationship. The process to stabilise the relationship can be improved between manufacturers and suppliers through relational factors such as trust, communication, and commitment. Criteria such as the organisational structure and cultural differences can be adjusted according to changes in the partners.

All stages of a supply chain partnering relationship can affect the relationship performance. The manufacturers should be informed of the relevant process when the joint ventures business environment is different, namely, the external environment has become unstable. High requirements are proposed for the effective management of the supply chain partnering relationship, and the relationship performance may undulate accordingly. The supply chain partnering relationship can generate complex and conflicting relationships due to the increased complexities of the partnering relationship over time.

This thesis proposes the optimum structure of the multicultural effectiveness partnering relationship, follow with the conceptual framework, which criteria are summarised in Table 11.

Table 11 The conceptual framework components (follow with Figure 4)

11.1 Framework Components	11.2 Categories	11.3 Key criteria	11.4 Selected authors
Recognising the partnering relationship	Necessity of partnering relationship	Overall car performance	Fisher, 1997; Ziropli and Caputo, 2002
		Advantages of manufacturers	Johnson et al., 2004
		Better quality	Goffin, Lemke and Szwejczewski, 2006
		Lower costs	Singh and Mitchell, 1996; Jap, 1999; Lambert et al., 2004; Park et al., 2004; Goffin, Lemke and Szwejczewski, 2006; Tanriverdi, 2006

Reliable delivery	Goffin, Lemke and Szwejczewski, 2006
Technology development trajectory	Fisher, 1997; Jap, 1999; McCutcheon and Stuart, 2000
Extent of goodwill and trust	McCutcheon and Stuart, 2000
Potential benefits	McCutcheon and Stuart, 2000; Prashant, Harbir and Howard, 2000; Min et al., 2005
Target costing	Ziropli and Caputo, 2002
Information sharing	Singh and Mitchell, 1996; Lado et al., 1997; Ziropli and Caputo, 2002; Park et al., 2004
Strategic benefits	Min et al., 2005; Cao and Zhang, 2011
Synergistic outcome	Lado et al., 1997; Jap, 1999; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Simatupang and Sridharan, 2005
Reduce duplication of efforts	Lambert et al., 2004
Fulfil customer needs	Simatupang and Sridharan, 2005
Capitalise quickly on market opportunities	Uzzi, 1997
Mutual support and interdependence	Johnston et al., 2004
Complementary resources	Tanriverdi, 2006

	Alignment between joint venture relationship and supply chain partnering relationship	Joint ventures format a new separate subsidiary, jointly owned by the partners	Stafford, 1994, p.65; Gill and Butler, 2003
		Partnering relationship purposeful agreements between independent companies	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Johnston and Staughton, 2009
		Partnering involves the parties working together in an environment which based on projects	Bennett and Jayes, 1995, p.2; Black et al., 2000, p.423; Bresnen, 2007
Supplier selection	Relationship Strategy	Strategy orientation	Eisenhardt and Schoonhoven, 1996
		Management style	Covin and Slevin, 1988; Datta, 1991; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012
		Interdependence	Andaleeb, 1996
		Mutual organisational characteristics	Cao and Xiang, 2012; Mahlendorf et al., 2012; Zaheer and Venkatraman, 1995
		Common goals	Zhang and Goffin, 2001; Pidduck, 2006
		Complementarity	Ohmae, 1989; Spekman and Sawhney, 1990
Operation measurement criteria	Commitment		Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Kwon and Suh, 2004
	Trust		Anderson and Narus, 1990; Gulati, 1995; Cai et al., 2013
	Communication behaviour		Paulraj et al., 2008

Partnership relationship management	Stabilise	Information sharing	Angeles and Nath, 2001; Elofson and Robinson, 2007
		Participation decision	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Cao et al., 2010
		Quality	Leong, Snyder and Ward, 1990
		Delivery	1990
		Cost	
	Adjust	Production Performance	Paulraj et al., 2008
		Supplier strength	
		Independence	Pilkington, 1999
		Trust	Niederkofler, 1991
		Information sharing	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Gulati and Gargiulo, 1999
	Solve conflict	Tight interaction	Prashant, Harbir and Howard, 2000
		Mutual goodwill	Niederkofler, 1991
		Contract incentives	Prashant et al., 2000
		Coordination	Hillman and Dalziel, 2003
		Strategy target	Niederkofler, 1991
	Solve conflict	Culture	Child and Faulkner, 1998
		Divergent interests	Parkhe, 1991
		Business environment	Parkhe, 1991
		Communication	Millar, Demaid and Quintas, 1997; Jean, Sinkovics and Kim, 2010
	Cooperation	Cooperation	Byrnes, 1986
		Joint solve and persuasion	Mohr and Spekman, 1994

Partnering relationship termination	Criteria influencing termination	Fairness	Peterson, 1995
		Satisfaction	Kotler, 2003
		Commitment	Morgan and Hunt, 1994
		Trust	Heide and John, 1988
		Relationship duration	Elfenbein and Zenger, 2014
Subsequent action		Switching cost	Hallen et al., 1991; Morgan and Hunt, 1994
		Terminating cost	Jackson, 1985; Ring and Van De Ven, 1994
		Renewal of vows for a different phase of life	Murray and Mahon, 1993
		Amicable divorce -going separate ways but staying friends	Murray and Mahon, 1993
		High conflict divorce - mutual recriminations and costly court processes	Murray and Mahon, 1993
Partnering relationship performance	Relationship performance measurement	Commitment	Monczka et al., 1998; Walter et al., 2003
		Satisfaction	Walter et al., 2003
		Prospective relationship and organisational capabilities	Koufteros, Vergheze and Lucianetti, 2014
		Manufacturing productivity control	Gunasekaran et al., 2001; Chan and Qi, 2003
		The degree of collaboration	Caplice and Sheffi, 1995; Vonderembse and Trace, 1999; Akyuz and Erkan, 2010

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How to measure relationship performance	Level and degree of information sharing	Toni et al., 1994; Mason-Jones and Towill, 1997;
	Buyer-vendor cost saving initiatives	Thomas and Griffin, 1996
	Extent of mutual co-operation leading to improved quality	Graham et al., 1994; Monczka et al., 1998
	The entity and stage at which supplier is involved	Toni et al., 1994
	Extent of mutual assistance in problem solving efforts	Maloni and Benton, 1997
Multicultural collaborators' business environments	IJV partners' relationship management	Management control issues Groot and Merchant, 2000; Chalos and O'Connor, 2004; Kamminga and Meerkoistra, 2007; Liu, Vredenburg and Steel, 2014
	Parent parties cooperation	Kamminga and Meerkoistra, 2007
	The degree of association	Artie et al., 2012
	Political and legal risks	Lambert and Cooper, 2000
	Reverse knowledge flows	Napier, 2006; Li et al., 2010
	Supplier management	Zhang and Goffin, 1999
	Positioning social skills and an understanding of Chinese cultural knowledge	Salmi, 2006
Alignment between China and other cultures	National culture underpins the culture of the organisation and provides	Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 1991

	the basis for the norms of organisational behaviour	
	Countries' and nationalities' cultures make for cultural clashes	Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 1991; Naor, Linderman and Schroeder, 2010
	Culture gaps lead to very different organisational practices, managerial decisions and business ethics	Hofstede, 1980; O'Reilly and Schein, 1985; Chatman, 1986; Kogut and Singh, 1988; Tse et al., 1988; Hewett et al., 2006
	People are independent and their choice of behaviour has the potential to erase the effects of national culture	Adler and Jelinek, 1986
	National culture could affect organizational culture	Adler and Jelinek, 1986
Business environment uncertainty	Law and regulations governing actions	Teagarden and Glinow, 1990; Chen, 1995
	Bureaucratic obstacles resulting from the unusual and complicated nature of the various authorities	Pan et al., 1995
	Cross-culture employees	Teagarden and Glinow, 1990; Business Asia, 1996c; Fan, 1996

2.7.2 The theoretical framework components

2.7.2.1 Recognise the partnering relationship

Choosing the partners is justified by confirming that greater benefits from goal achievement will be due to the SCPR rather than other approaches attempted by manufacturers and suppliers. The potential to co-create value might be used to identify suppliers with whom to build and strengthen relationships. The key suppliers can have a considerable impact on the overall well-being of partnering relationships. The current deficient resources of the partners as well as the possible contributions to the pursued goal are identified. It should be confirmed whether the SCPR is the most effective way for the partner to achieve the goal. Specifically, the relationship that exists between partners in order to form a supply chain is assessed. Supply chain partnering relationships can be formed and operated once it is confirmed that a partnering relationship is more beneficial than the manufacturer's independent implementation and or merger, thereby avoiding a waste of time and funds.

2.7.2.2 Supplier selection

The manufacturer selects its supplier based on relationship strategy and operations measurement criteria during supply chain supplier selection and evaluation. Each factor has an important influence on the supply chain partnering relationship process.

At the strategic level, the relationship process lays the foundations for how relationships with suppliers will be developed and managed. Relationship strategy refers to the possibility of achieving a comprehensive performance or competitive advantage in their value activity if both partners cooperate in aspects of their relationship such as strategic goals, value, and some other areas where they may collaborate (Lambert and Schmeterman, 2012). The relationship strategy between the manufacturer and supplier is consistent with its content in a supply chain strategic demand analysis. Relationship strategy meets the indicator demand in partnering relationship supplier selection analysis.

Supplier selection has been cited as one of the reasons for the successful implementation of partnering (Brouthers, Brouthers and Wilkinson, 1995; Evans, 2001; Hagen, 2002). In this field of discourse, supplier selection is an issue that is relevant to both practitioners and researchers and the criteria used to choose suppliers are a fundamental part of this process. The right partner is extremely important because the failure of many partnering attempts can easily be traced to poor partner selection at the planning stage (Pansiri, 2005). In

choosing appropriate partners, research identifies operation measurement criteria such as compatibility, capability, commitment and control as criteria for successful pre-selection of partners (Hugh and Faulkner, 1995; Mendleson and Polonsky, 1995; Hagen, 2002).

2.7.2.3 Partnering relationship management

The best way to *understand* cooperation is *through* cooperation (Kamminga and Meerkoistra, 2007). The greater the partner's ability to cooperate, the more likely they are to meet their objectives. Cooperating forces partners to develop skills that will minimise the interpersonal and organisational differences between them (Cao and Xiang, 2012; Mahlendorf et al., 2012).

Collaboration needs to be embedded in a wider set of governance mechanisms that should include relationship control, dependence monitoring and building trust (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012). It is believed that they are also crucial to the successful management of supply chains. It is imperative that the manufacturer takes strategic initiatives to foster superior relationships and provide mutual benefits (Chen and Paulraj, 2004). The supply chain partnering relationship management is composed of three activities: stabilise relationship; adjust relationship; and resolve the conflict.

'Stabilise relationship' refers to partners taking the correct steps to maintain the mutual partnering relationship, including various relationship factors affecting cooperation goals and performance. Supply chain contract and information sharing are important indicators that can be used to measure the relationship stability of both parties during cooperation, and are important indicators of stabilising activity.

'Adjust relationship' refers to the changes the partnering relationship needs to go through to adjust and adapt the relationship strategy, the cultural priority and criteria selection of the supply chain partnering relationship. Partners can correspondingly adjust the production plan, according to the product condition changes made by partners in the implementation of the supply chain partnering relationship. The adjustments to strategies and goals within the partnering relationship, and goals for cooperating with the partner, belong to an initial indicator to adjust the supply chain partnering relationship. The cultural priority includes the partner's culture, organisational structure, and other content. The partners can cooperate to correspondingly adjust the partner's culture and organisational structure.

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Partners should actively and carefully communicate any conflict generated and rationally solve the conflict on the basis of continuous and stable relational factors, thereby further ensuring continuity and development of the supply chain partnering relationship and improving performance as an outcome.

2.7.2.4 Partnering relationship termination

The termination of the supply chain partnering relationship can take place only if either party wishes it to. If the issue is the careful and planned process of disengagement then two must cooperate. Some costs will be incurred if either party simply stops acting but some of these costs might be reduced if they cooperate in the termination process. Supply chain partnering relationship termination incurs a loss to all parties concerned due to cooperation failure, the cost of switching partners, the cost of leaving the consortium, unfair relationship, dissatisfaction, commitment and trust and duration of the relationship. Halinen and Tähtinen (2002)'s process theory of relationship ending academic paper, they considered the type of relationship and termination have two parts, which are influencing factors and ending process. Basing on Halinen and Tähtinen (2002)'s research, this thesis reviewed criteria influencing partnering relationship termination, relationship terminate subsequent actions. It is believed that the waste of the partners' time and energy also represents costs incurred.

2.7.2.5 Partnering relationship performance

Performance can be explained from two aspects according to the literature: the performance is the profit-generating ability, which is obtained by manufacturers and is higher than the industry-average level; and the performance is derived from the unique resources and capacity owned by the partners. The performance, is hard for other people to learn and imitate, and is therefore difficult to replicate. From the aspects of obtaining cooperative ability and competitiveness, the cooperative partnering relationship is a method that demonstrates external achievement. Fostering and maintaining a superior relationship between dyadic partners is a daunting task. Various forces play critical roles in making this a challenging business practice.

2.7.2.6 Multicultural collaborators' business environments

Multicultural collaborators operate with some environmental characteristics of the international joint ventures. Many factors influence manufacturers, including their size, the

type of purchase involved, and the competitive environment they operate in (Zhang and Goffin, 2001). From the literature review, this can be defined as culturally influential decisions between partners in the partnering relationship process, and the resultant possibility of generating mutual benefits if both partners cooperate in areas such as culture, management style, and other aspects (Carter and Narasimhan, 1996; Chen, Paulraj and Lado, 2004). In fact, many organisations take cultural differences into account when trying to connect with customers worldwide (Stiglitz, 2002). As multicultural environments appear to be a fundamental problem for both simple and complex organisations (Thompson, 1967), this is included as a critical antecedent to the SCPR.

Zhang and Goffin (1999) jointly carried out a manufacturing investigation and found that, although international joint venture (IJV) manufacturing has significant potential for partners, companies typically face many operational problems in Chinese business environment. Although articles in existing literature have produced evidence of various operations management criteria which play a role, no previous research has shown the extent to which individual companies are likely to encounter these criteria. In addition, Zhang and Goffin (1999) highlight how the achievement of successful IJV manufacturing is dependent on accomplishing an effective IJV business culture. Summaries from the previous study, this research framework also indicates how international managers working in IJVs need to be capable of management in a complex multicultural environment (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Some studies (e.g., Chen, 1995) noted that joint ventures with international companies generally have a superior reputation and better performance. Other research has identified that sharing the management control of IJVs between partners leads to a more satisfactory business performance (Beamish, 1993). Partners sometimes have different views on how successful their IJVs are because they may use different criteria to evaluate performance (Luo, 1995). For example, Chinese partners tend to focus on long-term issues such as technology transfer, managerial learning, and exports. In contrast, international partners use criteria such as profitability and market share (Yan and Gray, 1994). Beamish (1993) pointed to the need for research on how partners reach agreement on common measurement for IJV performance and on how manufacturing performance is best measured and improved.

2.7.3 Conclusion

The partnering relationship in multicultural collaborators' business environments can now be illustrated with the help of a framework. This means that a cohesive picture can be obtained to address what needs to be explored and evaluated, and how the research questions can be addressed. The study uses empirical research to investigate how partnering theory is put into practice in existing multicultural organisations. The proposition is that using the framework and comparing actual operations of the partnering relationship will explore and measurement the partnering relationship's performance.

This study uses initial partnering relationship theories in explaining and exploring phenomena within the partnering relationship and seeks to enhance contributions to the field. It therefore examines contextualising multicultural business environments in terms of how their supply chain partnering relationship approaches are viewed and how these contribute to attaining business objectives and advantages. More specifically, this study contributes to the international operations management literature by juxtaposing underpinning partnering relationship theories. The study leverages these theories to explore research frameworks relating to the impact of cultural differences in SCPR.

The propositions of this study are showed as below:

- 1, *Explore a complete framework which identifies criteria to be incorporated into SCPR measurement and performance.*
- 2, *Explore within a specific context, namely multicultural collaborators how they are functioning in business-to-business partnering relationships.*
3. *Establish a coherent set of performance indicators to the links between behaviours and effectiveness against multicultural collaborators' business objectives.*

The next chapter presents the research methodology, which explains why cross-case studies approach is selected, multicultural manufacturers and suppliers (supply chain partnering relationships) were selected to gather evidence on the partnering relationship process. The methodology also provides an analysis of the semi-structured interview questions, explaining how they are linked to the research questions.

The theoretical framework (Figure 4 and Table 11) is designed as a tool to help explore and refine efficient supply chain multicultural partnering relationships in China. When used in

this manner, the company seeking a partnering relationship could first use the framework internally to assess the manufacturer or supplier of the proposed partnering relationship. The potential partner could then do the same. If both manufacturer and supplier use the framework they can jointly evaluate the facilitators and can reach agreement on the type of partnering relationship they want, how to manage the components, and explore relationship performance measurement. Each stage must be accomplished in a satisfactory manner and all must be completed to a satisfactory degree as no single one of them is enough for a supply chain partnering relationship. Relationships among various elements of the supply chain partnering relationship management, the international joint ventures business environment, and performance are discussed in next chapter, according to the theoretical analysis and the context of the Chinese automotive industry. The research framework of an effective supply chain partnering relationship in multicultural collaborators' business environments is constructed.

In the next chapter presents the theoretical framework developed from the findings from the interviews held with interviewees to investigate the research question – the measurement and effectiveness of supply chain partnering relationships in international joint venture groupings in the Chinese Automotive sector to reflect the multicultural effective partnering relationship process. The framework is constructed on partnering relationship theories perspective to present findings from a dynamic sector and multi-cultural collaborators' business environment background.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines previous research approaches taken in the supply chain discourse and draws on insights available from the management research literature in order to develop a clear research strategy for this thesis. The results of any study will be affected by the research approach chosen (Saunders et al., 1997); hence it is important that the strategy developed in this chapter is rigorous and uses an appropriate framework in order to contribute towards answering the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 and section 3.2.

3.2 The research aims and objectives

An effective supply chain partnering relationship stresses the importance of direct, long-term associations, and advances mutual planning and problem-solving exercises. However, in IJV relationships with multicultural partners, the patterns of behaviour and performance expectations are inconsistent across the international partners. The IJV managers, therefore, have the problem of what priorities to focus on with their different partners. Underpinning this is the lack of a coherent set of PMIs to establish the links between behaviours and effectiveness against business objectives.

This study seeks to explore and establish a framework of performance measurement indicators as to assess '*The measurement and effectiveness of supply chain partnering relationships in international joint venture groupings in the Chinese Automotive sector*' by answering the following research questions:

- (1) *How can multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) performance be measured? (Follow Table 1, p.11, Solve problem1, fill out gap1)*
- (2) *How effectively are multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationships? (Follow Table 1, p.11, Solve problem 2, fill out gap2)*
- (3) *How can criteria on which multicultural supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined? (Follow Table 1, p.11, Solve problem3, fill out gap3)*

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The aims of the study are to uncover the nature and characteristics of SCPRs, and explore the relationship operations and measurement, and its impact on multicultural partnering relationship performance. This chapter describes the nature of partnering relationship theories and the process of SCPRs, where the IJV identifies an opportunity or generates an idea. In addition, the research describes how the SCPR is deployed to operate and measure the relationship, and linkage with IJVs' opportunity. Of importance is how the partnering relationship generates value in the marketplace through the partnering relationship lifecycle and operations management. This research explores what the multicultural business managers recognise, and whether they are looking for differences in the performance measurement. Their perceptions are reported and analysed.

The objective of the study is first to identify a framework of the key performance criteria of relevance to a partnering relationship; second to analyse the impact of the multicultural IJVs on the SCPR measurement. This study explores and establishes a framework of indicators to underpin multicultural SCPR process and relationship performance based on case studies in international joint venture groupings in the Chinese automotive sector. A multinational feature is one of the typical complexities in the SCPR and is well represented in the Chinese automotive industry due to the government's policy to encourage international investment (Holweg, Luo, and Oliver, 2008). International-invested brands, operating in joint ventures as manufacturers, occupy over 90% of the market in China (Holweg et al., 2008; Richards and Yang, 2007). Despite the rapid growth of the Chinese automotive industry (McEvily, Perrone, and Zaheer, 2003; Zhu, Sarkis, and Lai, 2007) research on multicultural management skills is essential in order for sound decisions to be made and for potential problems to be anticipated when ramping up the SCPR performance.

This study contributes to the knowledge of the SCPR by providing theoretical insights and empirical findings. By pooling an extensive set of factors, this research extends the understanding of the attributes of SCPR operations in multicultural organisations. Through an in-depth investigation and use of cross-case analysis in different types of current Chinese automotive SCPRs in which the cultural differences, the research also intends to develop a reliable and valid instrument, and to empirically explore the relationships among supply chain partnering, international joint venture relationship management, and partnering relationship performance.

3.3 Research philosophy

3.3.1 Interpretive Paradigm

As Silverman (2005) suggested, the way in which an investigation progresses is determined by the conceptual framework. In adopting a conceptual framework to address the reality and the status of knowledge surrounding the process and effectiveness of the SCPR in the multicultural collaborators' business environment, the interpretive paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) is found to be the most relevant 'plan, model or pattern' (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p.68).

Pettigrew (1990) explained the process of organisational analysis, whereby certain paradigms – defined by Kuhn (1970) as a governing structure of metaphysical notions which a set of analysts agree as significant – shape the theoretical and ontological perspectives of the investigator. Easterby-Smith et al. (2002), Bryman and Bell (2003), and Saunders et al. (1997) proposed that the undertaking of an investigation is shaped by an investigator's perspectives in relation to epistemology, ontology, conventional knowledge, and social bodies' characteristics.

Hopper and Powell (1985) explained how the paradigm and its mechanisms suggest that people's and collective individuals' perspectives, as well as the significance they attach to phenomena, can explain organisational reality, with governed alterations permissible as an element of its subjectivist aspect. Vibert (2004) stated that the interpretive paradigm is not positivist in its statement of an objective reality outside of experience, as in the case of radical structuralism. The impact of multi-culture influences decision making, and partnering relationship measurement – alongside the investigation, assessment and appraisal of partnering relationship interaction and performance – can all be determined through the interpretive paradigm.

Table 12 The interpretive Paradigm (based on Burrell and Morgan (1979))

Ontological	Epistemological
Nominalism	Subjectivist and anti-positivist
Various methods of constructing reality	Experience helps to formulate knowledge.
Explanatory names, tags and ideas are utilised to consider, comprehend and organise individual cognisance of reality.	Organisations are most effectively comprehended by exploring the morals and perspectives of the individuals it is comprised of. The theoretical context of the research and its subjects' inclusion must be outlined, as subjects and the investigator are mutually dependent and

	subjectivism characterises social science research.
<p>Human Nature</p> <p>Contexts and unanticipated issues can determine a person's actions and conduct, regardless of their ability to shape their own context through individual behaviour.</p> <p>Voluntarism</p> <p>Deeper comprehension is possible through acquiring data on direct experiences. A company's current situation will be assessed, while the company's operational context will be investigated in terms of harmony and consistency.</p>	<p>Methodological</p> <p>Ideographic</p> <p>Relativism characterises methods, as they are concerned with how reality is formed, assessed and altered by individuals.</p> <p>An investigation of people's personal circumstances should be undertaken.</p>

Cresswell et al. (2007) outlined the procedures of interpretive research, which for investigating strategies may be more relevant. Gioia and Thomas (1996) believed it to be the consequence of cognitive assessments, shaping and being shaped by events and occurrences. In the context of investigating partnering relationships, the literature review shows that interpretive research has been utilised. The assessment and appraisal of outputs and results, the facilitating of successful partnering relationship and analysis of organisational context can all be undertaken, which will be discussed soon.

3.3.2 Justification of the paradigm

To more closely link theory with practice, there are three essential research principles that supply chain scholars much address. First, theory must be the primary foundation of research; the research must be weighted in theory. Secondly, the investigation must be of managerial import. Thirdly, the main impetus behind the research should be a significant contribution to the field (DeHoratius and Rabinovich, 2011; Soltani et al., 2012).

Research methods employed allow work practices and activities at the workplace to be scrutinised and linked with partnering theories. The interpretive paradigm helps us 'make sense of the complex, important, legitimate and reasonable' (Patton, 2002, p.265) in the real world of managers who are operating partnering relationship, particularly in China. For this research, interpretivism supported by constructionism appears more acceptable over the other paradigms. This research follows Burrell and Morgan's (1979) premise for the interpretive paradigm, in which

individuals in organisations carry out their affairs in an ordered, cohesive and integrated manner. This is reflected in Table 12, which indicates its elements as a basis for internal consistency and its assumptions about the nature of social science. This paradigm is deemed most relevant, and supports the examination of the phenomenon of partnering relationships through the lens of partnering theories to clarify concepts, processes, and practices.

Error! Reference source not found. illustrates the components of both the positivist and social constructionist paradigms, as outlined by Easterby-Smith et al. (2002). There is a significant discrepancy between traditional positivist methods and social constructionist approaches, which shows the latter's connections to interpretive approaches. Social constructionism is much more pertinent to perception forming, interview, case study, and general qualitative assessments, as evidenced by **Error! Reference source not found.**.. The partnering relationship results in appraisal, general output and results assessment, and overall comprehension of partnering relationship interactions are much easier through social constructionism. Silverman (2005) believed that the understanding of relationships, effects, and philosophical conventions could be assisted through social constructionism. While positivist approaches may be suited to traditional scientific research, social science and its incorporated fields has a different process of assessment and investigation. The assessment of individuals within structures is particularly instructive to investigating joint endeavours and associated partnering relationships.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) outlined how, under a positivist approach, sampling relies on the arbitrary determination of a significant number of participants, generalising of findings is assisted by statistical probability, basic units of evaluation are utilised, the researcher is considered autonomous from the research observations, while notions are clearly demarcated through the deductive procedure. On the other hand, phenomenological or social constructionism approaches have different characteristics.

Table 13 Outline of positivism's and social constructionism's methodological repercussions (based on Easterby-Smith et al. (2002))

Methodological Aspects	Continuum of Social Science Epistemologies' opposite ends of the spectrum	
	Positivism	Social Constructionism
Aims	Discovery	Creation
Initiation points	Prediction	Significance
Strategy	Testing	Reflexivity
Procedures	Quantification	Discussion
Analysis/Interpretation	Validity/falsification	Sensemaking

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Results	Causation	Comprehension
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In this research, purposive samplings of eight companies (and their five sets supply chain partnering relationships) were utilised (see Figure 5, p. 100). Theory construction is the means of generalising from rich information, and this, and induction, characterise the research procedure. The researcher is integral to the research observations and there is the incorporation of managers' opinions. During the investigation into partnering relationship interactions within a multicultural collaborators' business environment, it is evident from **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.** that the methodological and philosophical approaches, research proposal, and plan, as well as aspects of data obtainment and analysis, are all shaped by the interpretive paradigm.

Table 14 How the 'world-view' of interpretivism and the research philosophy influences the study of SCPR in multicultural collaborators context

Aim, Targets	Knowledge, Reality	Processes, Methods
What are supply chain partnering relationship interactions' primary aspects? In relation to supply chain partnering relationship interactions, what are the performance (measurement) consequences? From the perception of partnering relationship theories, how can relationships be assessed? Is the interaction between multicultural institutions' results and supply chain partnering relationships conducted entirely governed by collaborative advantage? Are joint endeavour activities, company results and supply chain partnering relationship affected by the interested parties' anticipated prospects and assumptions?	Individual, specific and subjective perspectives.	Various The major consideration was on partnering relationship interactions, although a number of institutional arrangements were assessed.

As denoted by its prevalence among supply chain scholars (Meredith, 1998; McCutcheon and Meredith, 1993; Lewis, 1998; Voss et al., 2002; Soltani et al., 2006; Soltani and Wilkinson, 2010; Barratt et al., 2011), analyses conducted on the qualitative case studies in Operations Management (Barratt et al., 2011, and Fisher, 2007) noted three distinct research methods: analytical, deductive survey-based empirical, and qualitative case study; each of which represents a specific era in Operations Management research. As the methods developed with each era, the new techniques improved upon the previous methods without undermining them. As a result, these developments allowed Operations management scholars to widen the area of research. From this perspective, the qualitative approach can be considered as accompanying and interconnected with previous eras' research methods, whilst simultaneously being separate from its predecessors. As Barratt et al. (2011) summarise, the qualitative method is one that has greatly impacted upon Operations management research; and it is this method that forms the basis of this paper.

On average, qualitative case studies on the supply chain management topic share three common characteristics: (1) As observed by Hines et al. (2002) and Pagell (2004), the choice of qualitative research above other research systems, particularly with reference to its abilities with newly arising material and practical areas; (2) With reference to Flynn et al. (1990) and Meredith (1998), qualitative research in supply chain studies has a greater utility for analysing new developments; (3) A major benefit of using qualitative research is its ability to improve and advance supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) theories, noted by Eisenhardt (1989) and Barratt et al. (2011).

In support of the assertion that qualitative research furthers SCPR theory and practice, there are four main points; namely: SCPR adaptability and workability, quick and localised time-scale of SCPR practices, absence of exclusive and vast amounts of theory, and finally, as a developing area, SCPR is more equipped and better suited to examining social interactions within the workplace (Boudreau et al., 2003; Bendoly et al., 2006; Croson and Donohue, 2006). Further explanation of these four factors is detailed in the following paragraph.

First, stemming from industry, supply chain management research is a practical method of analysing supply chain operations and practices, and is therefore suited to the topic on which this research centres; namely, the Chinese automotive industry. An effective supply chain depends on physical supply chain workability, as well as a well-functioning and smooth-running SCPR built on trust between all involved partners (Verma and Boyer, 2010). As Creswell (2007) explained, a qualitative approach provides significant insight into and comprehension of the relationship between all partners involved in the supply chain; not only in terms of organisation and environment, but also of the participant individual's role and contribution.

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Secondly, SCPR activities and strategy are by definition short-term, repeated every day. As Barnes (2008) and Lowson (2002) asserted, in order to fully analyse the partnering relationship performance objectives, such as productivity efficiency and partnering relationship functionality, as well as the company's overall strategic intentions, the short-term activities and long-term strategic intentions must first be calibrated. According to Porter (1996), facilitation of the company's success demands strategic positioning of the partnering relationship function to comprehensively and vigilantly oversee the working practices and processes. The qualitative research process can fulfil this role; it offers a system by which to audit and analyse processes, in both professional terms (for the company itself) and in academic terms (for researchers).

Thirdly, as noted above: SCPR theory is limited in scope and volume, as well as homogeneity (Swamidass, 1991; Fisher, 2007). Instead of this issue causing delays in the progress of research or the merging of theory and empirics. However, within the field there is overwhelming support for qualitative field research being used as a means to actively develop a collective theory. Fisher (2007) and Von Neumann (1956, p.2063) believed that the thought processes involved in attempting to understand and develop 'the best theories' (Lewin, 1945; Van de Ven, 1989), 'theorising based on empirics increases the chances of improving the theoretical base of operations management' (Fisher, 2007, p.369).

Current literature (Fisher, 2007; Barratt et al., 2011; Dehoratius and Rabinovich, 2011, for instance) emphasises the need for further academic discussion of the supply chain, in both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This factor is the focus of the fourth and final consideration, as listed above; and is an issue raised by multiple research investigations: Boyer and Swink (2008), DeHoratius and Rabinovich (2001, p.371). Fisher (2007), Meredith (1998), Roth (2007), Singhal et al. (2008), and Voss et al. (2002) Rather than branching out to consider overall supply chain management and its 'complex social and behaviour elements', as stated by Boyer and Swink (2008, p.339), the supply chain field is slow-developing and narrow in scope because most researchers focus on the over-worked, smaller picture (Fisher, 2007). For Fisher (2007, p.369) unless there is a 'healthy injection of empirics' into the supply chain field, there is a chance it will fracture into many minor branches of study (also discussed in Neumann, 1956). These conclusions underline the importance of qualitative research in the unification and improvement of SCPR studies. As Fisher (2007) surmised, empirical research will expand sources and theories.

As previously stated, the theoretical field of supply chain research lacks breadth. Instead there is a widespread preoccupation with the three principles and 'prescriptive solutions (based on traditional rationalist methods such as optimisation, simulation and statistical modelling)' (Westbrook, 1994, p.6). This tendency has come at 'the expense of broader contributions'

(Westbrook, 1994, p.6). In an attempt to reinvigorate and expand the field, this research opts to use deductive qualitative practical research in conjunction with partnering relationship theory.

The deductive research approach which can be employed (Blaikie, 2000; Baker, 2003). The deductive approach uses theory, practical data, and verification (Jankowicz, 2000) to assess and build upon previously established and accepted theories. In contrast, the aim of the inductive strategy is to produce new theory through its own research, observation, data, and analysis (Blaikie, 2000; Baker, 2003). To summarise: deductive strategy starts with and aims to extend existing theory; inductive strategy aims for wholly fresh developments to open up new areas in the research field (Maylor and Blackmon, 2005).

The structure of this research is as follows. Stages 1: during the research approaches, the theoretical framework is identified and substantiated in three steps: namely, reviewing existing literature, establishing the current multicultural collaborative SCPR environment, and specific consideration of the partnering relationship in the Chinese automotive industry. Stage 2: aiming to explore a fresh theoretical direction, this step reconsiders the framework from a perspective alongside an empirical case study approach. Using these strategies will also highlight any issues missed by the deductive process in Stage 1. Due to the cultural topic of this investigation (multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship), an additional approach can be applied. As detailed by Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) and Saunders et al. (1997), phenomenological parameters relate to social events and behaviours, into which cultural considerations are categorised. Using this theory in addition to the more standard approaches offers social insight into the data, providing opportunity for a deeper level of study, which is hugely beneficial to the field. For analysis of managerial factors, Saunders et al. (1997) demonstrated that deductive strategy can effectively be employed in tandem.

3.4 Alternative empirical research methodologies

3.4.1 Empirical research methodologies literature review

Every approach has good and bad points. There is no universally superior methodology (Boyer and Swink, 2008). In the following paragraphs, a variety of research methodologies are briefly reviewed, followed by justification of the chosen methodology for the context of this research. The formulation of an illustrative theory, as well as contribution to greater comprehension and existing knowledge of a topic, is the major reason for studies across all disciplines. Meredith (1998) suggested that research also seeks to reveal, assess, categorise, and comprehend

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occurrences and events that were unapparent or under-explored. Cook and Reichardt (1979) also emphasised that qualitative comprehension is necessary for quantitative knowledge, which is a significant point in relation to determining conclusions of investigatory findings.

The construction of a model or models, as well as assisting with the construction of knowledge and understanding, is typically the aim of identifying a research inquiry. Eisenhardt (1989) and Schmenner and Swink (1998) suggested that original, paradigm-expanding comprehension can be garnered by rational, rigorous, and verifiable theories. In devising a valid approach to research, three queries were suggested by Yin (2003): Are historical or contemporary matters relevant to the occurrence or issue under investigation; should spontaneous conduct be permitted or do variables need to be regulated; and what are the characteristics of the research query? The primary investigatory query, as well as the justification of the research, should shape the research approach. Gabrielian (1999) alluded to this, in explaining that precise and narrow foci are provided by case studies, while predictive research is effective when empirical and semi-empirical research strategies are used.

Boyer and Swink (2008) noted how marketing and management disciplines have been aided by the common incorporation of questionnaire methods, which are suitable for investigating issues relating to supply chains while having lower implementation costs. Issues and aspects that are not immediately discernible or measurable can be investigated via a questionnaire approach. Through the utilisation of questionnaires, information can be instantaneously obtained regarding a particular management activity from the relevant people and department. However, a methodology that incorporates a questionnaire approach can also have some drawbacks as well as advantages. As the investigation relies solely on the questionnaire information, prejudice and partiality may become an issue. Furthermore, questionnaire fatigue is a real issue, particularly for bosses of manufacturing companies, as well as in management generally. Boyer and Swink (2008) explained that despite questionnaires being an established and familiar approach to research design, managers may not be as willing to respond to this data collection approach.

Experimental research offers a high level of control over threats to internal legitimacy by reducing influences that might otherwise explain observed relationships between independent and dependent variables (Boyer and Swink, 2008). By means of controls and random assignments to treatments, particular outcomes can be isolated, and powerful conjectures of causality can be developed. The limitation to experimentation pertains to external validity, as the laboratory setting fashions an artificial environment that may not sufficiently correspond to actual decision-making conditions (Boyer and Swink, 2008).

Secondary data methodology is frequently used in the supply chain research field, with the increasing use of communications and information systems to amass data (Boyer and Swink, 2008). The availability of data accumulated by corporations, government agencies, news agencies, industry groups, and other parties is increasing extremely rapidly advantages of secondary data sources include extensive availability and lower data collection expenditure. Secondary data is commonly more 'objective' than self-reported survey data. Seeing that the researcher is reliant on another party for data collection, they must presume that the data were collected appropriately.

Qualitative research is a group of interdisciplinary, cross-cutting, and cross-thematic research methods, which is composed of a group of complex and interrelated terms, concepts, and assumptions (Denzin, 2009). Qualitative research is better understood through displaying its specific methods and applicable research fields. Case or field-based studies provide a qualitative approach to studying phenomena in-depth, particularly poorly understood or emerging phenomena (Boyer and Swink, 2008).

Case studies contribute to theory building through observation of phenomena in the operation management world that have not been empirically tested (Stuart et al., 2002). All of these factors—paucity of theory, complexity and lack of well-supported definitions and metrics—favour the use of case studies (Stuart et al., 2002). A number of researchers have suggested that research can be enriched by the use of inputs from other disciplines and by qualitative methods such as case studies (Näslund, 2002; Pedrosa, Näslund, and Jasmand, 2012). Primarily used as a theory-building approach, case studies have been effectively employed in a large variety of situations, and prove excellent guides for conducting such research exist in both broader business literature (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989) and in operations management literature (Meredith, 1998). *The Journal of Operations Management* (JOM) has published numerous case study-based articles over the past decade. Wu and Choi (2005) examined eight cases, gathering data from pairs of suppliers to identify five archetypes of buyer-supplier relationships. This study aptly demonstrates how careful and thorough application of appropriate case study techniques can yield substantial insights and provide a strong platform for future research. For this reason, the article by Wu and Choi (2005) was recognised as the best JOM paper of 2005. Benefits of case studies include the ability to examine a topic in great depth. Researchers can focus on a specific topic, allowing a thorough examination of numerous factors and nuances. Case studies provide a richness of description and first-hand observation of phenomena in their natural settings. Often, case studies yield unintended insights, which can lead to new avenues of inquiry. The best case studies provide a foundation for further examination.

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The literature review revealed that partnering relationship as 'linking pins' or 'mediators', are mainly involved in multicultural supply chain business environments, influencing strategy, projects, social interaction, practices and the attainment of objectives in the company. As they also influence both multi-culture organisations' managers' decision-making, the social constructionism approach is most relevant to research involving these elements.

3.4.2 Research strategy

The research strategy is 'guided'. As Marshall and Rossman (2006) recommended, a methodical investigation of this project's research issue concerning partnering relationship conduct is possible through the rigorously developed research strategy, with the understanding of partnering relationship within a multicultural collaborators context hopefully enhanced through the investigation. As the partnering relationship is involved, and this research concentrates mainly on a process approach (Pettigrew, 1992; Van de Ven, 1992) to the partnering relationship, naturalistic qualitative methods are favoured (Symon and Cassell, 1998; Bryman and Bell, 2003; Shook et al., 2003; Silverman, 2005). Ambert et al. (1995) suggested that, as opposed to validation of existing theories, qualitative investigations tend to focus on the revelation of new knowledge. Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) determined that as individuals form their understanding of reality within an institutional context, a qualitative approach enables the consideration of people's individual perspectives while factoring in the influence of management rules and alterations. To clarify, the three stages are as follows:

Stage 1: This involves revisiting the multicultural collaborators' SCPR approach and evaluating the methodology in the light of contemporary literature.

Stage 2: This involves refining the concept following the data collection and analysis of the perceptions of managers in the IJVs with experience of current practice to explore key criteria, making the framework more user-friendly and giving the concept a more practical focus. For the Chinese automotive industry, the study also considers the needs of manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers, thus bringing the concept up to date with current requirements.

Stage 3: Refining the concept in the light of evidence gained from the case study companies, in order to facilitate the multicultural collaborators' SCPR in practice.

Such an examination reveals the extent to which this investigation has developed throughout the research; progressing to not only address the thesis question but to also provide substantial impetus for any subsequent empirical research. With reference to the cataloguing in Section

3.3.2, the research was an amalgamation of the following methods: (1) theoretical/ conceptual development, and (2) empirical/case study research.

To achieve the research objectives, case study research strategy (Robson, 2002) affords several advantages as the researcher focuses on the effectiveness of specific partnering relationships within manufacturers and suppliers. Lewis et al. (1998), McCutcheon and Meredith (1993), Meredith et al. (1989) and Voss et al. (2002) advocated the implementation of a qualitative case study approach, rather than investigations centred on surveys. Meredith et al. (1989), Meredith (1998), Roth (2007) and Yin (1994) provided the basis for this investigation's definition of qualitative case study research as an empirically-focused inquiry into a given issue, utilising deep and detailed information that has been acquired in the actual context and background of the issue, in order to answer the investigatory questions. Eisenhardt (1989) and Yan and Gray (1994) stated that theory building or affirmation is generally the aim, while Meredith (1998) and Flynn et al. (1990) emphasised the need to comprehend the actual context of a developing or current event or occurrence. Additionally, Artie et al. (2012) noted how research into intricate events and issues in social science commonly utilises an in-depth case study approach. Original findings and information concerning political, social, personal, group and institutional events and occurrences have often been revealed with the assistance of case study approaches, with comprehension of phenomena in a rich, detailed, and significant manner facilitated by the approach (Yin, 2003).

Maintaining options for and alterations of data resources, assessment of pertinent existing research and ongoing identification of the investigatory questions is all possible by adopting a deductive methodological approach. The background, grounding and intricacies of phenomena should be able to be comprehended in detail through a case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989; Mertens, 1998; Punch, 2005). Berg (2009) explained how, following the methodical collation of data concerning an institution, occurrence, social context or individual, the issue or occurrence should be easier to more fully comprehend. Following the approach devised by Eisenhardt (1989a) and Yin (2003), a cross-case studies method is adopted alongside a descriptive and exploratory research design, in order to develop an in-depth comprehension of strategic planning. Furthermore, Pettigrew (1985) believed that the reality of the situation could be more effectively linked to theoretical explanations through a process-orientated method, with comprehension aided through the application of various theoretical explanations for personal, collective and institutional forms of conduct.

Cross-case studies add confidence to findings; such consideration guides the choice of the automotive industry through four manufacturers and their four tier one suppliers (their SCPRs are summarized in Figure 4, p.65) that have a manufacturer position in the competitive market sector,

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holding a large proportion of the market and achieving positive results. This is based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestion that research results can be treated with greater validity if a Cross-case study approach is taken. However, it is likely that Miles and Huberman (1994)'s research would be cumbersome if any more than four manufacturers and their tier one suppliers were investigated. Furthermore, partner selection, relationship development, and termination of partnering relationship could all be investigated in a concentrated manner.

Information is gathered about the partnering relationship processes and practices of these manufacturers and suppliers in the following areas: (1) explore relationship performance measurement; (2) multicultural business environments; (3) factors that influence their attitudes, decisions, actions and outcomes, and (4) how they find key criteria as well as how they resolve exploration and exploitation tensions through their partnering relationships. The likelihood of the company and its employees being accessible and amenable was considered. The chance that the acquired data and analysis outcomes could be transferred to other contexts and the procedure replicated was also factored into the assessment. Information on institutional culture and organisation, as well as data concerning strategic procedures and composition, were collected, where possible, by the researcher. Partnering relationship agreements in China, as well as significant and high-level managers and directors, were the foci of the case studies. The requirement for respondents to have knowledge about the necessity of strategic schemes, everyday regulation of business activities and strategic development, to be better informed in relation to manufacturer-supplier interactions, was apparent in the reviewed literature. As the existing body of research suggests that managers involved in partnering relationship conduct are key assets and connectors in partnering relationship's activities, those individuals are the focus of the interview process; however, various connected managers across related departments and activities were also included.

Considering the lack of research examining the processes involved in SCPRs in multicultural collaborators' business environments, this research employs a deductive qualitative multiple case studies methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989). Case studies are considered to be particularly useful for process-oriented inquiries (Yin, 1994). The cases were chosen to allow the research to capture the rich complexities of performance and environmental criteria surrounding the partnering relationship. Although the literature review and research strategy clarify the research philosophy and inform the reality, multiple quotations are also used to represent perspectives. Moreover, terms appropriate to qualitative research study are employed particularly in consideration of credibility and transferability of results. To minimise 'distance' or 'objective separateness' (Guba and Lincoln, 1988) investigations are conducted at the research site over a timeframe of at least

four months. As a qualitative research study is usually value-laden, any recognised biases are reported.

A retrospective cross-case study method was adopted, which is widely accepted as a good method for building or extending theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Voss, Tsikriktsis, and Frohlich, 2002; Yin, 2003). The purpose was to build on and extend partnering theory to an international context, in particular, an international joint venture context. Case studies are appropriate for this study's focus on process, the collection of qualitative data, and for cross-cultural research in general (Ghauri, 2004; Marchan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004). This study is anchored in the partnering theories' perspectives for research on the SCPR; this allows for the adoption of qualitative measures to explore relational approaches for mutual benefits.

As demonstrated in the framework, there are exploratory questions about how to measure the effectiveness supply chain partnering relationships in international joint venture groupings in the Chinese Automotive sector. An exploratory case study, as noted by Yin (2003), may be useful for researching certain exploratory research questions and to develop pertinent propositions for further inquiry. The main underlying issues being explored are dynamic but may be examined by observing the processes throughout a partnering relationship transaction. In particular, the expectations of the partnering relationship process in IJVs, and how this is being achieved (or not) in practice, were examined, through evaluating current and possible future practice in managing multicultural IJVs. Case study strategy involves multiple data collection techniques of document analysis, interviews, and observation (Robson, 2002; Jankowicz, 2005). This allows the research study to answer 'how' and 'why' questions, not just 'what', 'who', and 'where'; and allows for analytical generalisations (Yin, 2003). These multiple or 'hybrid' methods (Harrigan, 1983), involve 'multiple respondents' within the organisation (Barnes, 2001), and allow emphasis to be placed on gaining knowledge from the individual's perspective whilst reducing bias. This needs a constructionist model to prioritise interaction with a focus on behaviour, and for a preferred data to include observation and texts (Silverman, 2013, p.124). These methods prove useful in their fit with a theory on partnering relationship and topics including performance and IJVs. They also fit well with qualitative research here where both behaviour and interaction are being studied—partly descriptive and exploratory—and the multiple methods can help to more easily find patterns in the data. Easterby-Smith et al. (2002), through methodological implication, demonstrated that case study methods are highly applicable to qualitative research. The methods of Miles and Huberman (1994) are used for data analysis, supported with elements from Eisenhardt (1989a) and Yin (2003).

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With Eisenhardt's (1989a) and Yin's (2003) concepts of the multiple case study strategy in this study, transferability and applicability of results were a key consideration in selecting cases, while a sufficiently established theoretical approach was utilised to obtain qualitative data. In accordance with Ambert et al. (1995), individuals involved in partnering relationship conduct were selected as a focused sample to obtain rich data. As Miles and Huberman (1994) advocated, the methodical and cohesive character of social conduct was factored into consideration.

Furthermore, while interviewing managers on partnering relationship conduct regulation in order to illuminate their procedures, actions and conduct, it was important to be as objective as possible during the procedure of analysis, to thus mitigate pre-determined biases. Following this process and in line with Denzin's (1989) multiple method approaches, each company was investigated over a constrained duration of two years, with various complexities and nuances in analysis drawn out by means of contrasting particular aspects. An assessment can be deemed as significantly more valid if it incorporates aspects of critical comparison.

Yin (2003) observed that choices, schemes, procedural activities, and developments within institutions have all been the focus of case study methods. Harrigan (1986) suggested that quantitative validity and transferability are lacking in the case study approach. However, a more in-depth and nuanced consideration of pertinent business activities and strategy is possible through a case study method, as multiple perspectives can be incorporated and rich pictures developed. Hammersley et al. (2000) proposed that strength of the case study is its incorporation of assenting and dissenting opinions. Yin (2003) believed that transferability of findings is ensured through utilising a number of case studies, while theories and models can be affirmed or rejected based on various case studies that concern companies, management hierarchies and organisational planning. Thus this method is chosen to best address the study purpose and main research question.

3.4.3 Research design

With reference to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), this thesis utilises the case study method, which consists of four phases. As noted by Stuart et al. (2002), these phases are: establishment of research questions, instrument development, collection of data, and analysis of data. Each of these four phases is addressed below.

Analysis, assessment and outcomes are developed through the utilisation of the concepts, theories, methods, and measures employed, which can be outlined for this qualitative research design through the research problems, conceptual context, research questions, methods and

validity (Kaplan and Maxwell, 2005). The cross-case study design is used to answer the research questions of this thesis. A retrospective approach is employed to capture the evolution over time (Pettigrew, 1990 and Pentland, 1999). Although many different studies have been published on the topic of manufacturer-supplier (vertical) relationships, little attention has been devoted to understanding and explaining supply chain partnering relationship effectiveness and processes, within the multicultural business environment (IJVs). Although existing literature is dominated by cross-sectional studies, this thesis investigates the process of the SCPR, which refines the criteria of each partnering situation, and is evaluated based on the performance of the relationship. This study seeks to explore and establish a framework of indicators to measure the SCPR in international joint ventures in Chinese automotive sector, which can be developed as a corporate reference for related strategies. Unlike other studies that have ignored the supplier's view, for this research, dyadic data (i.e. both the manufacturer's and supplier's views) on the evolution of the relationship were collected, which provided an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the SCPRs.

Bowman and Ambrosini (1997) proposed that a case study approach mitigates the chance of undependable and insignificant results, while Hitt et al. (1996) suggested that legitimacy and applicability of findings can be enhanced. Both an interpretive approach and elements of descriptive and exploratory methods are adopted in this investigation, in order to shape the semi-structured interview approach. In order to achieve the most effective explanation of organisation and significance (Silverman, 2005), substantial attention was paid to the literature review, interview and data collection procedure, reflection, and resource assessment processes. In order to construct and contribute to theories more effectively, a constant reflection on the obtained information and relevant theories was performed.

Ajzen (1991) believed that management activities regulated prospects, limitations and various influences on conduct, thus it is these nuances that the deductive approach to resource assessment and interviews seeks to reveal. Within the partnering relationship, there are various procedures and activities that are related to inside and outside influences. It is also important to consider factors such as a potential for partnering relationship continuation, the situation and sort of developments being undergone, duration and rapidity of changes, and what models for existing and future situations can be devised. Alongside the appropriate regulation of such factors, culture can be key criteria in China. This investigation's major assessments, suggestions and conclusions can be assessed in a progressive manner throughout the research, as the primary component of analysis, partnering relationship, has been identified (Babbie, 2010).

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Determination of the issue, evaluation of obtained information, category elucidation, interactions, research structure, defining of questions, clarity in the process and objectivity are all enhanced by the literature review chapter providing a definition of partnering relationship. The information obtained from the interviews will allow reformulation. As James et al. (2004) proposed, the in-depth scrutiny of a select few examples is permissible through the qualitative case study method. Enhanced perspectives on the issue of partnering relationships will be possible as a consequence, with the formulation, shaping and enhancement of illustrative theories. Independent of the individual instigating the partnering relationship, any relevant partnering relationship was opted for in responding to the research query. This allowed for a pragmatic research approach and triangulation of the case studies (Patton, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The preparation, development and implementation of the case study method were regulated by established procedures for case studies. Yin (2003) outlined the case study method and procedures for reliability. For the research design, initially, theories are established based on an assessment of the existing research, with a proposed data collection process developed after choosing pertinent case studies. The determination of the means by which collected data supported or did not support established theory, similarities between outcomes, the incorporation of further case studies and the establishment of theory, evidence and conclusion linkages was undertaken for all case studies. The selection of particular cases was decided based on the theoretical framework, primary investigator query and established theories. The chosen tools, actions and within-case conduct were established on the basis of sub-areas (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Previous and existing perspectives on partnering relationships were assessed, utilising triangulation and replication logic. Yin (2003) emphasised replication logic, the belief that an alteration in context will change the occurrence or event, while, if an equivalent context is seen, the occurrence or event will be replicated. Yin (2003) explained that replication logic utilises multiple cases with theoretical justification, has stronger results, transferability and validity of produced theory, thus, facilitates theoretical construction and alteration. Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed that multiple cases strengthen a rich understanding of a stated issue, while Gibbs (2007) and Cresswell (2009) suggested that authenticity and accuracy of results are enhanced.

In research on partnering relationships, particularly in China, the associated research gaps indicate that 'their study is warranted' (Punch, 2005, p.340). The context of the Chinese automotive industry, hitherto under-researched, can provide useful lessons as cases therein can be perceived as more extreme given the dynamic and complex environment. Focus on partnering relationship exploration and evaluation, and the use of operations management and related joint

venture operations can contribute to partnering relationships in cross-cultural organisations. These elements focus more on exploitation processes and practices but also blend exploration activities. Resource and time constraints also influence this choice.

3.5 Sampling and the sample

3.5.1 Choosing the cases of the study

During the case study selection process, an initial evaluation of the on what the samples should consist of took place. However, once the sample companies were finally chosen, it was necessary to perform a more in-depth investigation. This included semi-structured face-to-face and email/telephone interviews to determine the exact nature of the multicultural collaborators and the complexity of the supply chain partnering relationship.

Eisenhardt (1989), Glaser and Strauss (1967), Meredith (1998) and Yin (1989) explained that in order to meet theoretical requirements, purposive sampling is adopted for case studies. Yin (1989) suggested that case studies should be selected based on the estimation of outcomes that either affirm or disavow each other. Miles and Huberman (1984), Pettigrew (1990) and Yin (1989) advocated the selection of highly dissimilar cases when it seems they have divergent features. In accordance with Choi and Hong (2002) and Fisher (2007), to produce points of reference for future research, top companies were selected. Consequently, rather than a random or convenient opting for certain case studies, Benbasat et al. (1987) advocated that the studies need to be thoroughly considered when the aim is to construct theory.

A question then arises as to the number of cases that researchers should select. Voss et al. (2002), recognising this dilemma, suggested that the fewer the number of cases, the greater the opportunity for depth of observation. However, multiple cases can augment external validity and help guard against observer bias. In particular, for theory-building purposes, the use of multiple cases is likely to create more robust and testable theory than single-case research (Eisenhardt, 1989, Yin, 1994; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). This complies with Eisenhardt (1998) who argued that between 4 and 12 cases is generally an appropriate number for a cross-case study. Eisenhardt's (1989) 'theoretical sampling' was employed to select cases from both extremes to achieve good theoretical replication (Yin, 2003). Eisenhardt (1989) cautioned that if fewer than four are used it may become difficult to capture the complexity of the real world, and if more than ten are employed it may become difficult for the researchers to cognitively process the information.

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In order to identify commonalities and particularities in the development process of partnering relationships, five sets of supply chain partnering relationships were selected (Figure 6), which are EA-S4, EB-S2, JC-S2, UC-S1 and UC-S3 (the manufacturers are named EA, EB, JC and UC, their Tier one suppliers are named S1, S2, S3 and S4).

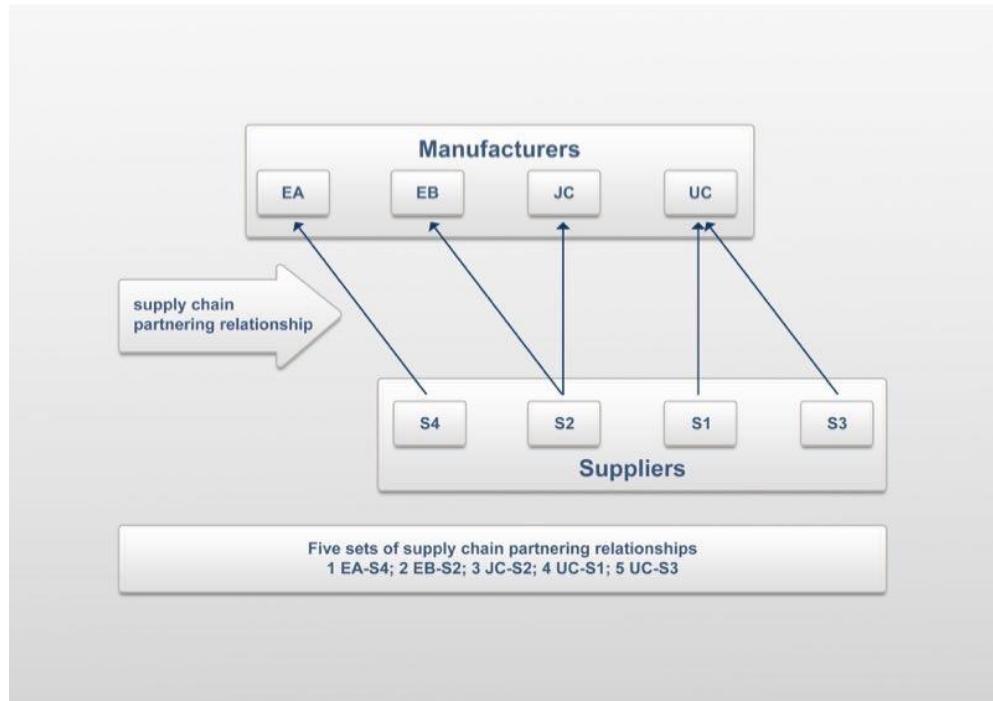


Figure 5 Five partnering relationship cross-case samples

To justify the generalisability of this study, Eisenhardt's (1989) guidelines were followed to select cases from automotive industries, from the initial sample of four international joint venture manufacturers and four of their tier-one suppliers. Criteria for evaluating the needs of samples, and the user, at this stage of the research project included the following:

- (1) A specific sample requirement was that the cases originated in the Chinese market, and all of the sample IJVs have their head offices in China. Due to historical precedence in IJV research (Glaister, Husan and Buckley, 1998), the researcher is confident that the sample was representative of IJV activity among Chinese automotive groupings.
- (2) Ensure this specification simplified the analysis since different inward-investing manufacturers are likely to influence the management of China-based IJVs in comparison to IJV operations in international countries (Blodgett, 1991).
- (3) Determine the extent to which data requirements can be met.
- (4) Determine that the selected companies were international joint ventures involving different cultures and nationalities which belong to three major areas and three classic

supply chain systems: Europe, America, and Japan. At present, the supply chain approaches of Europe, America and Japan (Korea) are present in the Chinese automotive industry (Kim, Rhee and Oh, 2011).

- (5) Determine whether the different kinds of the supply chain have their own supporting supply chain systems, leading to the obvious separation of supply chain approaches (Nobeoka, Dyer and Madhok, 2002; Kotabe, Martin, and Domoto, 2003; Dyer and Hatch, 2006).
- (6) Determine whether manufacturers in China are greatly influenced by and absorb international management styles and if and how they establish the manufacturing system to conform to their own characteristics.
- (7) Ensure managers in manufacturers or suppliers had been allocated, and determine (and assist in further developing) the managers' understanding and expectations for the relationships.

In this study's selection procedure, since the additional cases did not contribute any significant new information about the partnering relationship in IJVs, it was concluded that the cases had reached the point of theoretical saturation (McCutcheon and Meredith, 1993; Yin, 2003). Similarly, management interviews within each supply chain continued until the point of saturation was reached.

Exhaustive effort was directed towards gaining access to Chinese automotive multinationals (Owens, Zueva-Owens and Palmer, 2012). After gaining approval from Southampton University's ERGO systems (Ethical Considerations for this study are addressed in section 3.8) the first point of contact was typically the government leaders. The government leaders are long engaged in Chinese automotive operation/circulation management, committed to the domestic and international automotive industry and the automotive strategic research. The government leaders are long engaged in Chinese automotive operation/circulation management, committed to the domestic and international automotive industry and the automotive strategic research. The government leaders organised and developed of automotive industry related policies and regulations, systems approach, to promote the development of automotive industry has contributed to the development, who were contacted by phone, and appointments made. When the researcher secured a meeting with the government leaders, they were informed of the research question, research aims, objectives, contributions and the significance to the Chinese automotive industry. Once permission and support had been gained from the government leaders, they introduced some joint ventures and their suppliers. The researcher then contacted

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the manufacturer's vice presidents and two of the tier-one supplier directors by phone. They arranged to visit the vehicle manufacturers and help the researcher to contact the purchasing manager, investment manager, strategy manager, and supplier relationship manager, among others. The second point of contact was the manufacturers' tier-one suppliers. On the basis of the manufacturer selection, one of the European background case companies introduced the researcher to their tier-one supplier purchasing managers. The respondents were contacted by email and fax to confirm the survey conclusions; namely that they were involved in a partnering relationship with a supplier. An important selection criterion was the ability of the respondents to describe the SCPR trajectory through their capability to provide in-depth historical information of the process of the partnering relationship and supply the necessary background business information. This required interviewees on both manufacturers' and suppliers' sides that were involved in setting up the relationship and as such had already been in the company for a relatively long time.

3.5.2 Case information

The study concentrates on effective multicultural supply chain partnering relationship and influences at a micro level. Five types of supply chain partnering relationship which are EA-S4, EB-S2, JC-S2, UC-S1, and UC-S3 were defined in Figure 5 (p. 100). As the four manufacturers and four of their tier-one suppliers at the top of the various supply chains were promised anonymity they are referred to as EA (Europe - China joint venture manufacturer); EB (Europe - China joint venture manufacturer); JC (Japan - China joint venture manufacturer); UC (American - China joint venture manufacturer); S1 (UC's tier-one supplier); S2 (EB's tier-one supplier); S3 (UC'S tier-one supplier); and S4 (EA's tier-one supplier). There are have four manufacturers and four suppliers but these suppliers are actually in more than one supply chain and therefore subject to the effects of different core cultures and therefore there five sets of partnering relationship, their partnering relationships are define in Figure 5.

Characteristics of these cases make them a fertile area for the purposes of this study. Table 15 (p. 104) gives the main characteristics of the manufacturers and suppliers. A diverse sample is appropriate for exploratory studies and it can be seen from the table that manufacturers have various international parties (European, Japanese and American parties are all represented) and cover a range of automotive industries. All four manufacturers are nearly, or over, 10 years old, have been in full production for several years and are currently among the market leaders in their sectors in China. Suppliers have experienced in automotive industry. The diversity of approaches employed in the management of manufacturers' and suppliers' SCPRs are represented in the sample. The possibility of isolating effective partnering relationship practices from those that do

not afford as much benefit is provided by this diversity. The differences in culture in the four manufacturers' international parent organisations and their suppliers have been italicised. It can be seen that these samples have adapted to each other along various categories and to different processes of the partnering relationships. Their processes converged significantly in terms of the recognised cultural differences between China and the international countries investing. Analysing manufacturers' partnering relationships with suppliers allows a literal comparison/confirmation of the findings.

Table 15 Samples cases information (sourcing from sample cases' official website)

15.1 Key information	15.2 Manufacturer EA	15.3 Manufacturer EB	15.4 Manufacturer JC	15.5 Manufacturer UC	15.6 Tier-one supplier S1	15.7 Tier-one supplier S2	15.8 Tier-one supplier S3	15.9 Tier-one supplier S4
General history	EA is an international joint venture of EB's founded by a European party in the 1990s. EA has several thousand employees.	The first joint venture of EB's international party was established in the 1990s and terminated at the end of the 2000s. EB's international party joined another company in the 2010s, with China and the European international party setting up the 50:50 joint venture shares. EB has	JC was established in the 2000s with a Japanese vehicle manufacturer's party. JC's automotive productivity ranks first. JC has twenty thousand employees. The party joined another company in the 2010s, with China and the European international party setting up the 50:50 joint venture shares. EB has	UC's international party is one of the world's largest automakers and traces its roots back to the 1900s. UC has several thousand employees in China.	S1 was established at the end of the 1990s, which is IJV and operated by Chinese and America parties. S2 is an international joint venture by Japanese party and set up by Japanese supplier.	S3 is an international joint venture group. S4 is joint venture by three parties in China, America and Germany.	S3 is an international joint venture group. S4 is joint venture by three parties in China, America and Germany.	S4 is joint venture by three parties in China, America and Germany.

several thousand employees.								
Production information	Production departments	EB produces cars in China and designs including car models in its Research and Design (R&D), vehicle European centre. EB's products	JC engaged in Vehicle Research and Design (R&D), vehicle production, Sales and After-sales service.	UC has four major production base, eight vehicle production plant, UC is one of the leading companies in Chinese automotive industry, which offers the broadest vehicle brands in China which consist of at least five types of passenger cars.	S1 main products include automotive seat belts and airbags. The products are mainly used by famous automotive manufacturers.	S2 is mainly engaged in producing one-way clutch, friction plate/dual disc and clutch components.	S3 is the best transmission technology product and service supplier in the world.	S4 is specifically engaged in automotive exhaust system production.

Quality standard	Lean manufacturing; Globally consistent quality standards; Green production and technology innovation.	Regarding engine production, it is one of the global leading, world-class manufacturers. JC has an internationalised production facility which is mechanised and automatic in all aspects, as well as excellent equipment and stringent quality to ensure precise production quality. JC's supplier relationship management achieves collaborative management of supplier assessment and purchase system, which has an electronic bid procurement and self-help purchasing platform. According to	UC's internationalised production facility which is mechanised and automatic in all aspects, as well as excellent equipment and stringent quality to ensure precise production quality. JC's supplier relationship management achieves collaborative management of supplier assessment and purchase system, which has an electronic bid procurement and self-help purchasing platform. According to	S1 always regards product quality and service quality as the priority in production and operation. It bring a more outstanding core technology value.	S2 adheres to the principle of 'quality first and product manufacturing for winning client trust'. certification of ISO-9002\QS-9000\VDA6.1	S3 quality indicators are prominently improved and updated each year through focus and construction on process, system, equipment ability and measurement system stability.	S4's products TS16949 certification, ISO14001 and OHSAS18001 process, system, environment and health and safety system certification, and VDA6.1 system.
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the strategy of globalisation, high quality and high technology, JC has innovated its supply chain based on advanced experience and core as common destiny.

Manufacturing ability	Obvious regional advantages of the area. Good learning ability.	Driven by the holding group, the production capacity is developing fast. The manufacturing base is entering a new development phase.	The Technology Centre of JC is a technical centre in the global R&D platform and one of the largest passenger car technology centres in the south of China.	UC maintains an advantageous position regarding aspects of the market	S1 won the best supplier award of the manufacturer, and received a grade A quality ability review.	S2's technology for expanding business in China, thereby making the corresponding contribution for developing the automotive industry in China. S2 develops and produces electric	The manufacturing department is established on the basis of highly skilled workforce, rich experience and resources for S3.	All technologies are introduced from Germany, thereby meeting strict requirements of high standards for clients and products on quality.
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technology innovation and R&D, thus boosting corporate technical levels.

power steering system (EPS). An EPS device can be used for accurately conveying the driver's will, which is critical in steering stability, comfort and safety. In addition, the fuel rate is improved through reducing the operation force of steering wheel. Driving safety is improved through the application of electronic control technology. Therefore, demand for EPS is constantly growing globally.

Challenges	Coordination among individual departments is insufficient; the degree of market growth is not high enough at the same time.	EB plans to introduce competitive new products to the Chinese market to meet consumer demand alongside competitive new products. It plans to meet different market segments and expand its production scale.	The relation between localisation and import suppliers needs to be further resolved.	Industrial integration and cooperation in localisation need to be improved.	S2 accounts for the quite high proportion in the global EPS market. It is expected that the proportion will be constantly increased in the future, especially in emerging market countries, and global EPS demand for small cars is increasing.	To successfully operate and develop in China. The advanced process, system and technology are smoothly combined in order to meet domestic and international clients' expectations of company products at present and in the future. A client-oriented production concept has been established.	S4 is improving its own management processes gradually.
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3.6 Data collection

Exploratory studies need to be far less structured, with less need for 'standardised research instruments' (Silverman, 2013, p.319). The choice of cases, partnering relationship involving both product and process activities, and 34-managers interviews from diverse areas in manufacturers and suppliers, allowed the cases of partnering relationship operations to be comparable (the SCPR into cases are showed in Figure 5). Data on characteristics critical to the study were gathered under recognised constraints. Data collection steps are taken to 'minimise attrition, reduce bias, and increase validity and reliability' (Sellitz et al., 1976, p.418).

Effective collection of relevant information, allowing methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1989) and providing a broad to precise picture (Babbie, 2007), was possible through having a thorough research design and plan. Data from interviews helped to match and answer the research questions. But triangulation help to compare and contrast of case details was possible, in order to enhance the validity of the data analysis. While the research query could be responded to through gathered interview information, as Feagin et al. (1991) and Stake (1995) determined, triangulation can improve data legitimacy, corroborate particular issues, and reveal alternative opinions.

The cases interviewees were made thoroughly aware of the research focus and aims. Information on partnering relationships that were proposed, existing and terminated was collected from the various levels of management outlined above. Mitigating factors in partnering relationships, as well as discussions, problems and activities of parties, were revealed through the interviews, reinforced by further expanding contacts in the company. Conversation transcripts, historical data and frameworks were utilised and combined in accordance with Yin (1981) to develop the case study approach. Queries and actions that should be altered in the analysis process, the theoretical framework, highlighting the case study areas and their incorporation, were all assisted through a meticulous and accurate recording of observations, which helped the writing process. As Yin (2003) advocated, in order to produce a complete picture and linkages of the data, a databank for the case studies was produced and the information collection process was assisted with data analysis worksheets.

Investigations of their characteristics covered a time frame of approximately two years, particularly taking into account the structure of four manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers partnering relationship in China. The data collection process was intense during June 2014-

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September 2014 and July 2015-September 2015. It involved interviews and discussions with directors (June 2014-September 2014, July 2015 to September 2015); document analysis (July 2015 to September 2015); semi-structured interviews with partnering relationship or international joint ventures' business relationships (approximately four months - June 2014 to September 2014); and document analysis (July 2015 to September 2015). Follow-up telephone calls, emails, visits and informal discussions with participants served to help improve responsiveness, interaction and rate of cooperation, and help reduce attrition and bias.

The outlining of original motions, proposals and conduct, as well as progress in producing theories and elucidation of structures and issues, can be assisted through qualitative investigations. This research focused on people and collectives of people involved in the management of partnering relationship activities, whether engaged in producing, arranging or participating in a particular scheme or various schemes. They could assist with possible theory formation due to co-workers identifying them as informed and skilled. Resources that were pertinent to the research were also highlighted by these interviewees, while their knowledge of multicultural partnering relationship was useful. Table 16 indicates the process of approaching each case's directors to explain the study and asking for their assistance in identifying possible participants. As Amre et al. (2006) observed, it is crucial to ensure accessibility of interview data and resource databanks for case study research. Babbie (2007), Easterby-Smith et al. (2002), Eisenhardt (1989), Greener (2008), Neuman (2006) and Yin (2003) explained how finishing collection and assessment of information, as well as the formulation of conclusions, is aided by appropriate research methods, regardless of limitations such as transferability, accessibility and time.

Table 16 Interviewees' outline

Group Approached	Description	Number interviewed or consulted for each sample
Top management	Company executives, overall managers and directors, individuals who are responsible for devising strategy, implementation and completion. Those who had responsibility for the company's assets were also interviewed. The general viewpoint of the company was thus formed for assessment.	1 EA; 1 EB; 1 JC; 1 UC;
Middle management	Those with senior supervisory roles and managers who participate in supervision of the supply chain, manage assets,	3 EA; 3 EB; 4 JC; 4 UC;

	are involved in partnering relationships and are engaged in strategy formulation.	4 S1; 4 S2; 3 S3; 4 S4
Employees with supervisory responsibility (mid-level management)	Top or middle managers advised which employees with supervisory responsibilities should be interviewed, which assisted with investigating opposition and acceptance, problems, actions and consequences.	1 EA;

Coding of data aspects, for example, sorting of partnering relationship, was done following Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach, concentrating on connotations. Proposed data compartmentalisation and reply categorisation, alongside other outcomes, were divided into tables. Sufficient time was allowed for collecting, coding and arranging the information. Guest et al. (2012) suggested the researcher keeps rich records of the interview process and native connotations and issues, which aids textualisation, as Emerson et al. (1995) suggested.

3.6.1 Type of interview

Kahn and Cannell (1957) described interviews as two individuals or more holding a meaningful conversation. Significant, meaningful and dependable information pertinent to the research query and aims can be obtained through an interview approach. A number of forms of an interview can be characterised by the research process. Open and casual discussions may be opted for during the interview; or a very rigid and formal procedure may be deemed necessary; or an interview using varying degrees of both approaches may be implemented. In-depth or unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and structured interviews are a general way of characterising the different approaches.

Duplicated, previously prepared and consistent questioning typically characterises a structured interview approach, whereas a more open and unstructured questioning approach is taken with in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative methods, questionnaires and descriptive research usually take a structured approach, as different factors' interrelations and overall arrangements can be quantified and explained quantitatively. Speech and expression can introduce subjectivity; thus, consistency in the survey data is aimed for through structured questioning and pre-determined and uniform answer sheets. Babbie (2010), Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), Robson (2002) emphasised that there is restricted exchange between researcher and participant.

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With regard to semi-structured interviews, the procedure typically varies across the interviews, although there may be a prompt sheet and general open-ended questions. Depending on the particular institutional environment, certain lines of enquiry may be taken or not in certain interviews while, according to the discussions, progression questions may be asked at different times.

For this research, a semi-structured approach was considered suitable. It allows exploration, investigation and expansion of linkages, discrepancies and various individual perspectives, with suitably directed questioning. Further investigatory aim and queries may be opened on the basis of the respondents' answers in explaining phenomena. There is greater chance for the interviewer to focus on particular answers or lines of inquiry to gain a fuller understanding, while they also have more control over the pace and content of the discussion. Depending on the interview progression and the desired information generated concerning background and phenomena, the interviewee can shape the primary focus and queries around a narrow number of questions, while the respondent is able to respond freely and in their natural manner. The interview can be recorded by means of audio equipment and/or written notation. The professional insights and experiences that this research aims to gather are from mid-level managers who are involved in partnering relationship procedures and activities. Existing research, assessment of resources and observation provide further information for triangulation.

A more casual approach is adopted with unstructured interviews, which is useful for a particular research focus to be investigated in more detail. The issues that the interviewer wishes to investigate need to be sufficiently defined, despite the lack of prior preparation of questions. Thus the issues and related phenomena, conduct and values can be spoken about in an open and frank manner.

Babbie (2010), Easterby-Smith (1991) and Robson (2002) described how, overall, research focus can be assisted by the in-depth approach, with original information and occurrences being revealed. No pre-set line of inquiry is developed and the interviewee speaks freely; however, the interview framework is shaped by the interviewer's understanding of theory. The interviewee is not considered a respondent – rather they are an informant in the open discussion.

The interviewer-interviewee relationship can also determine the form of interview that is being adopted. It is most likely that discussions will take place in person, between a single interviewee and the researcher. However, online or telephone interviews may also be conducted if it is necessary. The central concern is that the research plan, intentions, aims and queries are being met in the most effective manner by the chosen interview medium. Semi-structured interviews are the primary form adopted in this study.

3.6.2 Relevance of research questions and research strategy

Different intentions characterise the utilisation of the different interview approaches. A case study approach is typically used for qualitative analysis, which usually involves in-depth and semi-structured interview approaches. 'By what means' and 'what' questions are usually investigated through these approaches. Surveys are generally adopted for quantitative research, which will generally use a structured interview approach.

Robson (2002) argued that in order to investigate phenomena and reveal original perspectives in explanatory research, unstructured interviews could be useful. In order to comprehend connections among variables, particularly connections unearthed through descriptive research, explanatory investigations can also utilise semi-structured interviews.

The benefits of obtaining information by means of a qualitative interview approach can be apparent in various contexts, with four primary benefits outlined below:

(1) The purpose of the research.

Blumberg et al. (2005) suggested that one's research design will often incorporate qualitative-orientated interviews if there is an exploratory component to the investigation, or if the entire investigation is exploratory in nature. Such an investigation commonly necessitates the establishment of variables' interconnections, which is a further justification for undertaking interviews. Fundamentally, a qualitative interview approach is required when comprehending the causes and root of perspectives and values or comprehending why interviewees have responded and made the choices they have. If the interviewer wants the respondent to elaborate or extend their replies, semi-structured interviews can allow such a process. When wishing to know how phenomena are given significance by respondents, usually within an interpretive epistemological approach, such elaboration is helpful. Richer information can be gathered through realising how respondents attach significance to concepts or phrases. Furthermore, research queries and aims can be devised, responded to and answered, or ideas important to our comprehension may be revealed that were missed, through the interview progressing down an alternative path. Moreover, the interviewee's train of thought may also be new to them, so speaking out loud under in-depth or semi-structured interview conditions may also be illuminating for the participant. Thus information that is intricate and comprehensive can be obtained.

(2) The significance of establishing personal contact.

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If managers consider that the research topic relates to their existing role and is thought-provoking, there is a strong chance that they will be willing to participate in an interview as opposed to a survey. They have no need to put their thoughts in writing; rather they have the chance to engage in conversation about their role. Healey (1991) and other analysts have confirmed that instead of completing a survey, more contributors would rather be interviewed. Furthermore, face-to-face guarantees from the researcher concerning the utilisation of data can be given to the participant, and the interviewer's perspective on matters can also be articulated. Additionally, with a survey there is no guarantee who actually filled it in, whereas with an interview one can be certain who the respondent is (Healey, 1991). Ultimately, a greater number of and more useful replies can be garnered through adopting a face-to-face interview approach.

Personal interviews are the common method of undertaking non-uniform qualitative interviews. However, web-based and telephone interviews are also possible as a method of approach. Reduced cost, greater rapidity and availability of participants may be the benefits of undertaking non-uniform interviews over the phone. Due to the excessive costs in money and time of undertaking personal interviews with individuals who are far away, carrying out an online or telephone interview means the interview can still be carried out. Reduced cost and increased rapidity of obtaining information are benefits to online or phone interviews, even when the location of a participant is not a problem. Overall, the appropriateness of phone interviews may be greater.

Interviews that are conducted offline (asynchronous) and those that are undertaken online in actual time (synchronous) have been termed electronic interviews (Morgan and Symon, 2004). Depending on the characterisation as asynchronous or synchronous an interview will have various distinctive aspects; thus the classification of different electronic interviews is instructive.

(3) The nature of the interview questions.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2002), Healey (1991), and Jankowicz (2005) outlined a number of conditions where interviews are the most useful method for acquiring information: when responses are necessary to a greater amount of questions; when it is necessary to alternate the procedure and rationality of questions; and when open-ended or intricate questions are being asked. In relation to the last two contexts, an in-depth or semi-structured approach is more relevant.

3.6.3 Data quality issues and preparing for the interview

The researcher developed a semi-structured interview tool for the data collection. The respondents were also encouraged to talk about novel concepts during the interview. The unit of analysis was the supply chain partnering relationship between the manufacturer and supplier. Therefore, multiple managers were interviewed; that included those from the manufacturer and the supplier sides of the relationship. To do so, interviews were organised with each of them.

As Leonard-Barton (1990) advocated, a precise procedure for data collection was followed through the deductive and retrospective obtaining of relationship trajectory information. Leonard-Barton also emphasised how understanding cause-effect interactions may be complicated by the subjectivity of the interviewees; therefore a number of interviews were carried out and triangulation was undertaken through using various methods of data obtainment (Jick, 1979). The process of information collation and assessment was initially undertaken at a superficial level, then the process was deepened and broadened, in accordance with Pentland's (1999) and Pettigrew's (1990) recommendations.

The analysis of crucial aspects of structures of partnering relationships in supply chains is investigated in this research. There are various intricate aspects to the relationship between factors, although they are discussed discretely here for ease. There is a short elucidation on parties' proficiencies in relation to factors influencing the mapping of procedures of partnering relationships in supply chains. Therefore the findings, suggestions and generalisability of findings in terms of partnering relationships can be considered can be considered valid. Reflecting Lambert and Shwieterman's (2012) research, management were participating in partnering relationships as heads of initiatives, in steering committees and bringing a number of skills to the institutions.

3.6.4 Interviewing competence

It is essential to combine theoretical and empirical research methods in order to achieve a complete understanding of what a multicultural SCPR looks like (Boyer and Swink, 2008). **Error! Reference source not found.** illustrate the research strategies. The obtaining of pertinent data and revelations concerning individuals' conduct within institutions (Patton, 2002) was possible through carrying out interviews as the major method of obtaining information. Denzin (1989) and Seidman (2006) explained how the process of relating stories assists the individuals in comprehending the meaning of events through dialogue and interaction.

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The most difficult questions were asked towards the end of the interview, while questions were asked in different tenses and were contrasting, structural and descriptive in nature. Content analysis of the interviews was facilitated through the categorisation of the different questions as they were asked and responses were given. A native speaker (the researcher) translated the interview question into Chinese. An introduction, example answers, methodical and rational organisation, numbering of sheets and responses, personal guidance and visual appeal were all included to ensure appeal (in Appendix B, p.227). Cooperative endeavours, multicultural collaborations, partnering relationship activities and the connections between the two parties in the relationship were the major focus of the primarily open questions. Written correspondence, telephone conversations and personal meetings were all used to collect data, these relate to the content of what the respondents reported. Prior to the conducting of interviews, permission to look at papers and files as well as carry out the interviews was sought through talking with the managing directors and executives. Post-interview, management were also communicated with. In obtaining data on particular factors, ease of collection, and potential for merging concepts and focusing on major criteria to prevent covering the same topics.

The first step of four or five in-depth interviews in cases covering different automotive IJV manufacturers was conducted with managers representing various levels and process. The processes covered in the interviews included the supply chain partnering relationship, the IJV's behaviour and relationships, supplier selection, and capabilities of suppliers. The capabilities reported as important by those interviewed included trust, commitment, coordination, communication behaviour, information sharing, participation decision, conflict resolution skills, power relations, relationship management and evaluation, relationship termination and performance measurement. The interviews were conducted based on a 13-question interview guide in Table 17, developed from the literature review. As stated above, each interview took around one hour and was transcribed for subsequent analysis.

The second step involved interviewing the managers from the tier-one suppliers to the case study manufacturers. Depending on the five sets of supply chain systems (see Figure 5, p. 100), these suppliers could provide different products for different manufacturers and become their supply chain partner. At least four senior customers, supply chain or strategic directors and managers in each company participated in the interviews. The interview questions were similar to those listed above but changed to reflect the situation of being in the first-tier supplier position rather than as a manufacturer at the top of a supply chain. In particular, the supplier may deal with more than one of the case manufacturers and were asked about the different practices as seen from the supplier side of the relationship.

Table 17 Interview process and form of interview questions (based on Kvale, 1996)

17.1 Question Type	17.2 Interviewer Procedure and Questions	17.3 Appropriate Choice	17.4 Linkage Research Questions
Introducing	<p>Introduce the topic through questions 'Why did you...?' or 'Can you tell me about...?'</p> <p>QS1: <i>Could you please explain your company's business and market environments from your perspective?</i> If applicable: <i>Can you please comment on any uncertainty within the business environment?</i></p>	Good option, as the individual may be encouraged to talk and the interview will develop.	How can multicultural collaborators' be measured in the supply chain partnering relationship performance?
Follow up	<p>'Please provide more information...' and 'What do you mean....?' Queries can encourage the participant to expand on their initial response.</p> <p>QS2: <i>Could you please expand upon the international joint venture relationship management?</i></p> <p>QS3: <i>Can you please describe the alignment between China and the other cultures within the IJV?</i></p>	Yes. These help the interviewee to transition from stating to sensemaking interpreting and analysing.	
Probing	Could you give me more information concerning...?'; 'For what reasons don't you believe...?'; 'What is the...?'; 'What did you mean by...?' and 'Could you	Good option – the participant can be encouraged to provide additional information, while the guiding	

	<p>provide examples?' can allow greater information concerning what has previously been said to be obtained, through direct questions.</p> <p><i>QS4: What do you think about the supply chain partnering relationship?</i></p> <p><i>QS5: What did you do to build the partnering relationship in your company as a manufacturer? (Or: What did you do to build the supply chain partnering relationship in your company as a supplier?)</i></p>	<p>question is augmented. Connections and definitions are usually required.</p>	
Specifying	<p>'Which methods do you use to...?'; 'Are you able to provide further information on the initiation and conclusion of execution?'; 'What were the consequences of you saying...?' 'How did he respond...?' 'which methods worked effectively?' and 'When you introduce...what are the consequences?' are questions that can garner information of more precision from the interviewee concerning phenomena and actions.</p> <p><i>QS6: How do you feel that your company, as a multicultural IJV, deals with partnering relationships from other world regions?</i></p>	<p>Yes. Duration, significance, proficiency, occurrences and procedures are focused on. Connections during execution and the crucial pertinent factors should be focused on by the participant as a result of these primary questions.</p>	<p>How effectively is multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationship?</p>
Direct	<p>'Who is involved in selection or initiation?'; 'Which forces does your company react to more often - internal or external?'; 'What is the degree and speed of response?' Such questions should ideally be asked towards the close of the interview, as they may lead the respondent and require a closed answer.</p>	<p>Yes. Issues and responses, disagreements, various bureaucratic factors, related consequences, risk, company framework, organisation, regulations,</p>	

	<p>QS7: <i>What criteria do you think are important when your company selects a supplier as a partner? (Or: What criteria do you think are important when your company is being selected as a partner?)</i> If applicable: <i>Is this different from dealing with a domestic Chinese company?</i></p>	behaviour, environment and network factors should be encouraged to be focused on through these questions.	
Indirect	<p>'How are strategies executed?' is an example of a question that is posed to reveal the participant's real perspective.</p> <p>QS8: <i>How does your company manage the partnering relationship with the suppliers? (Or: How does your company manage the partnering relationship with the manufacturers?)</i></p>	Yes. Execution results, procedures and employee parts can be comprehended, with the value of information provided by the interviewee improved.	
Structuring	<p>'Moving on, how does your company encourage learning and cooperation through activities and schemes?'</p> <p>QS9: <i>How do you stabilise and adjust the partnering relationship? How do you resolve any conflict? If applicable: Can you please compare this process in the IJV to one in which there are no non-Chinese managers involved?</i></p> <p>and 'Moving on to' are questions that indicate that the interviewer wishes to change topics.</p>	Yes. From the start of the interview, through its progression and to completion, when some conclusion is preferable, the process will be smooth.	

	<p>QS10: <i>How are amicable and high-conflict partnering relationship terminations handled by your company?</i></p> <p>QS11: <i>What does your company do when such partnering relationships are terminated?</i></p>		
Quiet	An interviewer can hint to the interviewee that they would like a response to a query, through being quiet.	Yes. Clarity and thought can be encouraged.	
Interpreting	<p>'Did you state that....?'; 'Did you mean....?'; 'Is it true that organisational renovation is innovative in your company?'</p> <p>QS12: <i>Could you please comment on the criteria you use to measure a partnering relationship performance?</i></p> <p>QS13: <i>How is the performance measured?</i></p>	Yes. As Healey and Rawlinson (1994) suggested, validity can be checked and amendments made, while overall understanding can be formulated.	How can criteria on which multicultural supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined?

To begin the interview, the role of the company manager in the partnering relationship is explored. Qualitative data analysis was carried out on the basis of transcripts of the interviews. A constant comparative method was adopted so that new interviews were used to shape and re-evaluate existing information. The primary aim was to illuminate disagreements and differences in interviewees' responses. Managers were communicated with again if conflicting perspectives were apparent, in order to discover the causes. Only 10% of interviewees had been employed for less than three years at their companies. The investigatory framework set the parameters for the perspectives and data gathered from the interviewees, with the investigatory framework tested and enhanced through the data collection process.

Four or five interviews with managers were undertaken across the four manufacturers and three or four interviews with managers from each tier-one supplier participants in this study were conducted. Thus there were 34 interviews in all ref table (Appendix B, p.227). Most interviewees were executives involved in the international business teams at headquarters and directly participated in the partner selection and relationship management in IJV formation. The interview answers were repeated from researcher to the managers for them to validate the researcher's understanding. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and memos were written to summarise information from selected company documents. The transcribed interviews, the information from the memos, and selected reports constituted the dataset used for analysis (Mistry, 2005).

Several steps were taken to minimise informant bias and enhance reliability (Owens, Zueva-Owens and Palme, 2012). First, within each company, several participants who were at the same level were interviewed (see Table 17). This helped to minimise retrospective bias and allowed the researcher to gain a broader perspective on the partner selection event. Second, this research gained access to highly knowledgeable participants. These were executives directly involved in the focused-on topics relevant to partner identification and selection: when the identification process was initiated, who was involved in the joint venture business environment, details of the partner selected and the partnering relationship operations management. Finally, participants were encouraged to provide accurate data. However the information used in the final write-up of this thesis was structured to prevent any disclosing of the companies' or the participants' identities. Each interview was approximately one hour in duration, and conducted face-to-face, over the telephone, or by email (see Table 18). As such, several people were interviewed who had been involved in setting up and developing the partnering relationship between manufacturers and suppliers – on both sides. These key informants have been employed at their respective organisations for several years; they also have a long history of working in their current positions.

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These individuals have primary responsibility for managing day-to-day relationships and are well aware of the history of interactions between them and their supplier,’ (manufacturer’) s employees. Respondents were asked to qualify the past years of their relationship to avoid biased responses due to abnormal experiences (Artz and Brush, 2000; Mesquita, Anand and Brush, 2008).

Table 18 Sources data for study on measurement and effectiveness multicultural SCPRS

18.1 Source(s) of Data	18.2 Interviewees' Occupation	18.3 Interviewees' Nationalities	18.4 Interview Method	18.5 Duration	18.6 Documents
Manufacturer EA	Purchasing Manager	Chinese	Telephone	40 mins	Annual reports; Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers, company yearbooks and Internet reports; Industry yearbooks; Industry reports; Working diary and report; Education documents
	Marketing Manager	European and Chinese	Face to face/Email	1.5 hours	
	Sub-company director	Chinese	Face to face	1.5 hours	
	Sub-company director assistant	Chinese	Face to face	45 mins	
Manufacturer EB	Investment Manager	European	Email	-	Annual reports; Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers, company yearbooks and Internet reports; Industry yearbooks; Industry reports; Photos and exhibitions
	Purchasing Manager	Chinese	Face to face	1 hour	
	Supplier Relationship Manager	Chinese	Face to face	1.5 hours	
	Strategy Manager	European	Face to face	1 hour	
Manufacturer JC	Purchasing Manager	Japanese	Face to face	1.5 hours	

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	Investment Manager	Japanese and Chinese	Face to face	1.5 hours	Annual reports; Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers, company yearbooks and Internet reports; Industry Yearbooks; Industry reports; Photos and Exhibitions
	Supplier Relationship Manager	Chinese	Face to face	50 mins	
	Strategy Manager	Chinese	Face to face	50 mins	
Manufacturer UC	Purchasing Manager	American and Chinese	Telephone	50mins/ 1 hour	Annual Reports; Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers, company yearbooks and Internet reports; Industry Yearbooks; Industry reports.
	Quality Manager	American	Email	-	
	Marketing Manager	Chinese	Email	-	
	Supplier Relationship Manager	Chinese	Telephone	1 hour	
Tier-one supplier I	Purchasing Manager	Swedish and Chinese	Face to face	1.5/1 hours	Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers, company yearbooks and Internet reports; Industry yearbooks; Industry reports; Certificate reports.
	Quality Manager	Chinese	Email	-	
	Investment Manager	Chinese	Email	-	
Tier-one supplier II	Purchasing Manager	Japanese	Face to face	1 hour	Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers, and Internet reports;
	Strategy Manager	Chinese	Telephone	50 mins	

					Industry yearbooks; Industry reports; Certificate reports.
Tier-one supplier III	Strategy Manager	Chinese	Email	-	Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers, and Internet reports; Industry yearbooks; Industry reports; Certificate reports
	Relationship Manager	Chinese and American	Face to face/ Telephone	1 hour 50 mins	
Tier-one supplier IV	Purchasing Manager	Chinese	Email	-	Company background, information, context, history and performance; Newspapers and Internet reports; Industry yearbooks; Industry reports; Certificate reports.
	Relationship Manager	Japanese	Face to face	1 hour	
	Strategy Manager	Chinese	Face to face	1 hour	

3.7 Analysis methods

Exploration of the connections between micro and macro issues in the company, and a consideration of social and cultural factors alongside the production of key subjects was possible by adopting an interpretivism method, which allowed connection of theories and reality (Pettigrew, 1985). Both analyses of the data and the explanations incorporate internal and external contextual conditions. For the data collection approach, the research considered proposals and results from other in-depth case studies, as a means of producing findings of greater authenticity (Rajagopalan and Spreitzer, 1997; Langley, 1999). Alterations in research strategy were anticipated, because as Maxwell (2005) suggested, alterations pertaining to certain factors may necessitate the reappraisal and reassessment of aspects of the research design. The honing of research queries, theoretical production and assessment, data selection, analysis, coding and presentation of findings as well as literature appraisal are all possible through the deductive method.

The connection of plans to the practical environment, significant learning, procedures and actions are stressed in the qualitative data analysis approach, adopted for this investigation. An iterative method for harmonising information and its assessment, as well as the comprehension of interviewees' classifications through textual analysis, was utilised when suitable. This investigator was able to consider the global developments in the market over a two-year period, through an effective consideration of existing theories and the empirical data collected. Additionally, over this period, multicultural and international partnering relationships could be contrasted.

3.7.1 Determination of analysis topic

Dubé and Paré (2003), Eisenhardt (1989), Glaser and Strauss (1967), Stuart et al. (2002) and Yin (1989) all suggested that analysis of information is central to formulating theory, with Glaser and Strauss (1967) determining it to be a gradual and concurrent process alongside gathering information. McCutcheon and Meredith (1993) proposed that information can be more accurately portrayed if obtaining and assessing information happens simultaneously. As information is gathered, frameworks and interactions are amended. As Gersick (1988) suggested, this may result from a discovered issue being explored through further case studies; or, as Harris and Sutton (1986) noted, through the interview questions being expanded; or as Burgelman (1983) and Sutton and Callahan (1987) proposed, through expanding case studies through further

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information acquisition. Additional assessment and revelation of connections through thematic and content analysis was supported through evaluation of documentary resources.

After each interview, an interview transcript was created. Furthermore, the analysis commenced by concepts in the data being identified and grouped (open coding). There are 193 –interview data were being identified and grouped (see Appendix C, p. 231-p. 249). The next step was axial coding, i.e. the researcher searched for data categories and matching the components of conceptual framework. All -interview data obtained were coded according to the criteria.

Document analysis supported content and thematic analysis conducted and secured linkages to further inform interpretation. Berg (2009) and Berg and Latin (2008) explained that subjects, arrangements, subjectivities and significance relating to certain resources can be discovered through the methodical, in-depth and meticulous procedures of content analysis. The coding indicates how mediums, networks, diagrams and graphs facilitated the presentation of data, with outlines, categorisation, coding documents and grouping of themes also employed.

The coding, categorisation and contrast of information follows the gathering of data which, for the majority of qualitative procedures, proceeds from identifying the research subject. The investigator's knowledge of the information is assumed prior to their selection of the analytical subject. In formulating the awareness of a subject, the interviewer may omit particular aspects of the gathered data if facing various constraints such as time. Following an overall comprehension of the gathered information's aspects, the interviewer's procedure for becoming acquainted with the data can begin.

Following a close inspection of the transcribed interviews, a number of key issues emerged. A categorisation and brief of the subjects most pertinent to the investigator's aim and queries were made. Then the various related issues and sub-issues were identified in order to produce a concise structure of concepts and issues.

Addressing the research questions from the basis of an interactive approach was the starting point for assessing partnering relationship operation and evaluation of the IJVs. This allowed for examining the level of linkage, integration and holism in mechanisms for operation, evaluation, linkage with joint ventures' performance, and hence the contribution to the theory and practice. On close, intensive reflection and analysis of the data collected, early insight was elaborated, refined and combined with procedures for analytically coding on an ongoing basis (Emerson et al, 1995). The analytical categories, themes and comparative analysis, linked with interpretative analysis, allowed a cumulative process of constant discovery and revision. Using replication logic, within-case and cross-case analysis the data analysis approach used, complemented the research question and conceptual framework.

3.7.2 Data classification

As Brass et al. (2004) suggested, formal and casual relationships between groups and clusters of individuals within cases produce a networked form of arrangements between nodes. Therefore, particularly in the automotive industry with its intricate and varied environment and procedures, the consideration of cooperative endeavours and partnering relationship activities was best explored through nodes, coding and thematic development. Rossman and Rallis (2003) and Miles et al. (2013) outlined the process of analysing the basic data through classification to identify particular trends, categories and signifiers, with the literature review having informed the procedures and related topics for classification.

Miles and Huberman (1994) illustrate the data analysis guide, which was devised based on qualitative data analysis procedures, the specific theoretical approach, investigators' queries, data-obtaining procedures and theoretical framework. Thus the acknowledgement of crucial connections, actions, discourse and events informed the revealing of action and significance configurations, which assisted with information classification.

Discrepancies in opinions and configurations were picked up through the devising of a straightforward classifying procedure. Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Lofland (1971) and Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed an incremental process of accessing and retrieving information, as well as contextualising speech and phrases. The context of particular partnering relationships and the nature of the question which elicited the response was also considered. In line with Miles et al. (2013), in order to reveal content and significance, themes of information was implemented, while interview notes and memos assisted the analysis process (Guest et al., 2012).

Miles and Huberman's (1994) methodology of devising a preliminary theoretical framework based on a list of research queries, subjects of the issue and analytical subjects was followed in this research while maintaining a deductive approach. The corroboration of outcomes and trustworthiness of methods is improved by developing selection principles, derived from the accuracy of the findings, the analyst's analytical preferences, and the research approach utilised (Selitz et al., 1976; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Companies' enterprising activities were also classified along the same lines. The comparison of interview information and the developed themes followed the corroboration of resources. Concepts were linked to categories by means of labels; thus, the implementation concept was connected to the orientation category through labelling.

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Sufficient duration of time was allowed for the arrangement and classification of data. In line with the approach of Emerson et al. (1995), textualisation of the data was assisted by highlighting intricate relationship and social procedures, native connotations and issues and third-person perspectives. Thus Seidman's (2006) conception of effective dissemination of knowledge and assessment of information could be ascribed to. Through the procedure of information indexing (information marking), raw information was subjected to the conceptual framework that had been devised. Punch (2005) described the process of utilising textual information to highlight relevant frame-related themes, with a close assessment of the primary issue dealt with in every paragraph of the interview. Based on the emerging concepts, the conceptual framework itself can be amended and honed. Every aspect of the collected information has to be subjected to methodical marking procedures.

Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) had noted that when an issue is corroborated by one individual or more individuals, the marking of the issue as a significant theme is important as a means of data analysis, alongside content analysis. The noting of corroborations and supported statements in a single or multiple interview(s) was observed (Gery et al., 2003) during the process of close assessment and reassessment of the acquired information while looking for crucial emerging concepts. Theories and possible concluding explanations were devised through revisiting the research queries and aims, theoretical framework, interview questions and literature critique in relation to the interview data.

In accordance with Kvale (1996), analysis of interview data and resources was undertaken based primarily on descriptive coding, utilising elements of different patterns and intuitive coding. The process of assessing interviews and relating them back to the research queries was considered as a vital procedure for thematic and content analysis, with inferential and descriptive coding helping to create themes. In order to fully explore differences, Bazeley (2007) recommended comparing, coding and verifying information across the various incorporated methods. The focus was on assessing partnering relationship activities and viewing the collected data in light of this, with an appraisal, cross-analysis and exploration of interactions considered in a careful and significant manner (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Triangulation assisted the shift between in-depth analysis and data obtainment. Thus, as Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) suggested, discussion of the research and the research framework are strengthened by categorisation and concept development.

Furthermore, Merriam (1998) identified that such development facilitates the incorporation of the investigation's initial theoretical and conceptual framework, ideas, language and developments into the discussion and assessment. Miles and Huberman (1994) showed how

preparation for concluding statements is made through linking research queries to the collated information and codes. Greater validity of the investigation is produced through including sufficiency, personal explanation and rational uniformity in the coding and analytical procedures (Koch, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Thus the real world application and development of theory is facilitated through research conclusions and suggestions.

3.7.3 Analysis approach

Denzin (1989) proposed that the accuracy of data analysis should be checked by considering the connections between interview responses and explanations in theory. Thus analytical methods can be honed and disadvantages identified. As Hussey and Hussey (1997) explained, this allowed assessment of partnering relationship activities through an interpretivism method that most effectively highlighted individuals' perspectives.

The interviewer also has perspectives and understandings that can influence the deductive processes of the data analysis. Transferability of findings is likely to be enhanced through engaged debate and countering of certain perspectives. Conclusions were augmented through providing various reasons and perspective and establishing truths, through suitable information analysis procedures. While an overall picture of the data was maintained, newer developments and evolving queries were considered and categories honed through iterative methods, as a means of constant engagement with the acquired information.

Eisenhardt (1989a; 1989b), Brown and Eisenhardt (1997), and Lovas and Ghoshal's (2000) theoretical research steered the approach to data analysis, construction of the theoretical framework and answering of the research queries. Transferability of findings, conclusions, progression, contrasting, assessment and transcription of information obtained from the cross-case studies were enhanced through triangulation (Yin, 1981). Miles and Huberman (1994) identified three primary procedures for qualitative information analysis – namely information reduction, information display, and forming and authenticating conclusions (Figure 6). This approach assisted decisions on which items of text to select for coding or summarising. The processes and activities of effective partnering relationship measurement in multicultural collaborators' business environment are also analysed from perspectives of partnering relationship theories, and these helped to focus the data.

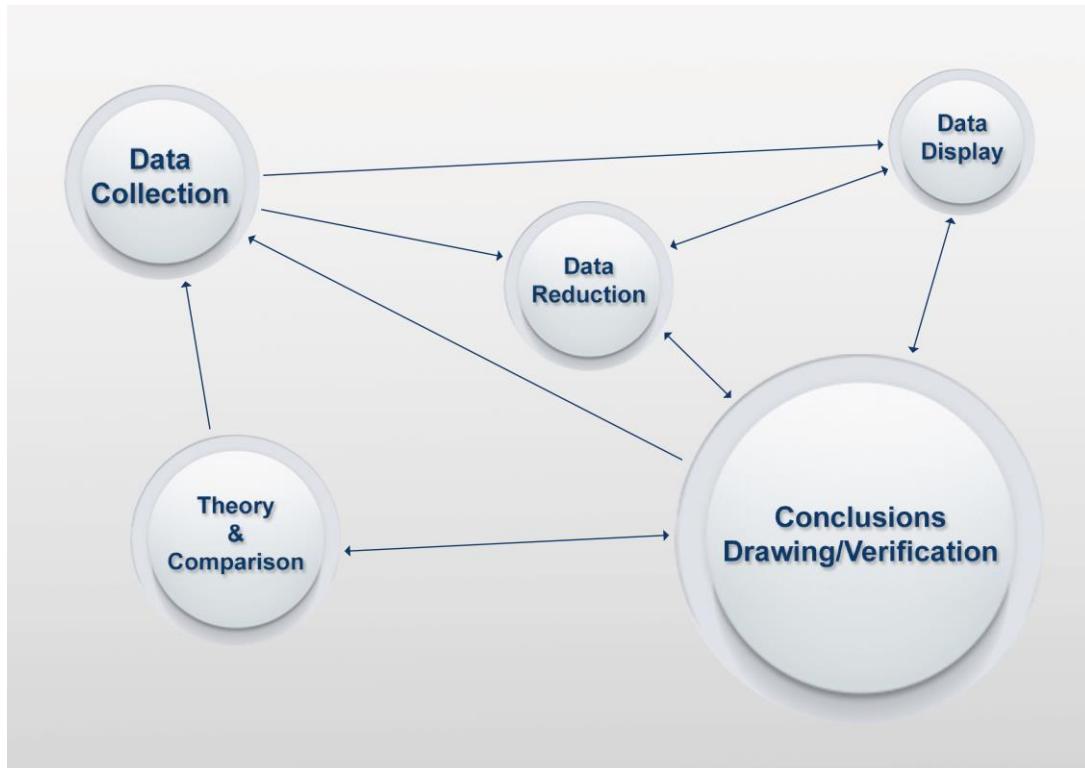


Figure 6 Aspects of data analysis (based on Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Coding of aspects largely followed Miles and Huberman's approach, with significance and focus prominently on the coding. The description was enhanced through coding and memo construction for narratives (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Langley, 1999). In accordance with Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2003), between-case and within-case analysis augmented the deductive method of assessing the cases. The analysis of individual case's frameworks and interactions were contrasted to the frameworks and interactions within the other cases, assisted by regular coding processes (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

The categorisation of information should follow its coding, on the basis of like features and aspects of the acquired data. Discrepancies and information that are initially obscured can be illuminated, if categorisation corresponds to subjects to be analysed by the researcher. Different categories are built based on all the codes developed from the information. Outlining and development of the information follows the categorisation procedure, with the possibility of devising a thematic table to arrange the categories. A few codes were assigned to each subject, with the codes and subjects used to categorise the information. The collation of data ends once all coding has been undertaken, following which descriptive analysis can begin. Frame analysis procedures, which are outlined in-depth in the data analysis chapter, were used to produce comprehensive tables of every phase of the analysis.

3.7.4 Organisation results

Eisenhardt (1989), Miles and Huberman (1984) and Van Maanen (1988) believed that the means of showing that concluding remarks, developed from information and personal notes, have remained free of subjectivity, is the most significant data analysis problem. The analysis of single cases is the initial stage, with internal company interactions and frameworks assessed in a rich, detailed manner. Although Yin (1989) emphasised that such rich descriptions have no set procedure and Gersick (1988) and Pettigrew (1990) noted the lack of critical analysis at this point, later comprehension may rely on them. The process of thinking through the important elements of description and emerging details is, in fact, a crucial aspect of critical case study analysis.

Benbasat et al. (1987), Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (1989) explained the process of revealing the relationships and configurations across the different case study analyses, as a process of cross-case analysis. Restricted amounts of information should not be used to form definite conclusions (Eisenhardt, 1989), while analysis should not be skewed through the interviewer's perspective of their interviewees' standing or the vibrancy of an account (Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Miles and Huberman, 1984). However, there is existing research that guards against these issues and explains cross-case analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989). For example, all case studies should be subjected to equivalent analysis processes and each compared and contrasted for likenesses and discrepancies. Furthermore, a particular issue arising from the interview may be illuminated by existing research, with that issue then able to be investigated further with additional data collection. Thus configurations across the data can be revealed. If discrepancies exist across the interview data, the reasons for such contrasts should be explained before dismissing them as anomalous. Moreover, Bourgeois and Eisenhardt (1988) and Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988) suggested that the origin of the data could be used to categorise them, with conclusions present in another source of data being used to corroborate like conclusions in one's own sources.

3.7.5 Presentation of research outcomes

The reliability of findings was ensured through the arrangement, regulation and control of the various information collection procedures' findings, in terms of major topics and issues revealed by the content analysis (Gillham, 2000). Partnering relationships, as well as linked procedures, goods and initiatives were further illuminated through assessment of secondary resources. Stake (2004) had explained that impacts, aims, ends, conduct, requirements, necessities, principles and related issues could thus be better assessed. In accordance with Emerson et al. (1995), regardless

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of the discrepancies across factors, subjects, propositions and explanations, empirical data analysis on the basis of open coding and thematic analysis was adopted in the qualitative analytical approach.

In accordance with Silverman (2005), the analysis was initiated based on examining the transcribed interviews point at which to start the coding process. Inferential statistical analysis based on this research would be difficult, as the focus is on deductive and descriptive procedures. The opportunity for development and more effective comprehension of issues through qualitative case studies is possible through qualitative configuration and tendency analysis. The area of manufacturing has the greatest amount of qualitative case study investigations. Hayes and Wheelwright (1979) and Miller and Roth (1994) explained how, over the course of many years, the in-depth investigation of manufacturing approaches through qualitative case studies – generally adopted for under-researched issues – has been the norm. Nevertheless, integrative aspects characterised the qualitative cross-case study strategy. For example, Sousa (2003) and Sousa and Voss (2001) linked contingency theory with strategies concerned with manufacturing, Salvador et al. (2002) utilised modularity, while Narasimhan and Jayaram (1998) and Voss and Winch (1996) considered engineering.

In this study, the qualitative individual in-depth interview method was adopted for interviewing managers in automotive vehicle manufacturer and supplier organisations. After transcription of the interviews, the necessary qualitative information was mined. Information contained in the transcripts is one of the most common means of collating qualitative information among various other procedures. A significant volume of data was collected, which posed a particular issue; however, the in-depth nature of the data was useful.

The cases provided the observed information. In order for cases to accrue benefits, it is particularly important to learn from and enhance their competencies. Thus the interview data was adopted as the analytical component. Permission to speak to individuals in the case, as well as personal opinions, was taken from the case executive and higher management. The utility of interviewing such individuals is that they are commonly engaged in everyday managerial functions, are involved in strategic decision making, are from the management culture, and typically play a connecting function between different managers.

3.8 Ethical consideration

Berg et al. (2004) argued that shared esteem and confidence should exist between the interviewer and interviewees during qualitative investigations. The means of interaction is of greater complexity and closer during qualitative interviews than it is between researcher and participants in quantitative research; thus qualitative researchers should actually perceive themselves as engaged participants.

3.8.1 Ethics

In conducting research, 'ethical issues may arise at the different stages, but there are potential solutions' (Punch, 2013, p.43). Participation in a social activity disrupts the subject's regular activities and the researcher has the obligation to cause no harm or discomfort and to make any shortcoming known (Babbie, 2010). The researcher sought a solution which will benefit those involved in the study, while respecting participants and research sites, and not putting them at risk.

Table 19 indicates how various parts of the research procedure and interviewee participation were informed by ethical considerations; for example, the integrity of interviewees and ensuring security of their data so as to enhance the dependability of the research process. A pilot interview process was carried out, during which higher management was engaged to grant permission to interview other members of the company. Ethical considerations in this instance were to be respectful of the executive management's other professional commitments while approaching and interacting with them. Anonymity was guaranteed through removing personal details and their connections to the gathered data.

Table 19 Methods and procedures to preserve the strategy and analysis (based on Miles and Huberman, 1994 and Yin, 2003)

18.1 Strategic or Analytical Component	18.2 Method or Procedure Adopted	18.3 Supporting Section in Thesis (need chapters)
External aspects of validity to sustain generalisability	Cross-case study aids replication logic.	Investigatory strategy, plus the case study procedure and approach.

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Formulated validity to endorse conclusions	Data are mined from various origins, with triangulation of secondary data and interview data. Unprocessed information, background information, quotations, procedural and analytical memos and subject signposts will all be used to establish a process of occurrences.	Information collection means and processes.
Preservation of validity through dependability	Implementation of case study methods. Construction of a case study databank.	Information collection procedures and implementation
Internal aspects of validity to sustain reliability	Implementation of coding, with construction of analysis and determination of configurations.	Analysis design and means, incorporating content and thematic assessments. Processes for diminishing data, analysing and presenting it. Validation and composition of conclusions, connecting theory to conclusions.

Eysenbach and Till (2001) believed that moral resolve and innovative ethical processes can result from participatory enthusiasm. Data security and safeguarding, concealment of interviewees' identities and control of the investigator's conduct are all ethical considerations protected by regulations that are now well established in many areas of life (see Appendix B.1 Interviewee consent form sample, p.227). The relationship preservation technique, return principle, voluntary principle and confidentiality principle all govern ethical considerations in qualitative studies (Eysenbach and Till, 2001).

3.8.2 Quality control and related challenges (ethics procedures)

Prior agreement was garnered from potential interviewees prior to the initiation of the qualitative investigation. The interviewees were informed on a range of issues including procedures to guarantee anonymous contributions and security of data, what the collected information would be used for, investigatory process, and the intentions of the research. The interviewees, higher management and the University Ethics Board were all required to give consent to the investigation before it could begin. Despite the potential advantages and benefits which may be

accrued from the investigation, the interviewees' rights need to be completely preserved during the research process. During the writing up of the study, illustrative sections should utilise quotes and the wording of the interviewees when possible. Furthermore, obscure and complicated academic language is best put to one side, as qualitative research should provide explanations accessible to a lay reader. The original interview transcript language is likely to be easily comprehended by individuals from similar backgrounds and societies. This, in fact, poses a hazard to the interviewee, if they and associates who they may speak of can be identified from the manner of speech. Protection of particular information and people's identities can, of course, be discussed with the participants, with the degree of protection they feel is necessary being agreed prior to publication of the investigation's findings. It may be required that particularly controversial or risky data need to be omitted from a publication of the qualitative research when it poses a threat to the interviewee in some manner.

3.9 Limitations

Barnes (2001) emphasised that as there is no certain method to tackle every problem, all research designs will undoubtedly have weaknesses and strengths. Limitations of case studies include cost and time, inability to generalise and prescribe, and a potential for bias in the perceptions of the researchers. Case-based research can be seen as risky, as it is time-consuming and may yield fewer publication opportunities per research hour of effort. It was generally difficult to obtain information from a large number of respondents because of limited population and the busy timetables of the executives (Al-Khalifa and Peterson, 1999). Fortunately, the comments of respondents made it clear that there was general agreement among key executives relating to perceptions of research variables. Each respondent had been heavily involved with the formation of a company and, during the interview, was encouraged to refresh their memory, if needed, by having recourse to additional information on specific parts of the selection process.

This study approach, when well done, can be expensive in terms of both financial cost and the time spent by both researchers and participating managers. While case studies can provide great depth, it is difficult to generalise results from a few cases to a broader population. Finally, since there is a high degree of involvement of the researcher with the subjects, there is a good chance of bias in terms of interpretation; however, these and other limitations can be substantially mitigated with the use of proper techniques. However, this type of research is excellent for establishing a foundation for follow-on research streams.

It is recognised that there are limitations in the case method employed here. There are limitations to the results of case studies as they may not be generalizable for all SCPRs. Nonetheless, the researcher is confident that there are significant lessons to be drawn here from the successful completion of this research.

3.10 Conclusion of research method

Given the complexity of a multicultural supply chain partnering relationship, empirical evidence is essential to develop theories surrounding such a phenomenon (Boyer and Swink, 2008). Following the proposed framework that evaluates of a SCPR, a cross-case study approach is adopted. As explained in the previous section, research on multi-culture SCPR is still relatively nascent. The case study method is particularly suitable for an exploratory purpose (Voss et al., 2002). More specifically, case study research enables answers to 'why' and 'how' questions, and provides in-depth understandings of phenomena that are not fully known (Eisenhardt, 1989; Barratt et al., 2011).

The empirical research focuses on the qualitative case studies. The topic of this research is limited to considerations between the IJV manufacturers and their first-tier suppliers. In order to identify commonalities and particularities in the development process of the partnering relationship, the researcher followed the guidelines set by Eisenhardt (1989) concerning the selection of cases to justify the generalizability of the study. Cases were selected from automotive industries, four manufacturers and four suppliers (and their five sets supply chain partnering relationships) were chosen through purposive sampling. Organisation, size and other variables influence the manufacturer and its business environment, while variations might also be seen in operations management processes and cultures. These variables have been factored into the assessment.

In this chapter, the focus has been on the 'ontological and epistemological principles associated with research strategy' (Sarantakos, 2005, p.42). This guides the choice of qualitative research, the way in which it is designed and conducted including the means and the theoretical perspective influencing collecting and analysing data, and the understanding of how case study personnel implement partnering relationships to improve capabilities and effect performance.

There were four parts to the methodology. First, the research aim was declared where linkage was made to the knowledge gaps and the contribution specified. The research philosophy of interpretive paradigm with qualitative research was deemed the best choice to better understand partnering relationship measurement. The research structure was then discussed whereby it was

found that a process approach is appropriate as it helps plan for describing initiatives as a unit emphasises how the perspectives of individuals are implemented in cross-case studies.

The research design was addressed next, specifying country, industry, company and unit contexts. This also involved case study design, data collection methods and procedures, including interviews with interview questions justified and linked to research questions, and documentary analysis. In addition, data analysis was explained, with means and procedures for data reduction and display, conclusion drawing, verification and linkage with theory. Ethics, quality control challenges and limitations were also addressed, complementing the research questions, conceptual framework and unit of analysis provided.

The researcher carefully selected the exploratory research respondents from the perspectives of case respondents in order to achieve the goal of the study. Five sets of SCPRs representative cases of four manufacturers and four suppliers were selected in the study as a sample. These organisations in turn recommended and facilitated access to a number of managers from these companies were also interviewed. In all cases companies were included in the study and '34' managers were interviewed. Overall (given that some suppliers supported more than one of the manufacturers) there were '5' separate supply chains in the study. The researcher selected the respondents who agreed to participate through prior consultation and appointments. Each interview lasted for around one hour, where data were gathered from the perspectives of individual respondents.

All respondents who were selected were intermediate and senior managers of the selected manufacturers and suppliers, and each had a deep understanding of case samples' conditions and industry conditions, as well as rich management knowledge and practical experience.

Data collection was completed in about four months, and the case-writing process for the company also took about three months to complete, with one month for refinement of analysis. This is because it was necessary to revisit the cases and the data for consistency checks. Data analysis and completion were finished by 2016. Formal leave-taking was done with orderly withdrawal and without causing any harm, having made arrangement for relevant persons to validate the findings accuracy of the transcribed interview data of descriptions. This aspect needs to be highlighted here since it is a form of validation of research findings.

The in-depth interview, a qualitative direct research method, was adopted in this research. It comprised unstructured and open-ended inquiry modes, and the outline of interview questions was prepared in advance in order to conduct the interview smoothly. The interviewer not only asked the pre-set questions but also proposed some prompt questions during the interviews. The

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respondents freely answered these questions, and both parties interviewee and interviewer) interacted in order to fully understand the relevant information as far as possible. Ninety per cent of the respondents had worked for the company for more than three years, indicating their ability to describe developments over time. Finally, the framework analysis was chosen, following which each piece of data was coded and categories classified.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework developed through research on the partnering relationship process utilises a combined partnering relationships theories perspective to sustain findings from a dynamic sector and multi-cultural collaborators' business environment background.

Chapter 4: Results and findings

4.1 Introduction

Based on cross-case studies in the Chinese automotive industry, the conceptual framework is based on the managerial strategy between manufacturers and suppliers in a partnering relationship. As the case studies involve detailed descriptions of the individual supply chain setting (Stake, 1995), this section describes the process of the partnering relationship. It is, in effect, an overview of findings. It presents relevant background information about the partnering relationship, incorporating findings in the contexts of multicultural business environments and describes the sample cases involved in the study. These explanations are important to guide the focus and interpretations in the sections on further analysis and conclusions. The findings are supported by a literature review, methodology and ethics refined from the pilot study, and follow replication logic, and the interview data of partnering relationships operating in a variety of multicultural organisations are used. The study, which covers the time frame from September 2012 to March 2016, is situated in the Chinese automotive industry, which is directly affected by globalisation and change, and more specifically, studies multicultural organisations implementing supply chain partnering relationships (SCPRs).

4.2 Cross-case analysis

The multicultural collaborators' SCPR is described in terms of themes, patterns of association, flow of events and context. This thesis analyses the data through classification and themes, acknowledging context and framework, and drawing links with research paradigms and perspectives. The classification process and application of themes described in section 3.7.2 (p.131) allows for the detailed description and analysis of activities, impacts and influences, so further analysis across cases is possible, along with an enhanced comparison of interactions, capabilities and outcomes. The manufacturers' and their suppliers' dynamic partnering relationship will significantly influence the internal processes, practices and implementation activities. Given these and forces internally generating change and demanding responses, manufacturers and their suppliers' partnering relationship must constantly seek ways to improve performance and reduce vulnerabilities.

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Incorporating a constructivist perspective allows data to be viewed, heeding interactions and 'social networks' (Nespor and Barylske, 1991). The researcher engaged deductive approaches, blending interpretive with constructivist, and recognising that theory can enable rather than limit new insights that continually emerge. The approach in this study allows analysis to contribute to knowledge and practice.

Following triangulation, most results from the data corroborated the findings of this research although some are refuted. From Table 20 to Table 25 facilitated comparison and allowed the researcher to determine criteria that confirmed or disconfirmed existing theory. The facts, prescribed meaning, developing themes, extracted essences, and presented evidence prove validity and link with theory. Descriptions and review, aided by direct quotes, are used to support insights presented. From the results of the analysis of data, this thesis determined what evidence or occurrences were similar to or differing from partnering relationship theory, and which were confirmed or refuted.

This thesis re-analysed the data and collapsed six-components into a smaller number based on suitability of the data and the research objectives, thereby 'holding the final number of major themes to a minimum' (Creswell, 2007), to keep the analysis coherent and the reporting 'elegant' (Wolcott, 1994; Miles et al., 2013). According to the conceptual framework (Figure 4 and Table 11), this study uses six major components—recognising the partnering relationship, supplier selection, partnering relationship management, partnering relationship termination, partnering relationship performance, and the multicultural collaborators' business environment, as headings for findings and interpretation.

Each interview was transcribed into a written format once completed, Appendix C providing 20 pages of summary of empirical data textual material. The data were broken down into discrete sections (i.e. words, sentences and paragraphs) in the opening-coding step through a line-by-line analysis of the interview transcripts, which yielded initial codes of the partnering relationship process (please see the summarized empirical data in Appendix C, p. 231-p. 249). The process of the data analysis is redefining of the relevant criteria, which reported and addressed the defined criteria from literature review. First, from 5 sets (EA-S4, EB-S2, JC-S2, UC-S1/S3) of partnering relationships' empirical data identify or confirmed the key criteria under the conceptual framework and framework components' categories; second, if the empirical data defined a criterion that is not summarised within the framework components' categories, there will be a new finding recorded under the conceptual framework category.

The key points extracted from components, used as principal reference points or headings for cross-case study analysis, are also highlighted in direct quotes, descriptions and review, to

enhance flow and interpretation. The related tables and figures were created to allow for comparison, so both connected relationships and disparities can be noted to assist with the identification of common problems and allow refinement of any areas unique to any case. This supports the completion of all case studies and cross-case analysis using qualitative analysis methods (Eisenhardt, 1989a; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Miles et al., 2013) to further develop conceptual understanding. These are linked to activities and learning in effectively functioning partnering relationships. As more than one SCPR is involved, the interpretation of criteria enhancing partnering relationship effectiveness and of associated processes and practices, interrelationships and interactions within and across relationships and contexts, proved instructive.

The process approach, complemented by the lens of partnering relationship theories, allows the analysis to incorporate how effectively multicultural collaborators are functioning in business-to-business partnering relationships systems in Chinese automotive groupings. Activities include objectives and objects; subjects; tools; rules; division of labour; community and outcomes; incorporate interactions, and partnering relationships at individual, project and organizational levels. These areas of influence are engaged both internally and externally in the development and discovery that takes place in multicultural and discovery in multicultural collaborators partnering relationships. The outcome of the specialist area of the multicultural collaborative partnering relationship can be quite far-reaching, so the approach in this section is 'combined' (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012), to synthesise all the data sources and insights. This creates analysis and interpretation that is integrated and holistic. Following section 3.7, the analysis is guided by categories and themes as corroborating patterns and element are matched to the research questions and conceptual framework. These are linked with the companies' context, culture and configurations related to multicultural collaborators in business to business partnering relationships to allow for credible conclusions, insights and theory development.

4.2.1 Recognise the partnering relationship

Recognising the supply chain partnering relationship was the first of the categories to emerge from the interview analysis, which highlighted the fact that, in order to build partnering relationships, collaborative efforts were carried out jointly with suppliers. During the interviews, semi-structured follow-up questions were used in a way that followed the pattern and course of the discussions: *What do you think about the supply chain partnering relationship? What did you*

do to build the partnering relationship in your company as a manufacturer? (Or: What did you do to build the supply chain partnering relationship in your company as a supplier?) These revealed a multi-faceted manufacturer-supplier relationship in the Chinese automotive industry, which takes place at many levels, demonstrating the necessity of the relationship and alignment with other relationships. Recognising the partnering relationship is the basic element of the framework.

Table 20 shows the opinions of different background interviewees.

Table 20 Recognise the partnering relationship

20.1 Categories	20.2 Key criteria	20.3 Empirical data refinement						
		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3
Necessity of partnering relationship	Overall car performance			◆	◆		◆	◆
	Performance advantages of manufacturers							◆
	Better quality		◆		◆			
	Lower costs				◆			
	Reliable delivery							
	Technology development trajectory							◆
	Extent of goodwill and trust							
	Potential benefits			◆				
	Target costing				◆			
	Information sharing				◆			
	Strategic benefits				◆			
	Synergistic outcome			◆	◆			◆
	Reduce duplication of efforts		◆			◆	◆	◆
	Fulfil customer needs							
	Capitalise quickly on market opportunities	◆	◆		◆			
	Complementary resources							
	Mutual support and interdependence	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Production demand*	◆	◆					

Alignment between joint venture relationship and SCPR	Joint ventures format a new separate subsidiary, jointly owned by the partners	◆	◆
	Partnering relationship purposive agreements between independent companies	◆	◆
	Partnering involves the parties working together in an environment which is based on projects	◆	◆
	Clear responsibilities and rights*	◆	◆
	Mutual effect on one other*	◆	◆
	Optimise joint venture relationship and supply chain relationship*	◆	

Note: ◆, what is confirmed in empirical research

Note: *, what is new finding in empirical research

4.2.1.1 Necessity of supply chain partnering relationship

This is the first category that describes the partnering relationship. Establishing the partnering relationship is a necessity; it involves the benefits summarised by scholars in Table 15 (pp. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). As shown in Table 23, the interviews data show that this activity was co-constructed between manufacturer and supplier. That is, both parties were involved in setting up the relationship.

From the empirical data, the box most confirmed by the respondents was mutual support and interdependence, which reflects that common profit is generated through mutual support within the relationship. When manufacturers assist their suppliers to grow, they both achieve joint growth and long-term cooperation.

'The partnering relationship provides mutual support and interdependence; manufacturers agree to share in environmental production responsibilities with suppliers, provide business strategies, help expand suppliers' business and assist suppliers in the growth of their companies' (Interviewee S3-3, 2014).

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Improving the overall car performance is confirmed by both manufacturers and their suppliers, which is beneficial for realising a high-quality operation (Interviewees JC-3, UC-1, S3-3, 2014) and strengthens the cooperation with suppliers (Interviewee S3-3, 2014).

Synergistic outcome is the common profit leads to synergy, which is created by interdependence (Interviewee JC-1, 2014) and allows manufacturer and supplier to achieve a win-win situation (Interviewee UC-3, 2014). From the supplier side, the supplier constantly grows together with the manufacturer (Interviewee S4-3, 2014). The empirical data confirmed Vangen and Huxham's (2003) collaborative advantage research, which shows that such a synergy could not be achieved by a company acting alone.

Reduce duplication of efforts is confirmed by manufacturers and their suppliers. From the literature, for manufacturers, the partnering relationship can improve profitability, reduce purchasing cost, and increase technical cooperation (Han, Wilson, and Dant, 1993; Ailawadi, Farris, and Parry, 1999). JC presented that

'Our Japanese domestic supplier has been contacted to set up a local factory in China, and a partnering relationship can be established with the newly established supplier factory' (Interviewee JC-2, 2014).

For suppliers, a partnering relationship with industry leaders can enhance operations and prestige (Anderson and Narus, 1991; Spekman, 1998), and provide stability in unstable markets (Fram and Presberg, 1993). EA's supplier S4 stated,

'Outstanding supplier resources will become the focus of competition in the future; the leading manufacturers throughout the world begin to pay more attention to establishing a long-term cooperative relationship with high-quality outstanding suppliers'
(Interviewee S4-4, 2014).

Both manufacturers and suppliers confirmed the above criteria. There are other criteria which were only confirmed by manufacturers or suppliers.

From the manufacturers' side, capitalising quickly on market opportunities is confirmed by most of the manufacturers. EB defines a partnering relationship as a necessity for expanding market share,

'Partnering relationship established in compliance with Chinese market demand as orientation is beneficial for developing the Chinese market' (Interviewee EB-2, 2014).

UC considers the partnering relationship to be a necessity for expanding their share of the domestic market and extend their reach into new areas of that market.

Production demand is confirmed by both European IJV manufacturers. EA explains that the partnering relationship is generally established with the supplier when a new car model is produced, which reflects Zirpoli and Caputo's (2002) comprehensive research on the theme. The partnering relationship controversial whether a superior for the SCPR necessity when new product development. Further, EB stated that the refined partnering relationship is in the new product development stage. Such cooperation signals a win-win situation for both sides involved.

Better quality is confirmed by manufacturers, which emphasised that the partnering relationship can provide better quality service (Interviewee EA-1, 2014), and JC considered that

'The Japanese domestic supplier partner is contacted for setting up a local factory in China, and a partnering relationship can be established with the newly established supplier factory, which is beneficial for realising high-quality operations' (Interviewee JC-1, 2014).

Lower cost and target costing are developed within JC, which considers that the partnering relationship becomes an exchange platform, where cost can be reduced by new product development (Interviewee JC-2, 2014). Because of the exchange platform, JC also ticks information sharing as a necessity, which is explained in section 5.3.2.2.

Potential benefits and strategic benefits are also confirmed and considered as a necessity when establishing a partnering relationship. In these empirical data, potential benefits includes being beneficial for product and market competition (Interviewee EA-1, 2014).

From the suppliers' side, due to the fact that advanced equipment and advanced management experiences are provided by manufacturers, it is necessary for suppliers to be supported by manufacturers if suppliers are to build and nurture the same kind of thinking that occurs inside of the manufacturers. A parallel and matching relationship exists between the European and American manufacturers and suppliers (Interviewee S1-1, 2014), and a clear 'double monopoly' (Dyer and Sigh, 1998) characteristic is present between JC and its suppliers. Manufacturers and suppliers based in Japan have the obvious feature of a 'double monopoly' (Dyer and Sigh, 1998)

Advantages of manufacturers is confirmed by supplier respondents, one of whom explained that

'EA are relatively strict with suppliers, so only (if) we constantly grow together with the manufacturers can (we) better complete the corresponding projects' (Interviewee S4-3, 2014).

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Technology development trajectory reflects that manufacturer may be able to secure better access to technologies that, while not core, are still important to the manufacturer's product or service success (Interviewee EA-1, 2014). The supplier, in turn, gains preferential treatment and more market security. This is confirmed with the consideration that

'The partnering relationship includes the sharing of technological information, advanced payment of production and R&D fees, transparency of information shared, enrol in environment production responsibilities with the supplier, provide business strategies and explore advanced supplier business' (Interviewee S3-3, 2014).

Relying on a supplier for a complex, swiftly developing or scarce input may be less risky if there is some bond or working relationship with the chosen supplier (Singh, 1997). The technology flow from manufacturer to supplier can assist the supplier's efforts to prevent quality gaps and develop more competitive products and services.

4.2.1.2 Difference between joint venture relationship and supply chain partnering relationship

The second categories of recognising the partnering relationship is alignment between the joint venture relationship and the SCPR. As manufacturers, the multicultural relationships of IJV and the SCPR are both included in the cases. IJV managers have the problem of what priorities to focus on with their different partners, which is one of the thesis research problems. That is to say, the horizontal IJV relationships might show similar characteristics to the vertical manufacturer-to-supplier relationships.

The empirical data shows that manufacturers understand the differences between joint venture relationships and the SCPR. The international joint venture relationship affects how business to business relationships function because the international party has both supplier selection and decision rights in the manufacturer. While these two kinds of relationships are provided with a clear division of responsibilities and rights, this criterion is a new finding from this empirical research. In EA, this criterion indicates that responsibilities for dealing with the two relationships are different. The SCPR should be screened by assessment. In JC, SCPR and IJV relationships are respected. The SCPR is implemented in procurement strategy, and a profit community can be formed with suppliers.

The criterion of mutual effect with each other is a new finding in this empirical research, and was identified by all four manufacturers' participants.

'After the IJV is established, the process of creating an efficient SCPR can be started. Both the Chinese party and the international party have equal selection rights' (Interviewee EA-4, 2014).

EB considers that the SCPR has a tendency to be dominated by the international party. UC believes that these two relationships cannot be separated in the Chinese automotive industry,

'In the joint venture, the establishment of the supply chain partnering relationship needs to follow procedures from the international side and needs to comply with local requirements (government regulatory, law, authorisation, etc.). It means the supply chain partnering relationship in the international joint venture has adopted characteristics from both sides' (Interviewee UC-1).

Optimise both relationships is another new finding in this empirical research, which is identified by JC:

'Joint venture strategy is internationalised. There are many models/forms of cooperation such as investment, procurement, factory establishment, etc. Routine power and supply chain partnering relationship can both be optimised' (Interviewee JC-3, 2014).

These considerations are likely to apply with at least as much force when manufacturers attempt to co-operate with each other. This is likely to magnify all the criteria that arise during attempts at change in a single organisation.

4.2.2 Supplier selection

Interviewees were asked to elaborate on factors that facilitate and drive supplier evaluation.

Depending on the route of the discussion, a series of follow-up questions were asked in a semi-structured fashion similar to the earlier procedure: *What criteria do you think are important when your company selects a supplier as a partner? (Or: What criteria do you think are important when your company is being selected as a partner?)* If applicable: *Is this different from dealing with a domestic Chinese company?* It appeared that the key driver behind the extent to which SCPR can take place hinges on a set of supplier capabilities that enables collaborators between the manufacturer and supplier. The collaborative supplier criteria were pinpointed as most critical for relationship strategy and operational measurement criteria (see

Table 21 Supplier selection

21.1 Categories	21.2 Key criteria	21.3 Empirical data refinement						
		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3
Relationship strategy	Strategy orientation	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Management style	◆	◆			◆	◆	
	Interdependence				◆			
	Mutual organisational characteristics				◆			
	Common goals	◆	◆		◆			
	Complementarity							
Operation measurement criteria	Commitment	◆		◆	◆			
	Trust				◆			
	Communication behaviour			◆		◆		
	Information sharing	◆		◆		◆	◆	
	Participation decision		◆					
	Quality	◆		◆	◆		◆	
	Production performance	◆		◆				
	Delivery		◆					
	Cost			◆		◆	◆	◆
	Supplier strength	◆	◆	◆		◆		
	Attitude*		◆	◆			◆	
	Compromise*	◆			◆			
	High loyalty*				◆			

Note: ◆, what is confirmed in empirical research

Note: *, what is new finding in empirical research

4.2.2.1 Relationship strategy

The first category of supplier selection that emerged from the data was processed as relationship strategy. The relationship strategy emerged from empirical data as the congruence of the lifecycle of partnering relationship strategic goals and objectives of two organisations regarding the strategic and manufacturing priorities of the relationship. Respondents articulated a 'strategic intent', reflecting an obsession with winning in the world marketplace by creating a synergy between the manufacturer and supplier relationship, strategic goals, their capabilities and current resource stocks (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). In the empirical data, respondents highlighted relationship strategy, management style, mutual organisation characteristics, interdependence and common goals. Based on their own characteristics, respondents explored the relationship strategy expectations from both the manufacturer's and supplier's points of view.

Strategy orientation in the supplier selection reflects how the manufacturer and supplier can perceive a strategic partnering relationship in a number of ways. They may view it as part of the bigger picture and, in so doing, disregard their own long-term strategy when devising a strategy for the partnering relationship. Additionally, they may view it as so integral to their competitive strategy that, if they were to fail, it would have to be significantly altered,

'Supply chain partnering relationship strategy cannot be separated from the joint-venture manufacturer's relationship; the strategy should fit the requirements of the manufacturer and the supplier should keep updating products. Develop the strategy which is satisfactory for market demand' (Interviewee UC-3, 2014).

It can be argued that companies that are engaged in a strategic partnering relationship interpret the other party as an extension of their own business (Frazier, Spekman, and O'Neal, 1988; Lambert, Emmelhainz and Gardner, 1996). Concentration is a key feature of the Chinese market. Strategy should therefore be adjusted which will be beneficial for the localisation policy and global synchronous purchasing. The strategy orientation considers both international presence and the benefits of the supplier's local presence. The suppliers, who are already a part of the manufacturer's international party's production system, will then jointly establish a factory with the manufacturer in China (Interview JC-3, 2014). This would be beneficial to the partnering relationship performance.

The management style in relationship strategy may involve attempts to establish a partnering relationship with a joint decision-making process, control systems and communications (Lavie, Haunschild and Khanna, 2012).

'We should establish a guaranteed partnering relationship, integrate supplier resources, encourage existing suppliers, develop new suppliers, conduct global purchasing, and implement fixed decision-making based on their own behaviour in the aspect of strategy' (Interviewee EA-1, 2014).

Depending on the partnering relationship, project management styles of the vehicle production is implemented between the manufacturer and supplier.

The common goals in the data findings are establishing a profit community and achieving cooperative goals. A profits community can be formed by interdependence with suppliers combined with the benefits of the suppliers' local presence.

'Loyalty and trust can be replaced with equity based on cooperative goals. Cooperative goals are adapted for establishing a communication committee, which can invest, purchase and set up factors jointly with the supplier' (Interviewee JC-3, 2014).

Common goals help to improve trust. This leads to continuous improvement, which positively influences customer satisfaction. Therefore, common goals form the basis for developing effective SCPRs in China. This illustrates the fact that suppliers satisfy the manufacturers' international party's systems and are capable of working with international party's cultures. From the case information, it is apparent that JC and its supplier achieve a status of collaborative management. On the other side, JC's international party requires suppliers from its own country to have a presence in China. Through this it will then establish a partnering relationship to reflect the relationship strategy of mutual organisational characteristics. The common goals in empirical data reflects the production of advantageously tailor-made products which demonstrate a synergy between the manufacturer and a number of suppliers. This helps to ensure the most optimal and efficient manufacturing process. The common goals require both parties to be equally involved in their performance measurement and to reach an agreement with each other.

4.2.2.2 Operation measurement criteria

According to the interviews, manufacturers and suppliers were involved in successful collaborative projects. It turned out that highly motivated suppliers have a desire to fulfil the requirements of their manufacturers. The literature summarised trust, commitment, participation decision, and product performance, cost, supplier strength and quality as key features, which were all mentioned in the interviews. In addition, attitude, high loyalty, information sharing of intellectual property and compromise are found particularly relevant to the multicultural context.

The literature on operation measurement highlights two features (Chan et al. 2003): qualitative criteria (e.g. commitment, trust, information sharing, communication behaviour and participation) and quantitative criteria (e.g. quality, supplier strength, product performance, delivery and cost). In Paulraj, Lado and Chen's (2008) Buyer-Supplier Relationship Performance research paper, the quantitative criteria are explained in depth regarding the measurement of the buyer's and supplier's performance. The quantitative criterion of empirical data includes supplier strength, which reflects size, operational capability, supplier development ability, high standards and successful experience. The analysis of supplier strength reflects the supplier selection described by Paulraj et al. (2008) and confirms the framework criteria description. Production quality was not explored but was acknowledged by the majority of manufacturers. Production performance and cost reflect the successful employment of advanced technology and therefore guaranteed operational production. Delivery reflects the economic cycle which is evidence of EA's green production and characteristic of technological innovation.

The manufacturers' background analysis, commitment to honestly, credibility and trust of integrity in the partner's relationship were all explored through the empirical data.

Intellectual property is a new finding to emerge from this study. Empirical data emphasise the fundamental aspect of information sharing. Both BA and JC, as advanced technology manufacturers, consider that intellectual property is an important criterion.

'Both the manufacturers and suppliers may enhance the protection of the intellectual property rights of the production in order to improve the technological research and development as well as the application ability of the key suppliers' (Interviewee S2-1, 2014).

This criterion is reflected in the findings of Fredendall et al.'s (2016) study, in their supply chain management practices and intellectual property protection in China's academic paper, they found that 'some managers reduced risks by not transferring proprietary knowledge to their Chinese sites and instead focused on investing in cost-efficient standard technologies and processes. This suggest that the Chinese government could make it more attractive for foreign investors if they would enforce existing intellectual property' (p. 136-137; p. 149). In this thesis' empirical data, which found this to be the case among German-Chinese manufacturers' partnering relationships and Japanese-Chinese manufacturers' partnering relationships.

Participation in decision making is one of the most important criteria for the manufacture and supplier relationship. The supplier should be reliable, credible, recognise the manufacturer development direction, and fully participate in the programme life cycle.

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Communication and participation decisions are described in the empirical data. Paulraj et al. (2008) claimed that communication has influenced the buyer and supplier partnering relationship. According to Kale, Singh and Perlmutter's (2000) strategic alliance study, language utilised in strategic alliance studies can pose a challenge, particularly if language barriers exist between the interface manager and the partner,

'The basic criteria are 1, understanding English very well; 2, understanding international business rules; 3, communicate with and balance the Chinese and American parties well; 4, advancement and high quality' (Interviewee UC-2, 2014).

This provides empirical evidence to suggest that communication between organisations is a relational competency that can improve performance for supply chain partners. Participation in decision-making is one of the most important criteria for the manufacturer and supplier relationship. The supplier should be reliable, credible, recognise the manufacturing development direction and fully participate in the programme's life cycle.

Attitude is a new finding from this study's empirical data. The disparity in the ideals of national culture between the partners is more likely to hinder collaborators than differences in corporate culture are (Weber, Shenkar and Raveh, 1996). Considering IJV experiences, the attitude is important in ensuring a comfortable start for the partnering relationship.

Compromise is also a new finding in these empirical data and was first demonstrated in the supplier selection. Compromise involves reaching an agreement between two parties with different requirements. This is discussed in the following statement:

'In the partnering relationship, the manufacturer's international party has very strict requirements within its own process; the Chinese party has its own process. Therefore, the two parties may need to compromise over when to measure the relationship and select the supplier. Different types of suppliers could be considered' (Interviewee EA-2, 2014).

Loyalty is also a new finding that emerged from the interviews. The manufacturers control the equities of tier-one suppliers, forming a 'pyramid' partnering relationship (Jia and Lamming, 2013). The partnering relationship with the suppliers is stable. This is a factor which is difficult to change once formed; holding a certain share of the equity of important suppliers, loyalty and commitment are the most mentioned as in JC. The partnering relationship will bring associated benefits of a larger share of business for both, manufacturer and supplier, longer-term relationships and consequent stability, fewer organisational conflicts, and inclination and intention of working together, sharing information and benefits, a decrease in price sensitivity

and more referral behaviour (based on positive word of mouth). This will lead to greater loyalty and commitment (Sahay, 2003).

Finally, it also turned out that the higher the quality of the requirements imposed by the manufacturers were, the more difficult it was to achieve SCPR readiness.

4.2.3 Partnering relationship management

Following the discussion regarding the development of relationships with suppliers, the questions in the next section are: *How does your company manage the partnering relationship with the suppliers? (Or: How does your company mange the partnering relationship with the manufacturers?) How do you stabilise and adjust the partnering relationship? How do you resolve any conflict? If applicable: Can you please compare this process in the IJV to one in which there are no non-Chinese managers involved?* Without this link, it is obvious that it will be very difficult to effectively carry out relationships with suppliers within China. Thus, the interview respondents were asked to elaborate on features of suppliers with whom developing activities were successfully maintained. What prepared them for such developments? The following categories in Table 22 can illustrate partnering relationships' readiness.

Table 22 Partnering relationship management

22.1 Categories	22.2 Key criteria	22.3 Empirical data refinement						
		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3
Stabilise	Independence							◆
	Trust						◆	
	Information sharing				◆	◆	◆	◆
	Tight interaction	◆			◆			
	Mutual goodwill	◆						
	Contract incentives	◆	◆		◆	◆		
	Coordination	◆	◆		◆	◆		
	Joint development*	◆			◆	◆	◆	◆
	Responsibility distribution*				◆			
Adjust	Strategy target	◆		◆	◆	◆		◆

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	Culture	◆			
	Business environment		◆	◆	
	Multi departments involvement*	◆		◆	◆
	Achieve mutual benefit and mutual compensation of resource*		◆		
	Respect each other*		◆		
	Satisfied manufacturers' demand*	◆	◆		◆
Solve conflict	Communication	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Cooperation	◆	◆		◆
	Joint solve and persuasion	◆	◆	◆	
	Protect manufacturers' benefits*	◆	◆	◆	
	Compromise but insist on baseline*	◆	◆	◆	◆

Note: ◆, what is confirmed in empirical research

Note: *, what is new finding in empirical research

4.2.3.1 Stabilise relationship

A key category of relationship management that emerged from the findings was the developed stable relationship.

The criterion of joint development is a new finding in the empirical data which identified by two manufacturers and their suppliers. In the strategic collaboration,

'Forming a partnering relationship allows both manufacturers and suppliers to be more competitive. It can jointly develop with the supplier, through performance evaluation by compliance in quality, research and development, and delivery' (Interviewee EA-4, 2014).

From the supplier side, joint development is confirmed and considers that it can realise the synchronous development between the manufacturer and supplier and the development of the suppliers in some supply chain links in advance and can solve the technology and product-upgrading problems faced by strategic alliance (Interviewee S4-1, 2014). Therefore, according to Interviewee S1-3, 2014, manufacturers align their suppliers' operations accordingly and jointly develop them.

Responsibility of distribution is a new finding in the empirical data, which is identified by one manufacturer. Through the interview, JC considers

'Manufacturers and suppliers are involved in the responsibility of distribution during the signing of the contract. In the event of a recall, the supplier should be responsible for liability. Even if the components of cars are defective, the manufacturers should bear certain management responsibilities in the event that they have a put financial gain above quality' (Interviewee JC-1, 2014).

Information sharing is confirmed by both manufacturers' and suppliers' participants. In 'stabilise the partnering relationship', information sharing reflects the following:

'Manufacturers provide technical support and manufacturers' engineers are dispatched to their suppliers. Suppliers also could dispatch engineers to the manufacturers to learn new technology. Otherwise, suppliers can exchange, compete and improve technology through supplier association' (Interviewee JC-2, 2014).

Contract incentives and coordination play important roles in partnering relationship management, which are confirmed by three manufacturers and one supplier. In a multicultural collaborators' business environment, coordination between manufacturers and suppliers can be mutually negotiated in dealing with problems that could arise in the SCPR. Otherwise, contract incentives and coordination are

'...achieved in line with new product development. Quality and cost should be considered, aiming at continuously improving the original supplier' (Interviewee EB-1, 2014).

From the manufacturers' side, tight interaction reflects that a stable partnering relationship requires the supplier to participate in the manufacturers' production planning,

'The supplier can participate from the start of the operational plan, and requirements should be proposed in new projects for privacy, cooperation and smooth operations. Problems can be resolved through communication' (Interviewee EA-2, 2014).

From his Rover-Honda strategic alliance research, Pilkington (1999) illustrated the nature of the partnering relationship which covered only certain projects relating to the development of specific vehicles. The manufacturers maintained a distance between each other, and developed separate product plans. Meanwhile, in this research the manufacturers require that the supplier should form strategic alliances. They also require that there should be sufficient competition among suppliers for joint development of the suppliers.

4.2.3.2 Adjust relationship

According to this empirical research, manufacturers and their suppliers were involved in successful partnering relationships. The motivation observed was demonstrated in a number of ways. It became apparent that highly motivated suppliers have a desire to satisfy the demands of their manufacturers. Satisfied manufacturers' demand is a newly finding criterion. The explanation offered for this was that, as complexity increased due to more stringent requirements, a supplier should be more capable of satisfying the manufacturers' demand in the case that the 'capability gap' between the manufacturer and the supplier increased,

'There are a few suppliers in the monopolistic competition market. If the manufacturer desires to break through the monopoly and find another supplier, both supplier and us can form a partnering relationship, and suppliers can apply modifications according to problems proposed by us. Meanwhile, existing goods suppliers can be modified'

(Interviewee EA-4, 2014).

Strategy target as an important indicator of partnering relationship adjustment which is the most confirmed criterion, which is an important indicator of partnering relationship adjustment and may generate conflicts of interest, goal disagreement, no demand for supplier resources, and so on (Niederkofler, 1991). In the interview, the strategy target in JC reflects that

'The relationship with the supplier is clearly established in order to achieve low costs and produce high-quality products' (Interviewee JC-1, 2014).

The partnering relationship is very subtle and it includes close and strategic cooperation. Some suppliers are strong because of their powerful industry relations or technology. In the case of EA,

'There are a few suppliers in the monopolistic competition market, the strategy target has to depend on a powerful supplier' (Interviewee EA-4, 2014).

Multiple departments' involvement is a new finding in this study's empirical data. Manufacturers consider that the department takes charge of the purchasing department and can jointly oversee management of the supplier with the business department. On the supplier side, multiple departmental involvements reflects that

'We actively change the passive position and match with manufacturer platform, forming a quality guarantee and serviceability. Further, we improve the bargaining power and sign the remitting agreement and realise zero risk management on the

receivables. Multi-department involvement in promoting partnering relationship development' (Interviewee S2-1, 2014).

Achieve mutual benefit and mutual compensation of resource and respect for each other are new finding criteria which were confirmed by JC and UC. These three criteria are positive criteria.

'Mutual benefit and mutual compensation of resources can be achieved. The adjustment should be made according to supplier value' (Interviewee JC-2, 2014).

Follow standard procedure to resolve supplier-related issues. Mutual benefit can be achieved by working and planning together while respecting each other's capabilities and ability or credit.

4.2.3.3 Solve conflict

When two parties in the partnering relationship are in conflict, however, avoiding the problem-solving efforts that are necessary would merely delay them. EA resolved the conflict under the precondition of the manufacturer guaranteeing its own interests. Both parties can be restricted through contract articles, and conflict can be solved by negotiation based on the cause of the conflict. EA compromised

'...on the basis of adhering to the bottom line, which did not focus on humanity'
(Interviewee EA, 2014).

EB stressed that both parties can mutually compromise, and jointly make technological progress in such a situation. Compromise, but insist on a baseline, is the new finding and is identified by manufacturers and suppliers.

'Suppliers need to guarantee that they can complete the orders by sacrificing the completion time, which compromises the time and order arrangement. From the supplier side, the supplier considered that their manufacturer never compromises on quality'
(Interviewee S1-3, 2014).

Protect manufacturers' benefits criterion is also a new finding and identified by most manufacturers. Cooperation depth is different, conflict is inevitable in areas such as cost and profit; however, conflict can be resolved under the precondition of guaranteeing the manufacturer's rights.

The criterion of communication is confirmed by all manufacturers. Conflict should be managed by the conflict resolution method of speedily contacting and communicating with manufacturers and

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suppliers (Jean, Sinkovics and Kim, 2010). There are several ways of communicating to solve the conflict. EA considers communicate with the aim of joint solution and through persuasion, while EB emphasises multi-level and specific topic communication.

The joint solve-and-persuade criterion reflects manufacturers' positive attitudes and strengthens the relationship. Mohr and Sepkman (1994) consider constructive conflict resolution including joint problem solving and persuasion. Through these empirical data, which illustrate that manufacturers understand the customer demand, suppliers understand their industry flow.

'Disputes occur when the product is not in line with the Chinese situation or consumer demand, and suppliers must defer and improve' (Interviewee EB-2, 2014).

Meantime, JC considered that

'Both parties should negotiate in a friendly manner, conflict should be transferred if it is encountered, and can be solved for other projects' (Interviewee JC-2, 2014).

From the cooperation criterion, it can be seen that both the manufacturer and its supplier make efforts to solve the conflict. UC lowers the possibility of conflict through contract constraints or early intervention. The supplier stated that manufacturers made the selective investment of resources in supplier development efforts. The supplier's service was foremost, with the manufacturer maintaining a long-term partnering relationship with the best service and product providers.

4.2.4 Partnering relationship termination

Termination of the partnering relationship is considered the last stage of the partnering relationship process. Follow the question: *How are amicable and high-conflict partnering relationship terminations handled by your company? What does your company do when such partnering relationships are terminated?* Through these empirical data, most of the respondents reported that the difficulty of producing effective management between manufacturers and suppliers was one of the most frequently occurring reasons for partnering relationship termination (Table 23).

Table 23 Partnering relationship termination

23.1 Categories	23.2 Key criteria	23.3 Empirical data refinement
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		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
Criteria influencing termination	Fairness	♦			♦				
	Satisfaction		♦	♦	♦				
	Commitment					♦			
	Trust		♦			♦	♦		♦
	Relationship duration							♦	
	Serious conflicts*	♦				♦			
	Terminating cost	♦	♦	♦					
Subsequent actions	Switching cost		♦		♦				
	Renewal of vows for a different phase of life				♦				
	Amicable divorce-going separate ways but staying friends	♦			♦				
	High conflict divorce-mutual recriminations and costly court processes				♦		♦		

Note: ♦, what is confirmed in empirical research

Note: *, what is new finding in empirical research

4.2.4.1 Criteria influencing termination

The criterion of relationship duration is confirmed by the supplier. If the relationship between the two parties lasts longer, it indicates that the two parties have long-term interactions and communications, which will lead to a higher degree of trust and satisfaction. The longer the duration of the relationship through relationship commitment, the lower the leaving tendency will be (Jackson, 1985; Ring and Van De Ven, 1994); but S4 considers that

'Manufacturers do not have a completely effective supplier elimination system to remove the inefficient suppliers who have small purchase amounts and can be replaced in the system. At present, a supplier elimination system depends on the completion of the vehicle production type's lifecycle and that naturally terminates the partnering relationship. It does not connect the supplier elimination with a procurement strategy;'

therefore, there are some inefficient suppliers who occupy the roles of suppliers'
(Interviewee S4-4, 2014).

This reflects another criterion of serious conflicts, which is identified by S4's manufacturer and a new finding in the empirical data. EA respondents consider that,

'We would choose familiar partners based on the limited information offered by the respondents. Complete replacement by new suppliers will incur high risk, and we will think about the existing relationship, but are still willing to maintain the partnering relationship rather than elect for termination if there is no serious problem' (interviewee EA-2, 2014).

However, EA's international respondents are relatively straightforward and direct speaking. Once the manufacturer has determined to terminate the partnering relationship, such suppliers will be eliminated from the supplier list.

Satisfaction of manufacturer is one of the most important criteria in partnering relationship termination, which is confirmed by manufacturers. The satisfaction includes: production performance (Interviewee EB-4, 2014), sourcing price (Interviewee JC-2, 2014) and commercial relationship (Interviewee UC-2, 2014).

Trust exists across the whole process of the partnering relationship. In termination, trust is demonstrated by the familiar supplier (Interviewee EA-4, 2014) and the manufacturer's supplier supports it. Also, trust can be illustrated in a stable business environment (Interviewee S2-1, 2014).

Manufacturers consider the switching cost and terminating cost when they terminate the partnering relationship. Switching cost is higher and termination cost will create a huge loss, both of which reflect Elfenbein and Zenger's (2014) research which refers to all possible expected losses and switching costs incurred when one partner terminates the relationship.

4.2.4.2 Subsequent action

Subsequent action the SCPR termination is reported by most manufacturers. The criterion of amicable divorce was confirmed by two manufacturers. EA respondents consider that,

'Once the relationship is terminated, previous accounts of the supplier should be checked, thereby completely solving the corresponding contact content' (Interviewee EA-1, 2014).

'We will not cooperate with the supplier, and the supplier should be eliminated from the supplier name list' (interviewee EA-3, 2014).

This reflects Murray and Mahon (1993)'s termination research that the SCPR under the circumstance that there is no further partnering relationship. UC respondents consider that,

'Once the relationship is terminated, stop all activities, inactive supplier; keep the supplier records on file' (Interviewee EA-1, 2014).

On the other side, the criterion of high conflict divorce was confirmed by a manufacturer and a supplier. JC respondents consider that,

'Once the contract is terminated or the partnering relationship is failed, both parties can solve the issue by taking a legal approach, which consumes much time and resources' (Interviewee JC-1, 2014).

Another JC respondent confirmed the criterion of Renewal of vows for a different phase of life, which means

'Since the sourcing price in China is increasing, the labour costs are expensive and it is difficult to set up factories or operate a manufacturing production line in China; therefore, many suppliers have to terminate relationship. A factory can be set up in another country from the headquarters of the supplier's international partner, and provide the products for manufacturer, thereby reducing costs' (Interviewee JC-2, 2014).

4.2.5 Partnering relationship performance

Overall performance is primarily measured from the perspective of the relationship in the area of effectiveness. Melnyk et al. (2004) recognised the orchestrating role of performance measurement systems in operations management and asserted that the 'performance measurement system is ultimately responsible for maintaining alignment and coordination' (p. 213). Following the interview question: *Could you please comment on the criteria you use to measure a partnering relationship performance? How is the performance measured?* This thesis focuses on researching the measurement of supply chain partnering and how to measure the partnering relationship and achieve cooperation through the partnering relationship in a multicultural collaborators' environment.

Table 24 Partnering relationship performance

24.1 Categories	24.2 Key criteria	24.3 Empirical data refinement						
		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3
Relationship performance measurement	Commitment				◆			
	Satisfaction	◆	◆	◆	◆			◆
	Prospective relationship and organisational capabilities					◆	◆	◆
	Manufacturing productivity control	◆	◆			◆	◆	
	The degree of collaboration	◆	◆			◆	◆	◆
	Add brand value*	◆		◆				
How to measure relationship performance	Level and degree of information sharing							
	Buyer-vendor cost saving initiatives	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Extent of mutual co-operation leading to improved quality			◆			◆	
	The entity and stage at which suppliers are involved	◆						
	Extent of mutual assistance in problem solving efforts	◆		◆		◆		
	Understanding the rules and business environment systems*			◆				
	Manufacturer's ability*				◆			

Note: ◆, what is confirmed in empirical research

Note: *, what is new finding in empirical research

4.2.5.1 The relationship performance measurement

The criteria of relationship performance are measured by the degree of partnering relationship cooperation, satisfaction, relationship and organisational capabilities, manufacturing productivity control, commitment and add brand value.

Add brand value is a new finding and identified by manufacturers. According to the empirical data, manufacturers feel comfortable that market competitiveness can be improved so that more people know the brand's value which is beneficial for retaining customers' loyalty. In the SCPR,

'Manufacturers and suppliers share together, make a breakthrough based on their investment in R&D and advanced technology, and enhance the brand's advantages'
(Interviewee JC-2, 2014).

Satisfaction is confirmed by all manufacturers and one supplier. Satisfaction is a dimension of measuring partnering relationship effectiveness. The relationship performance benefits the manufacturer's image. Level of satisfaction is illustrated in the following quote:

'Through the partnering relationship, we measure the satisfaction with a quality guarantee, enhance the technical development, the cost control, and increase the capacity of production platform and delivery' (Interviewee JC-1, 2014).

The prospective relationship and organisational capabilities criterion is confirmed by most of the suppliers. Suppliers use how the capabilities improve to measure the performance of the relationship. Through the interviews, suppliers discuss sourcing costs and integration of resources integration:

'The manufacturers' pressure to reduce prices will be transferred to the suppliers. However, we also face cost pressure as the prices of the raw materials, resources and labour force are constantly increasing. Dual pressures make our profitability decline. In addition, as there are a large number of suppliers for manufacturers, some suppliers adopt improper ways of surviving; thus, the industrial competition order is breached'
(Interviewee S1-1, 2014).

In some partnering relationships, the manufacturers complete the integration of production business and their supplier resources. Manufacturers share group management with the suppliers and enhance the competitiveness of the SCPR for better financial returns.

'The market of suppliers will be further integrated, which will result in the outstanding supplier resources being more concentrated, and the bargaining power of the supplier will increase as a result. The supplier tends toward a modular procurement and tends to purchase products from the tier-one suppliers, which gradually increases the bargaining power of the tier-one suppliers' (Interviewee S4-2, 2014).

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The degree of collaboration is an important criterion to measure the relationship performance which is confirmed by manufacturers and suppliers. The degree of collaboration affects the relationship performance within the multicultural relationship management:

'After the new joint venture cooperation, the new partnering relationship is established, the person in charge of the Chinese Party has experience with another international company, but with a completely different style from the existing joint venture, and the senior executives have difficulty in integrating and managing the new partnering relationship' (Interviewee EB-1, 2014).

The degree of collaboration is also illustrated through advanced technology sharing, and research and design (R&D) information sharing (JC). This reflect the Japanese style partnering relationship (Dyer and Ouchi, 1993) which has for a long time been in 'the model for the successful implementation of supplier involvement in new product development' (Zirpoli and Caputo, 2002, p.1389). Despite the overall Japanese financial crisis, Toyota's supply chain management still enjoys the best performance' (Zirpoli and Caputo, 2002, p.1389). Suppliers consider that the relationship between the manufacturer and supplier and the status between them, are very important.

4.2.5.2 How to measure the relationship performance

The criterion of buyer-vendor cost saving initiatives is confirmed by all suppliers and one manufacturer. On the manufacturers' side, the criterion recognised the number of changes in the sale volumes, with the corresponding reduction in cost. Suppliers tried, through cost-saving initiatives, to measure the partnering relationship performance, which provided some negative answers as shown in the interview quotation:

'Cost-saving initiatives is an interesting and prevalent internal challenge that was identifying unrealistic expectations in manufacturers. This resulted in frustration among the manufacturers over the perceived under-achievement of the supplier managers. Suppliers also seem to have a harder time adapting to cost-saving conditions, leading to an over-dependency on the manufacturers' (interviewee S2-2, 2014).

The criterion of extent of mutual co-operation leading to improved quality (defined as reduced automotive recall frequency and subsequent loss reduction) was noted.

Extent of mutual assistance in problem-solving efforts was confirmed by two manufacturers and one supplier, as the stronger side, a manufacturer considered that

'After the partnering relationship is established, the supplier shall fully support the development of manufacturers, and even guarantee the production operation of manufacturers at the expense of their own interests for a short period' (Interviewee EA-1, 2014).

Manufacturer's ability is a new finding identified by one supplier. Manufacturer's ability is a way to measure the relationship performance. This is defined as

'Performance pressure primarily lies with the manufacturer because the supplier market is already mature and the manufacturer can select the supplier most suitable for the manufacturer's own products according to the requirements' (Interviewee S4-4, 2014).

Understanding the rules and business environment systems is another new finding which is identified by a manufacturer. Manufacturers define the partnering relationship performance to include the need to understand the business context of China, and understanding of business rules:

'We consider performance from a long-term perspective, as a JV, we need both us and our suppliers to adopt international business systems, understand Chinese market and law systems, and an efficient government system. We hope our supplier could embody honesty and credibility, follow the rules, and not play games' (Interviewee UC-4, 2014).

Measuring the partnering relationship not only offers a perspective on benefits but also includes measures of problem solving which could enhance potential performance. The extent of mutual assistance in problem-solving efforts is the criterion which was confirmed by manufacturers and one supplier. On the manufacturer's side, this criterion is defined as a guarantee that the production operations and cost reductions are supported. On the supplier's side, financial problem deterioration should be included in problem solving.

4.2.6 Multicultural collaborators' business environments

The measurement of the process of SCPR indicates that multi-culture influences their application. Following the interview questions: *Could you please explain your company's business and market environments from your perspective?* If applicable: *Can you please comment on any uncertainty within the business environment? Could you please expand upon the international joint venture relationship management? Can you please describe the alignment between China and the other cultures within the JV?* According to the data analysis, multicultural manufacturers and their

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suppliers explore the partnering relationship PMIs in the multicultural business context (Table 25). The multicultural partnering relationship characteristics are applied to answer the research question regarding the partnering relationship measurement's implications for the SCPR between multicultural organisations and the research contribution on evaluating and identifying new research agendas associated with cultural differences in partnering relationship activities.

Table 25 Multicultural collaborators' business environments

25.1 Categories	25.2 Key criteria	25.3 Empirical data refinement
		EA EB JC UC S1 S2 S3 S4
IJV partners' relationship management	Management control issues	◆ ◆ ◆
	Parent parties cooperation	◆ ◆ ◆
	The degree of association	◆ ◆
	Political and legal risks	◆ ◆
	Reverse knowledge flows	◆ ◆ ◆
	Supplier management	◆ ◆ ◆
Alignment between China and other cultures	Positioning social skills and an understanding of Chinese cultural knowledge	◆ ◆
	Mutual respect and identify common values*	◆
	National culture underpins the culture of the organisation and provides the basis for the norms of organisational behaviour	◆ ◆ ◆
Business environment uncertainty	Countries' and nationalities' cultures make cultural clashes	◆ ◆
	Culture gap lead to very different organisational practices, managerial decisions and business ethics	◆ ◆ ◆
	People are independent and their choice of behaviour has the potential to erase the effects of national culture	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
Business environment uncertainty	Law and regulations governing actions	◆ ◆
	Bureaucratic obstacles resulting from the various authorities are not unusual and complicated	

Cross culture employees	◆	◆	◆
Government policy support*	◆	◆	◆
Market*	◆	◆	◆
Challenge of profit margins*		◆	◆
Resources limitation and competition*	◆	◆	◆

Note: ◆, what is confirmed in empirical research

Note: *, what is new finding in empirical research

The IJV partners' relationship management, Chinese and other culture alignment and business environmental uncertainty factors are the foundations for the whole research framework affecting the SCPR.

4.2.6.1 IJV partners' relationship management

In this category all the criteria are based on manufacturers' partnering relationship management, so the empirical data are only provided by the case manufacturers.

The criterion of management control issues is confirmed by most manufacturers. EA respondents contend that

'We integrate joint departments with smooth operations and clear authority and responsibilities. The international party has supplier selection and decision rights'
(Interviewees EA-1; EA-4, 2014).

Regarding the management control issue in EB, Chinese respondents mentioned that since operations management concepts are different in the original joint venture, the international party has an advanced management concept, while the Chinese party has a rich cultural heritage. IJV partner's relationship management personnel are replaced frequently and company policy is lacking in continuity. Therefore, IJV suffer from conflicts and crises. EB international respondents suggested that subcontracting is more realistic and cautious due to previous failure in a joint venture experience. New IJV cooperation and operations form the unique opportunity to seize the Chinese market. In UC, the management control is healthy and sustainable; UC has been prepared for operations improvement.

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The parent parties' cooperation is confirmed by the same manufacturers as the above criterion. Parent parties' cooperation in IJVs, illustrating tacit coordination of both parties, is crucial to smooth operations (EA). Otherwise, the international party places value on Chinese culture being actively integrated into the joint venture. Many years of international joint venture partners' relationship management experience can make for a quick response (EB). Furthermore, as a whole joint venture, all factors in management operations shall be communicated and discussed.

Positioning social skills and an understanding of Chinese cultural knowledge is confirmed by two manufacturers and was recognised as an important criterion of IJV partners' relationship management. As a manufacturer with two experiences of IJVs, EB's international party said,

'For the first time of cooperation, the international party sends the manager to China, taking turns in power with Chinese leaders. The international party is responsible for global procurement and IJV management, with advanced management concepts and very high and specific demands, while the Chinese party has a simple and honest management style with strong cultural deposits. The operations management ability during joint venture period has improved more or less, but many problems still exist.'

'For the second time of cooperation, as the Chinese party had cooperated with another international party before, there could be a reduction in IJV operation costs' (Interviewee EB-3, 2014).

Considering the understanding of Chinese cultural knowledge, UC reflected that

'We should pay more attention to our partner's Mianzi [concept of Face], especially for the leader of the Chinese party' (Interviewee UC-4, 2014).

Mutual respect and identifying common values is a new finding which is identified by one manufacturer. In IJVs' operations management, two joint venture parties should

'Mutually respect and identify the values, accept win-win cooperation, and accumulate international management experience, to create an international influence and competitiveness' (Interviewee JC-2, 2014).

IJV partners' relationship management brings changes in the partnering relationship, and different international parties also have their own characteristics in how they deal with an IJV relationship. EA focused on rules, EB stressed the importance of cultural conflict and the market, JC emphasised technology flows, and UC paid attention to communication. Chinese government policy and legal risks are also important influential factors within the IJVs' operation management. True assimilation can be achieved only when one's interactions with international cultures

demonstrate that they must be considered equal to one's own culture. Time and again, this lack of understanding has proven a telling shortfall for international managers in China.

4.2.6.2 Alignment between China and other cultures

The SCPR and multicultural characteristics cannot be separated. Thus, if cultural differences are apparent in an IJV, it is likely that disparity will occur regarding a commitment to and satisfaction with the IJV relationship (Markoczy, 2000; Griffith, Myers and Harvey, 2005).

The criterion that people are independent and their choice of behaviour has the potential to erase the effects of national culture is confirmed by most of the manufacturers and one supplier. In EA, the international party works rigorously, complying with rules with no racial discrimination, and it has a fair operation environment, upholding human rights, but in UC, it is completely different. It is difficult to balance the relationships of *Guanxi* [personal networks] and *Renqing* [rules of exchange]. As shown in the case of EB, the first IJV manufacturer, the international party had complete domination. In the second IJV manufacturer, the Chinese party held the most dominant position, retaining some of the suppliers from the original venture.

'A supplier with experience of serving an international manufacturer is preferred; that supplier should have their own strategy for working with us in building the partnering relationship, their own joint values and vision, all of which must be acceptable to us'
(Interviewee EB-1).

In the industry relationship, it is important to acknowledge that clashes can be avoided if the IJV relationship is secure. Through the empirical data, EB and its supplier confirmed the cultural clashes criterion. In the first IJV, the international party had complete domination; in the second IJV, the Chinese party held the most dominant position, retaining some of the suppliers from the original IJV. EB made the effort to avoid potential culture clashes by ensuring a comfortable start and securing a bilateral agreement within the partnering relationship.

An EB international respondent recognised

'The high value of local culture, and they are actively integrated into the culture'
(Interviewee EB-1, 2014).

An EB Chinese respondent proposed that

'The Chinese party has many years' experience in joint venture; thereby, it can make rapid response. However, the Chinese party and the international party are lacking in

communication. Therefore, contradiction in cooperation is not well solved' (Interviewee EB, 2014).

EB proposed that the partnering relationship with different cultural backgrounds makes it difficult for manufacturers to take on the role.

The criterion of culture gap leads to very different organisational practices. Managerial decisions and business ethics is confirmed by two manufacturers and one of their suppliers. Manifestations of culture are investigated through the specific consideration of discrepancies and idiosyncrasies in terms of behaviour, values and beliefs at a national level between China and the international party. Cultural distance is almost always manifested in reactive communication and attitude as well as differences in interpersonal communication and indirect communication, regardless of any conceptual culture frameworks expounded in the literature. The different negotiating styles and value of contracts and the more personalised business relationships illustrate that business relationships in China appear to be built very differently from the way they are in international countries. True assimilation can be achieved only when one's interactions with international cultures demonstrate that they must be considered equal to one's own culture.

4.2.6.3 Business environment uncertainty

As found by Lovas and Ghoshal (2000), as part of the group of persons with relevant knowledge there are sources of variation in an environment where structures and routines are predominantly formal. However the criteria which describe an uncertain business environment in multicultural partnering relationships vary in levels of sophistication across projects.

The market is a new finding and identified by most of the manufacturers and their suppliers. The Chinese market plays an important role in the global automotive development plan of the international party. The challenge of profit margins, resource limitation and competition are other new findings which are identified by most suppliers. On the supplier side, they concentrate more on more day-to-day, actual criteria. S2 stated that labour costs are increasing and that developing a mature automotive market is hard as the prices of raw materials are continuously rising and production has a significant impact on the economic environment. According to S2, multicultural management skills of expatriate managers towards suppliers manifested these challenges.

In the empirical data, respondents stated that the business environment existence of different situations – e.g., government policy support, market, cross-cultural employees and resource limitation when it came to supplier collaboration – impeded manufacturers' and suppliers'

partnering relationships. Therefore, propositions can be put forward regarding the multicultural uncertainty in the business environment, and a causal framework, identifying important forerunners to relationships between manufacturers and suppliers in the Chinese automotive industry, is formed based on these propositions.

4.3 Findings

The findings from the data analysis, based on the cases' different backgrounds, support previous scholars' research and reveal new findings from the empirical data. The multicultural collaborators' business environment is a key addition to the overall research in practice, which is analysed in a subsequent part of this thesis. Linking this dimension with the Chinese automotive industry, an effective supply chain partnering relationship in conjunction with the supply chain profit commonwealth can be formed. This section of the thesis elaborates on the findings and more critically examines them, both supporting and extending the previous discussions. After reducing and condensing the data, an integrated approach is taken in this session as the management, influences and outcomes in the multicultural, effective SCPR can define key criteria for manufacturers and suppliers that they need to manage carefully.

The researcher comprehensively structures, details, scrutinises, interprets and discusses the data collected from five sets supply chain relationships between four manufacturing companies, EA, EB, JC, UC and supported data from their four tier-one suppliers, S1 to S4, where S2 has two linkages with manufacturers. Data were gathered and a balanced approach used, linking with theory, to analyse the generated findings, which provides important implications for the conceptual framework, and highlights idiosyncratic aspects of SCPRs within the Chinese automotive industry.

4.3.1 Findings of recognise the partnering relationship

Most of the literature in this area advocates the need to establish collaborative buyer-supplier relationships (Paulraj et al., 2008). From the thesis data analysis, manufacturers and suppliers have recognised the strategic importance of partnering relationships. Based on their different backgrounds, each case supports previous scholars' research, and displays new findings from the empirical data.

Compared with the previous literature, the manufacturers in each of the four cases, as the strong side in the supply chain, recognised the importance of building solid supplier relationships and proposed expanding the market which is directly related to the market share of the production brand in recent years. On the other side, the suppliers also support the mutually beneficial partnering relationship as assisting supplier growth. Regarded as an important strategy for the manufacturer, the partnering relationship could be based on the production project or used by the manufacturer to replace loyalty with equity. Analysis of the results supports suppliers in uncertain environments towards multicultural manufacturers and suppliers' business environments. However, only a few scholars have researched how to establish a partnering relationship with IJV manufacturers, specifically in the case of different cultural backgrounds. The IJVs international party assesses the establishment of the partnering relationship. By participating in the manufacturers' production operations, the suppliers can satisfy market demand.

In the differences between IJV relationships and SCPR, the multicultural collaborators' business environment is specifically added to the overall research background, which is analysed in a subsequent part of this study. Linking this category with the international joint venture groupings in the Chinese automotive sector, it is plausible that avoiding problem identification was a mechanism to avoid potential collaboration for some of the suppliers. International joint ventures can have effective partnering relationships with clear responsibilities and rights. After the international joint venture, a partnering relationship can be formed with the profit commonwealth. The establishment of a partnering relationship reflects a commitment to long-term cooperation and analysis for supplier selection and evaluation. Therefore, it is critical to influence the mindset of managers in the partnering relationship as a first step. Furthermore, the results indicate that partnering relationships are built gradually at a very senior level and that the level of strategy and criteria increase in a sequential way over time, with relatively little reliance on contractual agreements unless absolutely necessary.

4.3.2 Findings of supplier selection

This thesis has achieved a deeper understanding of the conditions of supplier selection in the automotive industry. This study explored the supplier selection from the perspective of the partnering relationship framework. These elements were investigated in the Chinese automotive industry context. The framework includes some of the key driving forces that have been identified from the diverse literature. This study is intended to bridge the existing gaps in the relevant research and provide a basis upon which further research can be conducted.

The relationship strategy category indicates that a high degree of cooperation exists, whereby, in the case of corporate production plan, design and integrating resources, multiple departments will enrol in partnering relationships. Complementarity was not a concept that was discussed by the research respondents. Manufacturers need common development with suppliers which is driven by market demand. This guarantees efficient product operation and the provision of updates. Considering the multicultural supply chain partnering relationship, the relationship strategy dimension illustrates mutual fit and recognition. The relationship strategy could be adjusted to fit the requirements of the Chinese market, satisfy international parties' requirements, and achieve mutual organisational characteristics and the synchronous development of multiple relationships.

The supplier selection does not exist at the same level throughout; rather this should consist of multi-level criteria structure based on the conceptual definition of the operation measurement criteria. Drawing from the measuring categories of Choi and Hartley (1996) and Crane et al. (1999), three types of criteria are explored in practice. These are relation factors, cooperative behaviour and quantitative criteria (Chan et al., 2003). The relation criteria of trust, commitment, attitude, and a high degree of loyalty are deeply analysed by the underlying management (Demirbag, Weir and Mirza, 2003; Cao et al., 2010). By aligning cooperative behaviour with performance, through participation decisions, communication is examined and the quantitative criteria of product performance, cost, quality, intellectual property, size and successful experience are explored in practice. Established cooperative relationships between suppliers, which are based on commitment and mutual trust, through participation and communicating, help both manufacturers and suppliers to enhance their competitiveness. The way in which these roles are divided seriously restricts the building of a scale effect in the Chinese automotive suppliers' industry. It has been found that the supplier remains in a disadvantaged position in the supply chain partnering relationship while the manufacturer occupies a much stronger position. The supplier has a positive attitude towards improving its own strength and competitiveness. It has gained an understanding of the supply chain partnering relationship and the need to make some changes. In supplier selection, the multicultural manufacturer has a positive influence on the supplier at the same time. However, due to the limitations of technology and benefits, the supplier needs more support from the manufacturer.

4.3.3 Findings of partnering relationship management

During the interviews, all companies, regardless of background, discussed partnering relationship management more than any other aspect. Most manufacturers are to some degree or another

involved in partnering relationships, and manufacturers adopt different approaches in maintaining and managing their relationships with suppliers.

In this thesis, both manufacturers and suppliers began, over time, to generate friction and conflicts. This hindered their ability to cooperate and reach the goals of a successful SCPR in multicultural organisations. With these abilities the outcome is clearly specified, yet the solution is only outlined in general terms. Here the strategy adopted to attain the organisational goal is not critical as long as the desired outcome is achieved. That is, how the people achieve the specific goal is not of interest as long as the general goals are achieved. Consequently the outcome is specified and others in the organisation must determine the solution. Because of the desired flexibility in the specific outcomes achieved, there is no immediate or built-in linkage between strategic goals and solutions; rather the linkage is lagged. That is, the specific strategic goals are introduced and the organisation is allowed to explore alternative approaches and ultimately select the method that works best. Once the best approach has been identified, it can then be 'locked' by specifying the exact metrics to be used.

Partnering relationship management, deployed in cases as evidenced in Table 22, emerged as another category during the axial coding of the interview data, where an improvement in the partnering relationship with the manufacturers was sought through the use of cross-functional teams made up of strategic managers, supply chain managers, and directors who were sent to the facilities of key suppliers. In addition to the possible provision of equipment at the suppliers' facilities and consulting activities (Interviewee S1-4, 2014), conceptual activities and innovation for the suppliers at various levels (Interviewee S2-3, 2014), which are involved in the category.

Although the development of suppliers is a common and acknowledged practice in the automotive industry, the results suggest that while on a continuing basis the benefits of supplier development activities stem from these activities, the majority of respondents concurred that they tended to invest just once in supplier development activities for a specific supplier.

4.3.4 Findings of partnering relationship termination

Following the discussion on the partnering relationship termination on the organisation, data analysis shows that change and loss due to partnering relationship termination also should be measured from perspectives of criteria influencing termination and subsequent actions which are put in place when terminating the partnering relationship, particularly in the case of a change of manufacturer.

In order to provide an in-depth understanding of what happens and how people feel, the relationship between the manufacturer and supplier that leads to an improvement or termination in a relationship-based framework is explicitly mentioned by UC.

Even when serious conflicts or disagreements occur among cooperative partners, the partnering relationship is not easy to terminate. The manufacturers have positively subsequent actions in terminate the SCPR. The suppliers think that the partnering relationship is not easy to terminate unless serious conflicts or disagreements occur. In the empirical data, it was found that the supplier thinks that the domestic partnering relationship is relatively stable, and that neither cooperative party can change the other easily.

4.3.5 Findings of partnering relationship performance

A successfully implemented and used performance measurement process operating in the multicultural partnering relationship leads to a more participative and consultative management style. Similarly, the correct use of performance measurement systems can encourage an achievement culture to emerge.

Respondents rarely talked about how to measure performance. One reason is that performance brought about by the partnering relationship is sustainable but sometimes invisible, and typically manifests in the form of production cost reduction, good partnering relationship management, productivity improvement, and quality standard compliance. In the partnering relationship, manufacturers are in a position of absolute importance; thus manufacturers can exert more pressure on daily operations. Based on this, the partnering relationship can help manufacturers transfer this pressure in the right direction.

4.3.6 Findings of multicultural collaborators' business environments

Culture is a strong theoretical variable impacting the operation of partnering relationships and performance at these four manufacturers and their suppliers. It influences motivation behind a combination of partnering relationships, the configurations employed in operation management, and the level of effectiveness and outcomes. Ultimately, aspects of theory on partnering relationship measurement, formulated in the context of the Chinese automotive industry, are made more powerful in the application of such theory. The current study offers fresh insights while allowing for expansion of theory. It also serves to enhance appreciation of unique

environments as more contextualised deliberations are integrated. These elements evidently lead to the conclusion and recommendations in the next chapter.

The fact that the ‘international business environment’ is an influencing factor was very clearly revealed by the coding. It transpired that in many cases, cultural differences and a lack of cultural understanding hindered supply chain managers from doing their jobs effectively as the anticipation of actions and counter-actions of the supplier are made more difficult. Likewise, the provision of adequate stimuli and value propositions for suppliers is more difficult.

The multicultural business environment means that effective SCPR dimensions exist in practice, regardless of background. The SCPR is implemented to the benefit of all in the associated community. The empirical data show that in the case of multicultural manufacturers, the IJV parties reflect their cultures, which in turn influences the measurement of the relationship components: the industry relationship is paramount; bilateral agreement is secure; potential culture clashes are avoided, and the international party’s system is satisfied. The SCPRs in different cultural backgrounds have been explored here; these can be compromised, based on agreement, and compared transversely. Finally, developing a healthy organisational culture positively affects relationship performance.

4.4 Further analysis, interpretation and discussion

This section elaborates on the findings and more critically examines them, both supporting and extending the previous discussions. After reducing and condensing the data, an integrated approach is taken in this stage as the management, influences and outcomes in the multicultural effective of the SCPR can define key criteria in manufacturers and suppliers.

4.4.1 Gaps in the literature and areas for modification

In seeking to alleviate gaps, literature, theory and empirical data have been incorporated to support processes and practice in multicultural effective SCPR. This enables the linking of key procedures, practices and activities, particularly concerning multicultural business-to-business relationships.

Examining empirical data allowed analysis of the samples’ responses for adaptation and recognition of multicultural, effective SCPR outcomes. This thesis of influences and interactions

enables us to ascertain how vital it is for samples to enhance the utility of the SCPRs and relationship performance measurement to match key criteria with multicultural collaborators for functioning business to business relationships. It also allows us to glean how companies can successfully interact with criteria of their chosen partners, management and termination processes. A successful implementation can improve capabilities and create advantageous outcomes for partnering relationships, partner renewal and enhanced competitiveness. This research combines appropriate elements of literature on partnering relationships, IJV partners' relationship management and performance measurement perspective, all of them important to, and impacting the partnering relationship measurement.

The literature in these areas shows that there is sparse exploration and integration of these criteria. Guided by such gaps in the literature, the resulting aim for the research question and areas for contribution (Table 1, p. 11 and Table 10, p. 62), the study of these criteria is to better inform process and practice and advance understanding, while partnering relationship theories are generated as well as implications for future research and practice. As empirical studies on partnering relationship and relationship performance measurement in Chinese automotive industry are virtually non-existent, this setting is a unique context and incorporating manufacturing was perceived as advantageous in enriching contribution to theory in these areas.

The conceptual framework developed with the theoretical lens of partnering relationship theories was applied in combination and 'framed the study' (McCaslin and Scott, 2003). For the guided case study (Yin, 2003), data were collected and analysed, and comparisons drawn between findings (Eisenhardt, 1989a). Explored theories reveal implications which are suggested for future research.

GAPs-1: A complete framework does not currently exist which identifies criteria to be incorporated into SCPR measurement and performance.

This thesis proposes a comprehensive framework that measures the effectiveness of multicultural SCPRs. Existing studies tended to focus on either specific measures or individual organisations. The multicultural perspective provides a unique view on how effectively multicultural collaborators or networks are functioning in business to business partnering relationship systems in Chinese automotive groupings.

Respondents confirmed and extended the defined concepts and research variables built in to a theoretical framework. They are working with these concepts on a regular basis in practice.

Six categories that indicate what should be measured and how multicultural factors operate in a SCPR were identified. While a partial correspondence was found for this framework, the empirical

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findings reveal several surprising results, which highlight different cultural background views and multiple business environments within the SCPRs studied.

This thesis explored the performance measurement systems from the perspective of the partnering relationship framework. These criteria were investigated in the Chinese automotive industry context. The framework includes some of the key driving forces that have been identified from the diverse literature. This study is intended to bridge the existing gaps in the relevant research and provide a basis upon which further research can be conducted.

GAPs-2: Limited research is available within a specific context, namely multicultural collaborators, and the need exists to explore how they are functioning in business-to-business partnering relationships.

Studies (Vygotsk, 1980; Ambrose et al., 2010) show that multicultural collaborators' partnering relationships and contradictions can hinder the effectiveness of operations management in companies. Nevertheless, through its relationship selections and maintained criteria, a manufacturer can renew its strategy and other criteria by linkage of individuals, groups, and unit and organisations levels. This is supported by the work of Easterby-Smith et al. (2000). Data analysis reveals that as manufacturers heed the impact of change factors in their multicultural business environment, choose suppliers as partners, and initiate relationship management, there are conflicts, problems, and tensions within and between initiatives. These must be managed to promote 'efficiency, responsiveness and flexibility' (Miller and Roth, 1994).

Comparisons were made of the different nationalities and cultural backgrounds of manufacturers/suppliers, and data analysis incorporating criteria of the literature with partnering relationship theories to enhance understanding of partnering relationship processes, practices, activities, interactions, outcomes and impact. The theoretical framework was elaborated, and supporting concepts employed to more richly assess levels of effectiveness in management relations and competencies, partnering relationship management, and evaluation of criteria. Resulting developments or consequences were then more apparent, including the level of attainment of outcomes for partnering relationships, as the empirical study involved six categories implemented in four manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers. The interactions with key stakeholders in a dynamic environment within a developing nation provide a research site of major importance for confirming existing theories, as well as richer contributions to partnering relationship theories.

GAPs-3: There is a lack of a coherent set of performance indicators to establish the links between behaviours and effectiveness against multicultural collaborators' business objectives.

Recognising multicultural business environment dynamism, the analysis of the data confirms the manufacturer and supplier as 'an activity system' when renewing the SCPR, thus facilitating linkages and learning (Bloomquist and Packendorff, 1998) once well-coordinated and integrated. Both manufacturers and suppliers undertook actions to achieve higher performance, and the partnering relationship operation generated new findings and experiences in multicultural organisations.

Current definitions and academic models of partnering relationship operations are insufficient to explain partners' selection and to be used on an ongoing basis for manufacturers to use in the management of their supply chain. This study contributes further, as it analyses associated influences, management, integration and outcomes.

4.4.2 Confirmation of existing results

Following analysis of the empirical data, the idiosyncratic aspects of the multicultural SCPR within the Chinese automotive industry re-defined the conceptual framework as a result of analysing the empirical data. Compared to the theoretical framework and research propositions, which are summarised in Chapter 2 (Figure 4 and Table 11), through the cross-case analysis confirms the results from the manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers.

- Confirm the effective multicultural SCPR measurement through empirical data

The data analysis leads to a conclusion that such a study is needed to clarify the flow of a partnering relationship. Data analysis confirmed that it is beneficial to establish a partnering relationship between manufacturers and suppliers. Partnering relationships with suppliers are generally built gradually at a very senior level; therefore multicultural management skills are essential, even more so within the context of the Chinese automotive industry, in order to make sound decisions and also anticipate potential problems when ramping up output effectiveness through the supply chain partnering relationship. Partnering relationship management assists the combining of strategy and operations management to better explore and evaluate criteria and maintain efforts expected to assist a breakthrough to sustainable competitiveness. From the supplier side, suppliers appear to try to fit in to the multicultural partnering relationship to the extent that management levels can rise significantly.

The successful partnering relationship is a key element for both manufacturers and suppliers to become successful in China and other markets. Criteria within the literature are supported by empirical data results from this thesis. From the analysis of the findings, there appears to be strong evidence that a partnering relationship is operated by multicultural joint venture

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manufacturers. The stringency of certain quality and material standards in the automotive industry is another key aspect that requires state-of-the-art process management skills. Besides classic criteria such as better quality, reduced cost, information sharing, strategic orientation, interdependence, trust and communication, more attention should be paid to 'softer' criteria such as compromise, attitude and satisfaction as well as a level of collaboration between manufacturers and suppliers in order to ensure integrity in industry relationships at the required performance level. Put differently, it might be inappropriate to only focus on classic supplier performance metrics in a market that is highly dynamic and immature. These 'softer' attributes of the SCPR process were identified in this thesis.

- Contextualising in terms of multicultural partnering relationship measurement impacts the partnering relationship performance, as seen by both the manufacturers and suppliers sides

Analysis and discussion of findings from the empirical studies of the six categories based on the research framework reveals that while there are similarities there is also diversity in relationships within and between partnering relationships among manufacturers and suppliers, particularly regarding partnering relationship input and where partnering relationship measurement is applied.

First, the automotive industry in China is still in the early stages with regards to SCPR development. The dynamic relationship stages and milestones related to this aspect are not apparent in many cases. Often, both manufacturer and supplier recognised common goals and culture differences. Manufacturers adjust the strategy orientation and design management style initiatives accordingly. Partnering relationship concerns mutual support and interdependence between manufacturers and suppliers. A supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) and an international joint venture (IJV) relationship should mutually affect each other.

Second, inherent cultural aspects concerning communication and attitude necessitate a different approach when selecting the suppliers to measure performance: more efforts need to be spent on monitoring supplier strength and quality and intellectual property assurance. Analysis of multicultural characteristics assures alignment of relationship strategies and operation measurement criteria. As evidenced by this study, this alignment is crucial to building essential criteria, such as equal involvement in strategic orientation, and avoiding potential culture clash and compromise.

Third, suppliers lack the necessary experience to take part in an early production involvement. The basic project plans and milestones related to this aspect are not apparent in many cases. In

the selection of suppliers, the joint venture background of the manufacturer has a positive influence on the supplier at the same time. In maintaining partnering relationship, the supplier cooperates actively. It demands change to its status in the partnering relationship, but due to the limitations of technology and benefits, suppliers need more support from manufacturers. From the partnering relationship perspective, it is not hard to see that relationship operation is a long-term procedure. Manufacturers and suppliers should jointly develop the SCPR. Inherent cultural aspects concerning communication and operation patterns necessitate a different approach when managing the suppliers. More effort needs to be spent on stabilising and adjusting assurance.

Fourth, respondents from the manufacturers believe that manufacturers place more emphasis on SCPR management. They believe that the management of a partnering relationship has a greater influence on performance. Without serious conflicts, the SCPR will not easily choose to terminate the relationship as to do so incurs termination and switching costs. A high degree of collaboration and satisfaction within the partnering relationship benefits the relationship performance, which can be shown through performance measurement.

- The conceptual framework examines how multicultural organisations explore and evaluate the SCPR and partnering relationship performance in the automotive industry

While a partial confirmation of the initial framework was found, the empirical findings reveal several surprising results which highlight different SCPRs within multicultural business environments. In this thesis, based on data analysis, best universal practices of partnering relationship process and partnering relationship performance are discussed, and a framework is offered that will reflect a multicultural collaborators exploration as far as monitoring and control of partnering relationship tasks are concerned.

First, a deeper understanding of the conditions of manufacturers and their suppliers in Chinese automotive industry, and confirmation of the conceptual framework proposed in this thesis, has been achieved. The conceptual framework is basically in line with the actual conditions of the Chinese automotive industry, according to the data analysis. Data analysis recognised the SCPRs, supplier selection, partnering relationship management and termination, and the relationship performance brought about by multicultural business environments. Participants confirmed key criteria or identified new criteria and relevant concepts aimed at criteria of the conceptual framework were defined. The respondents are working with these concepts in their regular practice.

Second, the conceptual framework demonstrated that different cultural and organisational backgrounds could be compared transversely. Different SCPR characteristics are summarised in

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the data analysis. All four manufacturers pay significant attention to the automotive industry environments at present and clearly recognise the international joint venture environment and their own supply chain partnering relationship demand conditions. To better survive and sustain partnering relationships in multicultural, regionally and internationally business environments, it is necessary to enhance sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance (Lee, 2004; Ketchen and Hult, 2007; Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2008; Li et al., 2008; Gligol and Holcomb, 2012; Vanpoucke, Vereeckbe and Boyer, 2015).

4.4.3 Challenges, new results and related implications manifest

Challenges are posed by contradictions within activities, projects, initiatives and the companies, and between these. These challenges impact practices and processes in strategy execution (Okumus, 2003).

The partnering relationship exploration examined in the empirical study of this research revealed that environmental forces now are even more dynamic and influence expected behaviour and performance levels in partnering relationships. These allow change and experience (Weick et al., 2005) but also present significant challenges to the meeting of goals and attainment of relationship. The partnering relationship, as a business relationship linked to the multicultural collaborators, assists joint ventures to enhance efficiency, exploit competencies, expand markets, and explore some new ideas while improving partnering relationship performance. However, to allow manufacturers and suppliers to become more dynamic and enhance competitiveness requires higher levels of exploration and learning (Scarborough et al, 2004). In addition to this, analysis of the empirical data reveals that manufacturers are challenged in dynamic relationships to better combine dimensions of strategic orientation to best inform selection and management of partnering relationships.

4.5 Summary

This chapter elaborated and more critically analysed the data, using a deductive approach to refine the conceptual framework. This thesis was vigilant in incorporating concepts and themes relevant to cases and based on logic and practicality, while noting differences, inconsistencies and contradictions. Figures and tables constructed principles of data analysis.

Although the effective multicultural partnering relationship has encountered a number of problems during the various processes of development, it has also recognised a number of important criteria and highlighted newly identified criteria leading to significant refinement of the multicultural SCPR concept, giving the methodology greater practical orientation. These case studies have also validated the previous argument surrounding the aggregate load methodology; in other words, the claim that managers favour simplicity and have a limited amount of time available for multicultural business and business relationships activities. Simplicity is also a useful means of promoting repeat use of SCPR. The resulting methodology provides an excellent platform from which to implement multicultural efficient SCPR in practice once a disciplined approach to providing data has been integrated into the culture of organisations.

A rigorous approach was taken to select the case studies companies (Session 3.5, p. 99 and Table 15, p. 104); the case studies have helped to provide a practical insight into the process of SCPR and contributed to the conceptual development of the multicultural collaborators' approach. One of the key criteria of any categories designed for use in practice is flexibility; this is particularly true when it is designed for the diverse multicultural business environment and highly customised automotive industry. It is also important that the data requirements of the concept do not exceed the data availability within the cases. These factors have been considered throughout the stages of conceptual refinement described in this thesis.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This thesis has bridged the gap between the theory of the supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) and the practice of the Chinese automotive industry. Section 6.2 is organised around the three research questions outlined in Chapter 1 and repeated in the relevant subsection for reference. Section 6.3 gives a clear summary of the contributions on methodology, theory and practice. Section 6.4 then describes limitations and suggests future research directions.

5.2 Conclusion the research questions

The thesis has examined and extended the major concerns formulated in research gaps in the selected and relevant literature, and provided sources for the development of the main research questions. The study had clearly stated research questions: (1) How can multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship performance be measured? (2) How effectively are multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationship? (3) How can the criteria on which multicultural supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined?

A summary of the research questions and the rationale for posing them is provided in Table 1 (p.11). The conceptual framework (Figure 4, p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) incorporates effective SCPR processes and practices within the multicultural business environment and the conceptualisation of relationship performance measurement provides a viable framework for ongoing research and practice. This thesis and the empirical data collection undertaken while conducting the research concentrated on a strategy process perspective in addressing linkages inherent in multicultural cooperation through partnering relationship management, utilising measurement and refining criteria while examining processes of renewal and business advantages (Table 26).

5.2.1 How can multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) performance be measured?

In examining the first question, this research found that an effective and intense collaboration between international joint venture manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers is required. As a means of enhancing the management of partnering relationship activities, the continuity of the relationship programme is an important aspect in understanding how the concept of the partnering relationship process evolved. The empirical data emphasise the prominent role that partnering relationship activities have in this aspect, and allows the definition of an efficient and sustainable SCPR within a multicultural context. This research refined partnering relationship theories in the aspect of multicultural SCPRs. Improvement of current theories and this research's conclusions and suggestions is possible through stating the ramifications of this study's findings in the broader context. Overall, this study makes important contributions to both theory and practice and provides evidence for how the background cultural characteristics of the collaborating organisations influence decision making.

Four types of multicultural SCPRs were selected for this study; European-Chinese joint venture manufacturer and their suppliers, a second European-Chinese joint venture manufacturer and their suppliers, a Japanese-Chinese joint venture manufacturer and their suppliers, and an American-Chinese joint venture manufacturer and their suppliers (these SCPRs are illustrated Figure 5 Five partnering relationship cross-case samples, p.100). All the measurements are followed to the process of the partnering relationship, which is refined into the refinement conceptual framework (Figure 7, p.192).

Effective multicultural SCPR was measured from the perspective of SCPR performance, which included levels of satisfaction reported and degree of collaboration. Both manufacturers and suppliers need to recognise common goals and cultural differences. Manufacturers should adjust the strategy initiatives accordingly; suppliers should positively follow up manufacturers' strategies. Inherent cultural aspects concerning communication and attitude necessitate a different approach when selecting suppliers, and more effort needs to be expended on monitoring supplier strength and quality and intellectual property assurance. Manufacturers and suppliers should jointly develop the relationship, creating interdependence and building respect for each other, while they communicate and cooperate in a variety of ways. If this process fails to deliver success, termination of SCPR may follow. Performance can be measured through cost-saving, mutual co-operation and assistance in problem-solving efforts.

Analysis of cross-cultural characteristics assures alignment of the process of SCPR criteria. Cross-cultural elements, in turn, influence the measurement of the relationship. As evidenced by this

research, this alignment is crucial to building essential measurement criteria, such as equal involvement in strategic orientation, avoiding potential culture clashes and compromising, but insisting on the baseline requirements to be achieved as agreed. The challenge of the Chinese auto market and profit margins achieved also affect SCPR performance. Veloso and Kumar (2002) addressed issues of the comparisons with Japan, Korea and the globalisation of the automotive industry. Since Western automotive manufacturers and suppliers in the Asian market, which broken Japanese or Korean automotive traditional parochialism of the Asian supply chain systems. "As OEMs integrate operations, bidding of SCPR is becoming open to suppliers outside the Japanese or the Korean"(p.26). In practice, regarding SCPR performance measurement, the European-Chinese JV had the European partner as the stronger partner; JC preferred consultation and UC saw addressing management suppliers regarding operational improvement with communication as important, with a minimal role for understanding Chinese culture. They were more likely to work closely with regulators to find regulatory solutions in a spirit of consultative decision-making, rather than confrontation. This does not mean that EA was eager to be regulated while UC was not. It is in this context that stronger regulations in EA have largely been set in consultation with industry, or driven by the industry itself. EB stressed the importance of cultural conflict and the market.

5.2.2 How effectively are multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationships?

At the heart of this thesis is the research aim which seeks to explore and establish a framework of performance measurement indicators as to how effectively multicultural collaborators or networks are functioning in business-to-business partnering relationship systems in Chinese Automotive groupings. According to the findings from the empirical data, this thesis has extended knowledge by exploring these theoretical frames of varying degrees of partnering relationship across a number of different groups which have different geographical antecedents (Figure 7).

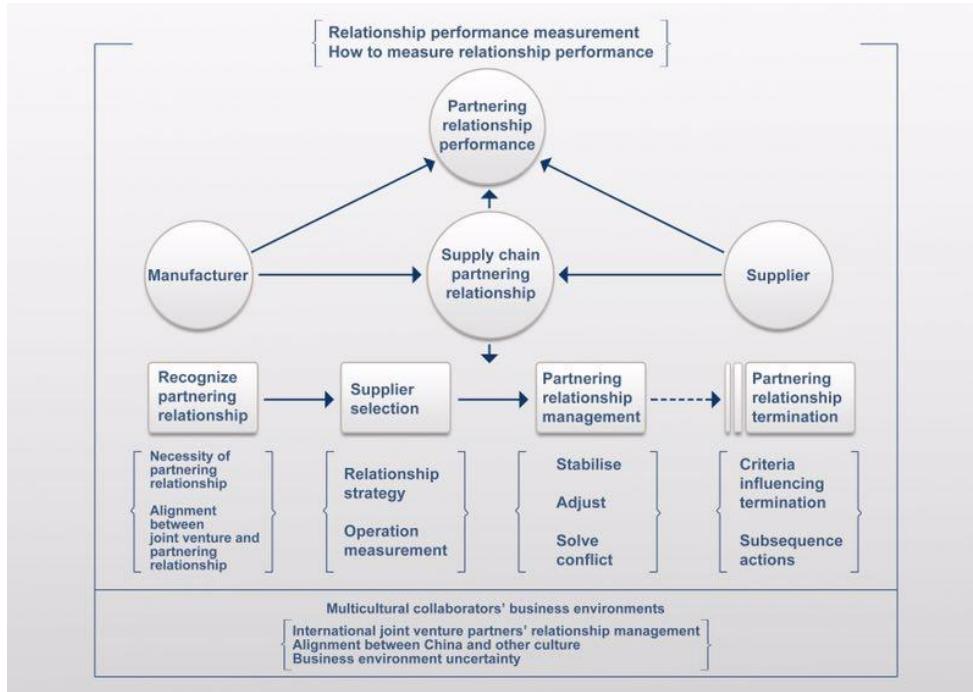


Figure 7 Conceptual framework refinement

The process of multicultural SCPR measurement has been confirmed, as seen by joint venture manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers:

Recognised partnering relationship's necessity and benefits, alignment between joint venture relationships and supply chain partnering relationship help this research to convert the partnering relationship theories into practice.

Supplier selection from the high level of relationship strategy and detail criteria of operation measurement criteria, help manufacturers to evaluate and select supplier to fit the effectiveness of the supply chain partnering relationship.

Partnering relationship management based on stabilising, adjusting the relationship dynamics and solving conflicts in order to best manage the relationship. In practice, in terms of managing the partnering relationship, the European-Chinese joint venture manufacturer has the European partner as the stronger partner; the Japan-Chinese joint venture manufacturer prefers consultation, and the America-Chinese joint venture manufacturer follows the contract terms to create management partnering relationship effectiveness.

Partnering relationship is not easy to *terminate* unless serious conflicts or disagreements occur. In practice, the termination should be illustrated in the diagram as a dotted line.

Partnering relationship performance demonstrates an effective relationship process. The effective can be illustrated by the degree of collaboration and satisfaction reported by both manufacturers and suppliers.

The refined conceptual framework shows how the partnering relationship components, categories under components, refined criteria and interactions are linked (Figure 7 and Table 29), thereby ascertaining associated impacts and implications of multicultural SCPR phenomena. The partnering relationship measurement assesses the functioning of the partnering relationship to provide simple but rigorous and repeatable tools which may be used to improve the effectiveness and effective of the partnering relationship process (Bititci, Carrie and McDevitt, 1997).

5.2.3 How can the criteria on which multicultural supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined?

This was addressed by exploring and constructing a complete framework for the process of supply chain partnering relationship in a multicultural collaborators' context. As such, the framework helps illuminate the importance of national culture, development and general differences in viewpoints of partnering relationship application between manufacturers and suppliers. From the deductive research, the literature was referred to define a theoretical framework of multicultural SCPR performance measurement and identify the criteria of the process of the multicultural partnering relationship (see Table 11, p.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

This thesis focused on partnering relationship processes and internal elements, but was flexible in considering content and context including structure and culture to facilitate the explanation of characteristics, behaviour, activities, practices and outcomes. The context for the empirical study was the Chinese automotive industry; however, although the researcher faced accessibility and other limiting constraints, the use of the automotive industry supported national and cultural elements being held constant to enhance data reliability.

From the deductive research, the empirical data allowed the refinement of the measurement process of the framework. The study looked at four manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers, which included recognising partnering relationship, supplier selection, partnering relationship management, partnering relationship termination, and partnering relationship performance. The measurement is basing on multicultural business environments compared to the illustrative criteria from the literature review which helped shape the conceptual framework. This was then refined using empirical data, and the findings suggest how the framework can be used in practice

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(Table 26). There are three processes involved in the redefining of the relevant criteria: first, manufacturers and suppliers confirm the key criteria under the framework components' categories; second, if the empirical data defined a criterion that is not summarised within the framework, there will be a new finding recorded under the category, and third, delete the criteria which are not confirmed by both manufacture and supplier. The empirical data reported and addressed the defined criteria from literature review. However, there are novel findings for this research.

Table 26 Conceptual framework refinement (summarized from data analysis)

29.1 Framework component	29.2 Categories	29.3 Key Criteria	29.4 Empirical data refinement							
			EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
<i>Recognise the partnering relationship</i>	Necessity of partnering relationship	Overall car performance			◆	◆			◆	◆
		Advantages of manufacturers								◆
		Better quality	◆		◆					
		Lower costs				◆				
		<u>Reliable delivery</u>								
		Technology development trajectory								◆
		<u>Extent of goodwill and trust</u>								
		Potential benefits	◆							
		Target costing				◆				
		Information sharing				◆				
		Strategic benefits					◆			
		Synergistic outcome			◆	◆				◆
		Reduce duplication of efforts			◆				◆	◆
		<u>Fulfil customer needs</u>								
		Capitalise quickly on market opportunities	◆	◆		◆				
		<u>Complementary resources</u>								
		Mutual support and interdependence	◆		◆	◆	◆			◆
		Production demand*	◆	◆						
		Key Criteria	EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4

		Key Criteria	EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
Alignment between joint venture relationship and supply chain partnering relationship		Joint ventures from a new separate subsidiary, jointly owned by the partners	♦			♦				
		Partnering relationship purposive agreements between independent companies	♦	♦		♦				
		Partnering involves the parties working together in an environment which based on projects	♦			♦				
		Clear responsibilities and rights*	♦		♦					
		Mutual effect with each other*	♦	♦	♦	♦				
		Optimise both relationships*				♦				
Supplier selections	Relationship strategy	Strategy orientation	♦	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦	
		Management style	♦	♦				♦	♦	
		Interdependence				♦				
		Mutual organisational characteristics				♦				
		Common goals	♦	♦		♦				
	Operation measurement criteria	Commitment	♦		♦	♦				
		Complementarity								
		Trust				♦				
		Communication behaviour				♦			♦	
		Information sharing	♦		♦		♦		♦	
		Participation decision	♦							
		Quality	♦		♦	♦			♦	
		Key Criteria	EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4

		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
		Production performance		♦		♦					
		Delivery		♦							
		Cost				♦			♦	♦	♦
		Supplier strength		♦	♦		♦				♦
		Attitude*			♦		♦				♦
		Compromise*		♦			♦				
		High loyalty*				♦					
		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
<i>Partnering relationship management</i>	Stabilise	Independence									♦
		Trust								♦	
		Information sharing				♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
		Tight interaction		♦		♦					
		Mutual goodwill		♦							
		Contract incentives		♦	♦		♦	♦			
		Coordination		♦	♦		♦	♦			
		Jointly development*		♦			♦	♦		♦	♦
		Responsibility distribution*					♦				
		Government support*							♦	♦	
		Risk management*									♦
		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
	Adjust	Target		♦		♦	♦				

		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
		Culture				♦				♦	
		Divergent interests			♦	♦			♦	♦	
		Business environment					♦		♦		
		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
		Multi departments involvement*		♦						♦	
		Interdependent*		♦							
		Achieve mutual benefit and mutual compensation of resource*					♦				
		Respect each other*						♦		♦	
Solve conflict		Satisfied manufacturers' demand*		♦	♦						
		Communication		♦	♦	♦	♦				
		Cooperation		♦			♦				♦
		Joint solve and persuasion		♦	♦	♦					
		Protect manufacturers' benefits*		♦		♦	♦				
		Compromise but insist on baseline*		♦	♦		♦	♦			
<i>Partnering relationship termination</i>	Criteria influencing termination	Fairness		♦			♦				
		Satisfaction			♦	♦	♦				
		Commitment									♦
		Trust		♦					♦		♦
		Switching cost			♦		♦				
		Relationship duration			♦	♦	♦				♦
		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4

		Key Criteria	EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
			◆	◆	◆					
		Terminating cost	◆	◆	◆					
		Serious conflicts*	◆				◆			
Subsequent actions		Renewal of vows for a different phase of life			◆					
		Amicable divorce-going separate ways but staying friends	◆		◆					
		High conflict divorce-mutual recriminations and costly court processes			◆		◆			
<i>Partnering relationship performance</i>	Performance measurement	Commitment			◆					
		Satisfaction	◆	◆	◆	◆				◆
		Prospective relationship and organisational capabilities			◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
		Manufacturing productivity control			◆		◆	◆	◆	
		The degree of collaboration	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	
		Add brand value*	◆		◆					
	How to measure relationship performance	Level and degree of information sharing								
		Buyer-vendor cost saving initiatives	◆		◆		◆	◆	◆	
		Extent of mutual co-operation leading to improved quality				◆				◆
		The entity and stage at which suppliers are involved	◆							
		Extent of mutual assistance in problem solving efforts	◆		◆		◆	◆		
		Understanding the rules and business environment systems*				◆				
<i>Multicultural collaborators' business environments</i>	IJs partners' relationship management	Manufacturer's ability*								◆
		Management control issues	◆	◆		◆				
		Key Criteria	EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4

		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
		Parent parties cooperation		♦	♦		♦				
		The degree of association		♦	♦						
		Political and legal risks		♦		♦					
		Reverse knowledge flows			♦	♦	♦				
		Supplier management		♦	♦	♦					
		Positioning social skills and an understanding of Chinese cultural knowledge			♦		♦				
		Mutual respect and identify common values*				♦					
Chinese and other nationality cultures alignment		National culture underpins the culture of the organisation and provides the basis for the norms of organisational behaviour		♦		♦	♦				
		Countries and nationalities cultures make experience clashes			♦				♦		
		Culture gap lead to very different organisational practices, managerial decisions and business ethics		♦	♦				♦		
		People are independent and their choice of behaviour has the potential to erase the effects of national culture		♦	♦		♦		♦		
Business environment uncertainty		Law and regulations governing actions		♦			♦				
		Bureaucratic obstacles resulting from the various authorities are not unusual and complicated									
		Cross culture employees		♦			♦				♦
		Government policy support*		♦		♦	♦		♦		
		Market*			♦		♦	♦	♦		♦
		Challenge of profit margins*						♦	♦	♦	
		Key Criteria		EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4

		Resources limitation and competition*						♦		♦
		Key Criteria	EA	EB	JC	UC	S1	S2	S3	S4
Note: ♦, what is selected in empirical research; *, what is new finding in empirical research; Note: -, what is not selected in empirical research										

5.3 Summary of contributions

It is important to identify both contributions and implications from the completion of this thesis and to highlight them from methodological, theoretical and practical or managerial aspects. The research questions guide this; they have been suitably enlightened by the research and study, to also support the resulting conclusions. Following section 1.4.1 (Table 1, p.11) and section 2.5 (Table 10, p.62), the multicultural effective SCPR process and practice has been fully explored in the field studies, and the expected contribution has been achieved in this study.

Bridging the gap between theory and practice involves a compromise that incorporates fostering both theoretical change and change in practice, and provides evidence of how the background cultural characteristics of collaborating organisations influence decision-making. This research has explored and refined the dynamic nature of SCPR in the Chinese automotive industry. Through the multicultural business environment, both manufacturers and suppliers seeking SCPR could first use the framework and refine criteria internally to assess potential partners for proposed SCPR. On the other hand, if SCPR is already in existence, both manufacturers and suppliers could jointly evaluate the framework and criteria, and reach agreement on the effective and efficient SCPR they want. The dynamic nature could help Chinese automotive groupings define long-term associations, advanced mutual planning and problem-solving processes. Contextualising is necessary regarding multicultural SCPR performance measurement, as seen by both manufacturers and suppliers, particularly regarding SCPR input and where SCPR performance measurement is applied.

5.3.1 Examination of partnering relationship theory in new business relationships in China--Implication for the methodology

This research began with a largely theoretical concept that was effective in the supply chain partnering relationship. The question revolved around how to explore the practice of ensuring an effective multicultural SCPR. The key contributions of the research are defining the process of the SCPR in the different multicultural business environments; and the

refinement of the multicultural effective SCPR conceptual framework. Use was made of the qualitative, deductive case studies methodology, in line with practice. Throughout the framework refinement process, it was important to examine the partnering relationship in the multicultural business environment and explore the criteria of effectiveness and effective of the partnering relationship. The approach embodied in the refined framework now makes possible a more realistic exploration of the practice of SCPRs in the Chinese automotive industry.

The theoretical development and refinement process encapsulated criteria of deductive research. Deductive research led to refinements to key criteria underpinning the effective multicultural SCPR approach, such as the following (for further details, see Chapter 3):

- The deductive approach provides significant insight into and comprehension of the SCPR between manufacturers and suppliers; in terms of multicultural organisations and business environments.
- Phenomenological parameters relating to social events and behaviours, into which cultural considerations are categorised, offers social insight into the data, providing an opportunity for a deeper level of study, which is hugely beneficial to the field.
- Refinements of the concept, following the data collection and analysis of the perceptions of managers in the IJVs with experience of current practice allowed the exploration of key criteria, giving the concept a more practical focus.
- Refinements that reduce the data requirements and parameter setting reduced the burden of the qualitative approach, providing a concept of greater relevance to the real-life effectiveness of the partnering relationship and to the day-to-day activities of the managers concerned.
- The adaptation of the concept to accommodate theoretical exploration of measurement issues, which is otherwise difficult to satisfy in practice in functioning multicultural relationships, and sustainable performance within the conceptual framework and relationship.
- A multiple partnering relationship option, allowing management to assess the cumulative impact of multicultural managers before making the final decision.
- It facilitates the making of comparable observations, analysis and interpretations if the study is replicated in different circumstances and data can be scrutinised for any discrepancies in evidence, and compared with literature or theory. Complemented with the theoretical lens applied in the analysis and discussion of results, it helped keep the data focused and bounded. The research questions and interpretations

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have been carefully considered to allow for a reduction in any inherent bias, and widest possible dissemination. Mindful of the need to enhance objectivity, validity and reliability of data, framework and results, the researcher was diligent in the selection process for companies and initiatives, analysing stakeholders and risks, and utilising managers from diverse departments in the sample cases.

The deductive phase of the research was conducted through cross-case study, leading to further significant theoretical development of the qualitative approach. The key refinements resulting from this stage are as follows (for further details, see Chapter 4):

- Refinements to incorporate data of the effectiveness of the SCPR process between manufacturers and their tier-one suppliers. This is considered a particular refinement as many of the theoretical approaches to supply chain partnering relationship in the literature.
- Elaboration and refinement of the conceptual framework and, more critically, examined the process of the multicultural effective partnering relationship, both supporting and extending the previous discussions. An integrated approach was taken in these refinements as the management, influences and outcomes in the multicultural effective of the SCPR can define key criteria between manufacturers and suppliers.
- In-depth analysis of the data revealed a pattern (Eisenhardt, 1989). When the 5 partnering relationships of EA-S4, EB-S2, JC-S2, UC-S1, UC-S3 were examined, checks were made for a match with the theoretical concept and, in analysing the data, it was noted how data for one case match or vary from those of other cases. After completion of all case write-ups, comparison of data for all partnering relationships at different companies is supported. This is, in effect, evidence resulting from examination, triangulation and replication, enabling corroborating or refuting of literature, and strengthening of confidence in findings. Innovative procedures and the unique qualities of the data are considered when comparing the data sets (Guest et al., 2012). Moreover, further cross-case analysis undertaken with qualitative methods (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994), linking positive and negative elements – as well as differing views – enhances analysis while minimising inconsistencies. However, the contradictions created from different sets of data may not be resolved (Payne, 1997), despite arguments by theorists that the researcher's creativity and critical thinking can be expanded by contradictory data.

- According to Eisenhardt (1989, p.540), 'data analysis frequently overlaps with data collection', so in conducting further analysis and interpretation, elements are matched to the research question and conceptual framework, supporting the research aim. This also allows greater focus on partnering relationship use and the support of relationship performance to better contribute to new and/or improved capabilities. Further explanation and comparison make the examination of similarities and variations easier so that theory and logic can be justifiably reinforced or refuted – supported by refinement of the conceptual framework where necessary. Conducting analysis across the partnering relationship process, linking major components, and considering interactions, this comparative section is, therefore, expected to support further investigation, modification and implications, best contributing to an exploration of performance measurement and areas for improvement. Research gaps show that there are different perspectives surrounding partnering relationship operations and relationship measurement roles. Data analysis associated with interpretation and discussion of outcomes thus facilitating conclusion and recommendations that results in a strong conceptual foundation and extends theory and the framework to resolve the conflicts revealed from the findings.
- Incorporating capabilities and activities across the cases, this study focused firstly on the environment, orientation and impacts on partnering relationship performance measurement. This includes complexities such as culture, structure and dependencies, linked to benefits and challenges in partnering relationship measurement. Secondly, it dealt with managerial and partnering relationship criteria incorporating roles, connections, configurations, capabilities, and outcomes. Thirdly, it assessed interactions of elements surrounding major components' execution, influences, effectiveness and outcomes. These were linked to the research questions and discussed within the theoretical lens; and all lead to both theory confirmation and upgrade by addressing the gaps in the literature and making manifest their implications.

Whilst these refinements are the results of research based on the qualitative, deductive approach, it is suggested that these criteria are of relevance to the multicultural concept in general. The case study experience suggests that multicultural managers within the functioning business-to-business relationships who are performing multiple tasks have limited time available to focus on the SCPR, and favour simplicity over more complex

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concepts. Whilst these conclusions relate to 5 partnering relationships (including four manufacturers and four suppliers) at present, it is felt that they are likely to be of general relevance and hence important to retain within the refined qualitative, deductive methodology. For reasons outlined in Chapter 3, it is sometimes appropriate to use another variant of the multicultural effective supply chain partnering relationship.

Table 27 Conclusion of the research

27.1	27.2	27.3
Feature of the Research	Extending the Boundary of Knowledge	Thesis Navigation
Identifying criteria to be incorporated into effectiveness SCPR measurement	<p>Reviewing and determining the applicability of the efficient SCPR approaches presented in the literature such as the concept of supply chain partnering relationship, supplier selection, partnering relationship management, partnering relationship termination and performance measurement. Forming a key motivation for undertaking in multicultural collaborators' partnering relationships.</p> <p>The identification of key characteristics of multicultural joint venture concepts, thereby verifying that multicultural supply chain partnering relationship approach to joint venture contains the required features.</p>	Chapter 2 Chapter 2 (see Section 2.7)
Refining the multicultural supply chain partnering relationship approach	<p>Refinements to the multicultural SCPR concept, including allowing the construction of the conceptual framework due to different cooperation behaviours between and characteristics of partners, and provide a base that supports the research method employed in each stage of the study. Explored the connotations and perspectives of the SCPR.</p> <p>Deductive refinements to the multicultural supply chain partnering relationship concept from multi-case studies' accounts, including accommodating limited data availability and measuring for partnering relationships and functioning business to business relationships.</p>	Chapter 2 (see Section 2.7) Chapter 4 (see Section 4.2 and Section 4.3)
Identifying and addressing partnering relationship criteria within multicultural business environment	<p>The effective of the SCPR and functioning applicable to the multicultural joint venture business environment.</p> <p>A refinement of the detailed multicultural SCPR conceptual framework, working through the results to show where changes in the framework were justified by empirical data. Selecting (or not selecting) and addressing existing criteria relating to cases' business environment. Identifying new criteria from empirical data in each</p>	Chapter 4 (see section 4.2) and Chapter 5 (see Table 26)

stage of the conceptual framework within the different cultural business environments. Insights into the effects of multicultural SCPR behaviour and performance. Underpinning national culture and effectiveness against multicultural business objectives.

5.3.2 Explore and establish a framework for measurement of performance in multicultural collaborative SCPR activities and identify new research agendas--Implication for theories

The thesis summarises the SCPR and performance measurement literature and identifies a number of important research gaps to be addressed in this field. Research is synthesised from different multicultural collaborators' business environments, supply chain partnering relationships and performance measurements to develop a comprehensive view of partnering sourcing theories. Theories help us make sense of the world around us. They can serve a function beyond description, in that they allow us to predict the nature of relationships between phenomena. Because of their applicability and complementarity for the OM field (Walker et al., 2015), a number of theories from the organisational sciences have been utilised in the research (Ketchen and Hult, 2011). The study of partnering has become a rich tapestry of theoretical and conceptual foundations, drawing on theories from a range of disciplines such as economics, business strategy, organisation theory and general management (Melnyk and Handfield, 1998; Schroeder, 2007). Among these are the resource-based theory, transaction cost economic theory, dynamic capabilities, knowledge-based view, systems theory, resource dependence theory, organisational learning, and social network theory, among others (Choi and Wacker, 2011; Hitt, 2011).

This study expressed in the form of the effective multicultural partnering relationship 'knowledge'. This thesis defines the criteria of the process of multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship and the approach that is taken in the performance. Identified and addressed partnering relationship criteria within the multicultural business environment. This thesis identified of key characteristics of multicultural joint venture concepts, thereby verifying that multicultural supply chain partnering relationship approach to joint venture contains the required features. Refined to the multicultural SCPR concept, including allowing the construction of the conceptual framework due to different cooperation behaviours between and characteristics of partners, and provide a base that supports the research method employed in each stage of the study. Explored the connotations and perspectives of the SCPR. Refined to the multicultural SCPR concept, including allowing the construction of the conceptual framework due to different cooperation behaviours between and characteristics of partners, and provide a base that supports the research method employed in each stage of the study. Explored the connotations and perspectives of the SCPR. The effective of the SCPR and functioning applicable to the multicultural joint venture business environment. A refinement of the detailed multicultural SCPR conceptual framework, working through the results to show where changes in the framework were justified by empirical data. Selecting (or not selecting) and addressing

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existing criteria relating to cases' business environment. Identifying new criteria from empirical data in each stage of the conceptual framework within the different cultural business environments. Insights into the effects of multicultural SCPR behaviour and performance. Underpinning national culture and effectiveness against multicultural business objectives.

One of the key factors in bridging the gap between the literature on the SCPR in theory and the very limited case study literature is the whole lifecycle of the SCPR. The conceptual framework examines how multicultural manufacturers and their suppliers measure the SCPR and partnering relationship performance in the automotive industry. The measurement and effectiveness of SCPR can be considered to be the point at which theory meets practice; however, the literature has so far failed to provide sufficient empirical evidence to support this process. By providing an in-depth case study account in which partnering relationship criteria of particular relevance in multicultural business environment are both identified and addressed, the research provides an original and much needed contribution to knowledge. The conclusion of this research is summarised in Table 27.

Determining the applicability of multicultural SCPR approaches is a complex process. The number of alternative concepts is increasing, and multicultural businesses are inclined to suggest that any such approach is universally appropriate. The recommendation for a universal approach is driven by a lack of multicultural collaborators on the part of the automotive industry, which hopes to benefit from a particularly effective SCPR and thus gain wide applicability. However, aiming for such wide applicability means it is inevitable that the automotive industry's multicultural collaborators' business to business relationships are not adequately met given that business environments are diverse in terms of supplier selection, partnering relationship management, partnering relationship performance, confusing the priority of relationships, and so on. The performance of SCPR is often an ill-informed strategy based on SCPR rather than on the selection of features designed for a specific business. It is noted that the thesis summarises both the criteria discussed above and the contributions to knowledge that arise from the study of the literature. From the literature review of the SCPR and performance measurement literature and identifies a number of important research gaps to be addressed in this field. Research is synthesised from different multicultural collaborators' business environments, supply chain partnering relationships and performance measurements to develop a comprehensive view of partnering sourcing theories. In addition, this study defines the criteria of the process of multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship and the approach that is taken in the performance. It identified and addressed partnering relationship criteria within the multicultural business environment.

During the case study research, a number of criteria have been identified which contribute towards the complexity of the effective multicultural partnering relationship. Reviewing and determining the applicability of the efficient SCPR approaches presented in the literature such as the concept of supply chain partnering relationship, supplier selection, partnering relationship management, partnering relationship termination and performance measurement, this was set in the context of multicultural collaborators' partnering relationships. The criteria identified and addressed included the following (for further details, see Table 26):

- *Recognise the supply chain partnering relationship.* No matter what the background of the manufacturer is, deciding to establish a partnering relationship is the necessity. Mutually supporting each other, expanding the market and reducing cost are good for the product competitiveness of the buyer. At the same time, it was found that IJV horizontal interactions between the IJV partners and manufacturer and supplier, as vertical interactions, affect each other and the rights and obligations of the IJVs need to be clearly understood.
- *Supplier selection.* Supplier selection needs to match with the relationship strategy and operations measurement. The interviewees frequently pointed out that supplier evaluation, selection and partnering relationship operation management directly hinges on a set of critical supplier criteria. Process management, performance management, communication/autonomous problem solving, planning, engineering/innovation and learning capability were found to drive the SCPR in the automotive industry.
- *Partnering relationship management.* Considering the task of the sourcing department of the corresponding manufacturers to manage partnering relationships in China, this research found that the partnering relationship as an organisational interface becomes evident. Antecedent criteria that lead to better evaluation criteria of suppliers, and in turn to a better SCPR, have been identified. These criteria are joint development, information sharing, coordination, communication, and compromise but with an insistence on baseline criteria. Manufacturers have the ability to create relational capital in the SCPR in terms of adjusting, stabilising, and conflict solving.
- *Partnering relationship termination.* Relationship duration and serious conflicts affect whether the partnering relationship needs to be terminated.
- *Partnering relationship performance.* The deductive empirical data follow a framework that mainly concerns the 'what to measure' question, such as the criteria of satisfaction and the degree of collaboration. Further, the measures have been developed in order that the multicultural SCPR data can be efficiently utilised. This may vary according to the partnering relationship process and its objectives. Conversely, the multicultural business

environment in practice influences 'how to measure' the partnering relationship, which focuses on the way of mutual cooperation, cost-saving initiatives, qualitative and ability.

- *Multicultural business environment.* The extent to which the SCPR is successful has been shown to be strongly influenced by national culture, joint ventures' relationships, government policy support, market and other business environment uncertainties, and the extent to which these can be manipulated within the partnering relationship. By exploring these criteria in detail, the thesis provides a further original contribution to knowledge. The research enabled a number of important criteria to be identified and developed a gradual approach to implementing the concept. This is considered to be of particular significance when cultural and other uncertain business criteria are in need of a great deal of change.

This thesis identified key characteristics of multicultural joint venture concepts, thereby verifying that multicultural supply chain partnering relationship approach to joint venture contains the required features. It has refined the multicultural SCPR concept, including allowing the construction of the conceptual framework to recognise different cooperation behaviours between and characteristics of partners, and provide a base that supports the research method employed in each stage of the study. It explored the connotations and perspectives of the SCPR in the research setting.. The thesis has demonstrated the effectiveness of the SCPR and its functioning is applicable to the multicultural joint venture business environment. A refinement of the detailed multicultural SCPR conceptual framework was performed by working through the results to show where changes in the framework were justified by empirical data. This was done by selecting (or not selecting) and addressing existing criteria relating to the cases' business environment. New criteria were identified from empirical data in each stage of the conceptual framework within the different cultural business environments. Insights were obtained about the effects of multicultural SCPR behaviour and performance which were underpinned by national culture and these impacted effectiveness against multicultural business objectives.

5.3.3 Evaluation in current and possible future practice in managing multicultural collaborators' business, and offering guidance for practitioner behaviour-- Implications for practice

This research explored and refined the dynamic nature of SCPRs in the Chinese automotive industry. Through the multicultural business environment, international JVs seeking a partnering relationship could first use the framework and refined criteria internally to assess the potential partner of the proposed partnering relationship. On the other side, if a SCPR is already in

existence, both manufacturers and suppliers could jointly evaluate the framework and criteria, and reach agreement on the type of effective and efficient partnering relationship they want. The dynamic nature could help Chinese automotive groupings define long-term associations, advanced mutual planning, and problem-solving processes.

This research contributes from theory to practice by providing a framework incorporating the measurement and effectiveness of the SCPR in international joint venture groupings in the Chinese automotive sector. This is important for contemporary manufacturing companies to have greater chances to gain or increase advantages in international multicultural business environments.

This research has explored partnering relationship operations and measurement in multicultural business environments formed by organisations from different nationality backgrounds. This research created a set of partnering relationship performance measurement indicators to establish the links between behaviours and effectiveness against business objectives. The refined framework resulting from the research enables cross-cultural managers to decide on priorities to focus on with their different partners.

5.4 Limitations

This section considers limiting factors to the research, study and outcomes. The initial aim was to gain empirical results regarding the multicultural collaborators' SCPR in practice. A qualitative case study approach was applied as the research methodology for this study. Although this approach was deemed suitable due to the low maturity level of the research in this field, its main drawback is an inability to make a statistical generalisation to a larger population. However, this opens up a window of opportunity for future research in order to validate the proposed relationships and yield more statistically significant results. The specific context of the Chinese automotive industry might limit the generalisation of the conceptual framework for other geographical areas or industries. However, this study is a critical step in developing these industry sectors due to the huge impact that relationships in this region of the globe will have on the rest of the global economy. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to develop more industry-specific approaches in this research field, so that researchers can identify similarities and discrepancies, which might be applicable in a wider industrial or geographical context.

Guided by the research questions, the researcher identified both similar and contrasting partnering relationships, and the chosen managers, involved with partnering relationship

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operation and projects, were the means of indirectly observing this unit of analysis. Although the intention was to conduct interview with the key players in the field, cultural and other elements impacted, and access to the managers was limited. However, the achieved 34 respondents, who were purposively chosen and included four to five from each company, helped to limit bias, while still allowing for the improvement of explanations to enhance theoretical insights. Some managers were more qualified, experienced and involved in an implementation of initiatives, processes and practices than others but none of the initiatives reported on was fully completed during the research timeframe. Nevertheless, the researcher sought to incorporate managers from the companies' diverse areas and to study a contrasting range of six categories. This intense examination of a small number of instances (Thomas, 2004) makes the findings more precise, stable and valid, adding to robustness and generalizability of and confidence in the findings. Managers, initiatives and the companies' varying characteristics supported replication (Yin, 2003), validation and counteracting of potential bias, and the multiple methods and cross-case studies allowed the use of triangulation to help with this.

The researcher was constrained by limited access to companies and personnel, this being related also to the subject matter connected to sensitive strategy, and other impacts of culture and the economic pressures of a dynamic business environment. The researcher faced, in acute form, the problem of access to other companies, as many companies struggled to survive dynamic and recessionary environmental impacts, but was able to overcome this and make contact and obtain data within a viable time frame of approximately three years. The data collection process was particularly intense during the summers of 2014 and 2015.

There are other issues, some of the findings are not novel in that they are general supply chain partnering relationship findings that would apply anywhere, such as the power imbalance between manufacturers and suppliers in the sector, but could be developed further.

5.5 Future research directions

There are not easy steps to take, particularly with research grounded in and focusing on the supply chain partnering relationship as a unit of analysis, as is common in much of the operations management research reviewed in this work. The future study suggests researcher could go back to the sample cases to testify how importance of each criterion is being confirmed and new findings and the relevance with national culture, organisation behaviour in this research.

Specifically, studies can use combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods over time to better capture the variables and outcomes of interest. For example, in this review, the researcher found examples of some papers capturing the longitudinal aspect of their theory by using multiple methods, interviews and surveys, spaced over multiple years (e.g., Allred et al., 2011). Another study focused on the separate capturing of predictor and outcome variables using a combination of both survey and archival measures (Craighead et al., 2009). The future research could suggest using methods such as multiple criteria decision making (MCDM) methods to measure the partnering relationship performance based on the criteria the researchers have found important. While addressing the empirical issues raised in the literature review of this research was not an easy task, enriching the methodologies will allow operations management scholars to make greater contributions to the field and to the development and extension of partnering relationship theories. It is, however, hoped that this is not the final result from this cross-case study approach and that in time the research can be continued, thus leading to successful and sustained use of the SCPR concept.

It is also hoped that, through collaboration with other researchers actively involved in case-study applications of SCPR in other industries, more generalised conclusions regarding both the design of multicultural SCPR concept and of effective strategies can emerge through the triangulation of results.

Appendices

Appendix A

A.1 The history of the Chinese automotive industry

This research extends the analysis by reviewing the government policies that have underpinned the industry's development since 1950, China adopted planned economic means to establish the country's own automotive industry with the assistance of the Soviet Union before reform and opening up. This resulted in full introduction of the industry regulations. There are still retrospective features of the Automotive Industry Development in the 60 years since the establishment of China (Organised by the China Automotive Industry Yearbook, 2012; 2014; 2015; Holweg, Luo and Oliver, 2005).

China largely pursued a policy of economic isolation from the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 until shortly after the death of Mao in 1976. During this period the emphasis was on trucks—car production was very limited at only a few thousand cars a year for use by high-ranking officials. In the 1980s, a few international car makers began to make investments in China which, at the insistence of the Chinese government, took the form of international joint ventures with indigenous Chinese companies. Examples included Volkswagen, Jeep (Chrysler), Peugeot-Citroen and Suzuki. In 1994 the Chinese government published its seven-year 'Automotive industry Policy', the aim of which was to build up the auto industry in China as a 'pillar' industry. The policy had a number of aims, including the encouragement of car ownership, the establishment of a number of large-scale car-producers (in place of the 120 or so producers of trucks and cars that existed at the time), to improve the components industry, and the creation of an indigenous automotive product development capability. To be allowed to operate in China, international automotive manufacturers had to establish international joint ventures with Chinese manufacturers. China essentially made technology transfer to local firms a condition of access to its potentially huge market. International automotive manufacturers flooded into China during the latter part of the 1980s and into the 1990s: Peugeot-Citroen (PSA) teamed up with the Dongfeng Motor Corporation (now the second biggest automaker in China); General Motors (GM) did the same with the Shanghai Automotive Industry and First Automobile Works (both companies now among the top five Chinese car makers); Honda also tied up with the Dongfeng Motor Corporation. This soon led to a massive increase in production capacity and, by 2005, the Chinese domestic market had grown to become the second-largest vehicle market in the world after the USA, with 5.8m vehicles sold and by 2009 was the largest car market in the world, with sales of 13.5 million units (helped by the financial crash, which dragged sales in the USA down to

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around 10 million units). In 2014 approximately 23 million vehicles of all types were sold in China, the vast majority of which were also produced in China.

More than 170 technologies were introduced in the field of automotive, including 21 whole-vehicle technologies, 22 main assembly technologies such as engine, transmission, and vehicle body, among others, more than 10 technologies for consulting and improving old products, and more than 50 technologies such as computer application, research and development, manufacturing technology and so on.

A.2 The development stages of Chinese automotive industry

Key phases	Stages	General characteristics	Problems or trends
Automotive market	<p>The stage of state monopoly for purchase and marketing before 1978.</p> <p>The stage of the state-led automotive market from 1979 to 1993. The stage of the company-led automotive market from 1994 to 2004.</p> <p>The stage of the brand sales model from 2005 to the present day.</p>	<p>The market developing rapidly; diversity of classification; diversified market consumption; increasingly on-target network construction.</p>	<p>Poor circulation of second-hand cars; credit consumption development lagging behind; accessories market in urgent need of regulation.</p>
Import of automotive products	<p>From the 1950s to the 1970s, the absolute quantity of imports was not large but impacted the domestic market.</p> <p>From the 1980s to the 1990s, the import volume reached its peak and impacted the domestic market.</p> <p>From the end of the 1990s to the present day, the imported cars have become more and more upscale but</p>	<p>Tax policy playing a core role; exchange rates affect the long-term trends of the automotive import market; the substitution of domestic cars for the imported ones.</p> <p>Among the import countries of automotive products, Chinese imports from Japan, Germany and other traditional automotive industry</p>	<p>The influence of the circulation policy. Imports have limited influence on domestic cars.</p> <p>The imported and domestic cars complement each other with differentiated competition.</p> <p>Imported cars continue to occupy a part of the domestic market, and the absolute import volume is increasing.</p>

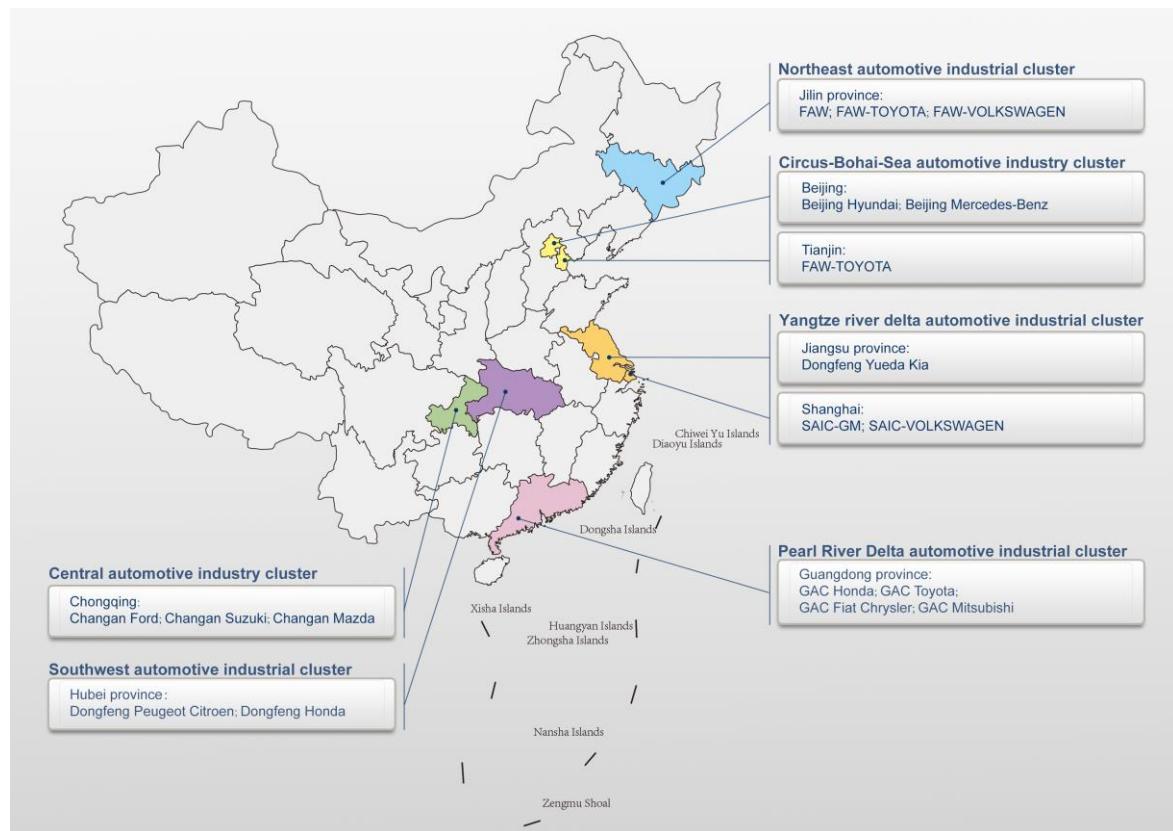
	the market share is relatively small. High levels of national protection.	powers are still relatively large.	The rate of growth of automotive imports is higher than that of exports, and the proportion of the automotive exports to the total amount of automotives is rather low.
Exports of automotive products	<p>The initial stage from 1958 to the early 1990s; stable growth stage after accession to the WTO in the early part of the 1990s; rapid growth stage from accession to the WTO to the present day.</p> <p>The Chinese automotive whole-vehicle export key market is relatively stable, and main targets are the emerging countries and regions, such as Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South America and other regions, which are still the traditional, most lucrative markets of China. At present, Chinese automotive export products still consist of just parts. Generally speaking, some supplier products produced by</p>	<p>Mainly involved in suppliers' exports; domestic and international capital leading to vehicle and suppliers' exports respectively; the main export trend is general trade with developed countries as the main target market; the structure of exported products is unbalanced.</p> <p>The Chinese automotive whole-vehicle export key market is relatively stable, and main targets are the emerging countries and regions, such as Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South America and other regions, which are still the traditional, most lucrative markets of China. At present, Chinese automotive export products still consist of just parts. Generally speaking, some supplier products produced by</p>	<p>Small export scale; multiple business entities; export disorder; more and more obvious cost pressure.</p> <p>Export products are mainly the labour- and material-intensive and high-energy consumption products, with low added value; the phenomena of Chinese export companies that price competition is low, after-sales service is not in place and so on, exist in the international countries; the rise of trade protectionism increases the anti-dumping complaints on Chinese automotive products; the rising costs of labour and energy within Chinese territory weaken the competitiveness of automotive export products.</p>

Appendix A

		China, particularly the driving system and the automotive electrical and electronic products, have occupied an important position in the global market of automotive products, and have entered the global procurement system of Multi-National Corporations.	
Joint venture and cooperation of auto industry	The initial stage of joint venture and cooperation from 1953-1978; the exploration stage of joint venture and cooperation from 1979 to 1994; the fast expansion stage of joint venture and cooperation during from 1994 to 2002; the all-round development stage of joint venture and cooperation from 2002 to the present day.	From individual phenomenon to common phenomenon; the cooperation scale continues to expand with increasingly rich ways of cooperation and gradually deepening content; the resource advantages of domestic and international companies constantly change.	How to deal with the interest relationship of joint ventures; how to share the advantageous resources of both parties; how to deal with products, marketing and cost control problems; how to deal with the issues of trust and communication.
Automotive products research and technology development	The growth period of starting and self-reliance entrepreneurship from 1950 to 1965; the period of adjusting the structure of automotive products and remodelling of old products from 1979 to 1997; the transition period of the automotive industry starting with great development; the great development period of the automotive industry	During the growth period: the products were single and the technology imitated from abroad; during the remodelling period: products were introduced and the technology was learnt, digested and adopted; during the transition period: the product structure was optimised and adjusted, and new products and technology	More products of joint venture companies come into the Chinese market more rapidly; the quality of the products is improved and the supporting ability strengthened; the rise of the self-owned brand; China is still lacking the technical foundation with weak core technology. This strategy fails to achieve the desired results

	<p>from 2002 to the present day.</p>	<p>continued to be absorbed with applicability reform; during the great development period: the field of saloon cars increased most rapidly with the most fierce competition and an increase in new products, focusing on car safety, energy conservation, and emission reduction performance.</p> <p>The prevalence of the joint venture model has greatly enhanced the technological dependence of China's automotive industry on multinational companies.</p>	<p>both in theory and time. The transferred market did not bring back core technology, and the phenomenon and trend of 'technology hollowness' even appears in the automotive industry.</p>
Policy of Chinese government	<p>The core policy of 'market for technology' gradually launched in the 1980s and 1990s has become the common development model of China's automotive manufacturing industry.</p>	<p>This strategy facilitates the joint venture mode for Chinese automotive companies, although the 'market for technology' strategy has helped participation of the Chinese automotive industry in international competition to undergo continuous refinement and derive a new market.</p> <p>The policy is establishing an integration model for serving international-invested multinational companies.</p>	

A.3 Six major domestic automotive industry cluster in China



Resource: Annual report on automotive industry in China (2014)

Six major domestic automotive industry clusters in China basically on a large scale, which are mainly manifested as follows: six basic scales are: Northeast automotive industrial cluster represented by Changchun, Circus-Bohai-Sea automotive industry cluster represented by Beijing and Tianjin; Yangtze river delta automotive industrial cluster represented by Shanghai, Pearl River Delta automotive industrial cluster represented by Guangdong, central automotive industry cluster represented by Wuhan, and Southwest automotive industrial cluster represented by Chongqing (Annual report on automotive industry in China, 2014). Main economic indicators show that six major industrial clusters cover major shares of car industry market in China. Total automotive industrial output, added value, main business revenue and total profit respectively account for 79.9%, 73.49%, 80.28% and 81.78% of total automotive industrial output, added value, main business revenue and a total profit of national automotive industry (Annual Report On Automotive Industry In China, 2015, p. 59) Currently, China automotive industry clusters are still characterised by a weaker foundation, lower development level and more scattered regional layout. These factors affect the further improvement of the competitiveness of the domestic

automotive industry to a certain extent. Automotive industry clusters are lacking in stronger synergistic effect.

Appendix B

B.1 Interviewee consent form sample

Study title:	The measurement and effectiveness of supply chain partnering relationships in international joint venture grouping in the Chinese Automotive sector
Researcher name:	Weixi Han
Ethics reference:	xxxx
<i>Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):</i>	
I have read and understood the information sheet of participant information sheet) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. <input type="checkbox"/>	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study. <input type="checkbox"/>	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected. <input type="checkbox"/>	
I am happy for the interview to be recorded. <input type="checkbox"/>	
I am happy to be contacted regarding other unspecified research projects. I therefore consent to the University retaining my personal details on a database, kept separately from the research data detailed above. The 'validity' of my consent is conditional upon the University complying with the Data Protection Act and I understand that I can request my details be removed from this database at any time. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Data Protection	
<i>I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.</i>	
Name of participant (print name).....(the person's name should be confirmed in the end of October).....	
Signature of participant.....	
Date.....	

B.2 Interview Debriefing sample

Origin source from Business school, University of Southampton

Study title:

The measurement and effectiveness of supply chain partnering relationships in international joint venture grouping in the Chinese Automotive sector

Researcher: Weixi Han

Ethic number: xxxx

Thank you so much for participating in this study. Your participation was very valuable. It has been acknowledged that you are very busy and very much appreciate the time you devoted to participating in this study. There was some information about the study that could not be discussed with you prior to the study, because doing so probably would have impacted your actions and thus skewed the study results. This form explains these things to you now.

What is the research about?

An efficient supply chain partnering relationship stresses the importance of direct, long-term associations, and advances mutual planning and problem-solving exercises. However, in IJV relationships with multicultural partners, the patterns of behaviour and performance expectations are inconsistent across the international partners. The IJV managers, therefore, have the problem of what priorities to focus on with their different partners. Underpinning this is the lack of a coherent set of performance indicators to establish the links between behaviours and effectiveness against business objectives.

This study seeks to explore and establish a framework of performance measurement indicators as to assess 'The measurement and effectiveness of supply chain partnering relationships in international joint venture groupings in the Chinese Automotive sector' by answering the following research questions:

- (1) How can multicultural collaborators' supply chain partnering relationship (SCPR) performance be measured?
- (2) How effectively are multicultural collaborators functioning in the observed supply chain partnering relationships?
- (3) How can criteria on which multicultural supply chain partnering relationships should focus be defined?

Use of active deception or misleading participants

I do not use active deception in my study. All participants will answer questions based on interview lists. Participants could withdraw at any time.

The interview guidelines will be based on the literature and the initial framework generated from the review and will cover areas:

- IJVs company backgrounds and the supply chain approach (including relationship of international joint ventures, organisation details, international parties and expatriate managers, etc.).
- IJVs business environment (including any important and problematical criteria)
- Supply chain partnering relationship recognition and selection
- Developing the partnering relationship
- The expected partnering relationship performance

The interview questions are:

1. Could you please explain your company's business and market environments from your perspective? If applicable: Can you please comment on any uncertainty within the business environment?
2. Could you please expand upon the international joint venture relationship management?
3. Can you please describe the alignment between China and the other cultures within the IJV?
4. What do you think about the supply chain partnering relationship?
5. What did you do to build the partnering relationship in your company as a manufacturer? (Or: What did you do to build the supply chain partnering relationship in your company as a supplier?)
6. How do you feel that your company, as a multicultural IJV, deals with partnering relationships from other world regions?
7. What criteria do you think are important when your company selects a supplier as a partner? (Or: What criteria do you think are important when your company is being selected as a partner?) If applicable: Is this different from dealing with a domestic Chinese company?
8. How does your company manage the partnering relationship with the suppliers? (Or: How does your company manage the partnering relationship with the manufacturers?)
9. How do you stabilise and adjust the partnering relationship? How do you resolve any conflict? If applicable: Can you please compare this process in the IJV to one in which there are no non-Chinese managers involved?
10. How are amicable and high conflict partnering relationship terminations handled by your company?
11. What does your company do when such partnering relationships are terminated?

Appendix B

12. Could you please comment on the criteria you use to measure a partnering relationship performance?

13. How is the performance measured?

We hope this clarifies the purpose of the research, and the reason why we could not tell you all of the details about the study prior to your participation. If you would like more information about the research, you may be interested in the following:

1. Holweg, M., Luo, J. and Oliver, N. (2008), 'The past, present and future of china's automotive industry: A value chain perspective', International Journal of Technological Learning, Innovation and Development, Vol. 2, No. 1-2, pp. 76-118.

2. Goffin, K., Lemke, F. and Szwejczeski, M. (2006), 'An exploratory study of 'close' supplier-manufacturer relationships', Journal of Operations Management, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 189-209

3. Kim, K. T., Rhee, S. K. and Oh, J. (2011), 'The strategic role evolution of foreign automotive parts subsidiaries in china--a case study from the perspective of capabilities evolution', International Journal of Operations & Production Management, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 31-55.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me:

Weixi Han, wh3g12@soton.ac.uk

It is very important that you do not discuss this study with anyone else until the study is complete. Our efforts will be greatly compromised if participants come into this study knowing what is about and how the ideas are being tested. Once again results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may contact the research support officer, Angela Faux (risethic@soton.ac.uk) or Dr Martina Prude, Head of Research Governance, Research Governance Office, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ. Phone: (mad4@soton.ac.uk).

Appendix C Empirical data summary

Each interview was transcribed into a written format once completed, Appendix C providing 20 pages of summary of empirical data textual material. The data were broken down into discrete sections (i.e. words, sentences and paragraphs) in the opening-coding step through a line-by-line analysis of the interview transcripts, which yielded initial codes of the partnering relationship process. From Appendix C1 to appendix C 13, there are 13 opening-coding tables.

C.1 Necessity of partnering relationship empirical data

Interviewees	Code 1: Necessity of partnering relationship concepts
EA-1	Manufacturers and suppliers establish partnering relationships which can provide best-quality services.
EA-2	The establishment of a partnering relationship is reflected in all aspects; the cooperation is diversified, which requires mutual support and interdependence.
EA-3	The establishment of a partnering relationship is beneficial for product competition aiming at a heritage company in the fiercely competitive market.
EA-4	The partnering relationship is generally established with the supplier when a new car model is produced.
EB-1	The partnering relationship is established with a supplier in the new product development stage for win-win cooperation.
EB-2	Partnering relationship established in compliance with Chinese market demand as orientation is beneficial for developing the Chinese market.
JC-1	Japanese domestic supplier partner is contacted for setting up a local factory in China, and partnering relationship can be established with the newly established supplier factory.
JC-2	The partnering relationship becomes an exchange platform. Cost can be reduced by new product development. Profit commonwealth is formed by interdependence.
JC-3	The partnering relationship is established, which is beneficial for realising high-quality operations.
UC-1	Have good performance and a very important strategy for the company.
UC-2	Assist suppliers in growth, thereby achieving joint growth and long-term cooperation.

Appendix C

UC-3	The partnering relationship, an important strategy of the company, thereby achieving a win-win situation.
UC-4	Expand our share of the domestic market and extend our reach into new areas of that market.
S1-2	<p>The manufacturer provides advanced technology and we are learning from their advanced management experiences, which are changing aspects of our company. They provided a trainer free of charge, who brought innovation and influenced us. Therefore, our traditional approach to production has changed.</p> <p>Although we don't gain much financially from this, we do gain in many other ways.</p>
S3-3	<p>The manufacturer establishes a partnering relationship with the supplier. They reduce the number of suppliers which increases financial performance for both us.</p> <p>The manufacturer, improves the quality of production, promotes innovative application of technology and decreases supply chain risk.</p> <p>The manufacturer wants to increase the co-operation with the supplier and transparency of information shared.</p> <p>The partnering relationship is incorporated at an early stage of production R&D with the supplier. The partnering relationship includes the sharing of technological information, advanced payment of production and R&D fees, transparency of information shared, enrolment in environment production responsibilities with the supplier, provide business strategies and explore advanced supplier business.</p>
S4-3	EA is relatively strict with us, so only we constantly growing together with the manufacturer that we can better complete the corresponding projects.
S4-4	Outstanding supplier resources will become the focus of competition in the future; the leading manufacturers in the world begin to pay more attention to establishing a long-term cooperative relationship with high-quality outstanding suppliers.

C.2 Alignment between international joint venture relationship and SCPR empirical data

Interviewees	Code 2: Alignment between international joint venture relationship and SCPR Concepts
EA-1	These two kinds of relationship are provided with a clear division of responsibilities and rights. Responsibilities for dealing with the two relationships are different. In supply chain partnering relationship, the supplier should be screened by assessment.
EA-5	Manufacturer supports vehicle operation; production and operation can be completely supported regardless of international joint venture relationship.

EA-2	Resources can be integrated after the international joint venture. Operational efficiency can be affected if the international joint venture partners' relationship is not processed well.
EA-4	After international joint venture is established, supplier selection can be affected. In manufacturer, both the Chinese party and the international party have equal supplier selection rights.
JC-2	Our departments' responsibility and rights are clearly divided, we implemented sourcing strategy and formed a profit community with suppliers.
JC-3	Our relationship strategy is internationalized. There are many models/forms of cooperation such as investment, procurement, factory establishment, etc. Depending on the strategy, our supply chain partnering relationship can be optimized with the supplier.
UC-1	As an international joint venture, the establishment of the supply chain partnering relationship needs to follow procedures from the international side and needs to comply with Chinese parties' local requirements (government policy, law, authorisation, etc.). This is the supply chain partnering relationship characteristics in the international joint venture.
UC-2	After an international joint venture relationship is established, both their targets will be making a profit commit. The supply chain partnering relationship is a long-term cooperation, and there is no difference in selection standard between Chinese party and international party.
UC-3	Supplier selection is one of the most important strategies for us after the establishment of international joint venture relationship. Two parties in IJV involved in supplier selection.
UC-4	In our company, international party has international party's own system to select suppliers, but Sino can always find their own relationship.

C.3 Relationship strategy empirical data

Interviewees	Code 3: Relationship strategy concepts
EA-1	A number of departments should be integrated in order to encompass a greater share of the market. The purchasing and business departments of the manufacturer should make every effort to work together in selecting and managing suppliers.
EA-5	The relationship with the suppliers assists in guaranteeing the success of the manufacturer's development strategy.

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	Therefore, new suppliers should be cultivated and existing suppliers should be encouraged for further development.
EA-2	<p>Purchasing resources are integrated.</p> <p>A synergy between the manufacturer and a number of suppliers helps to ensure the best possible manufacturing processes which allows for the production of tailor-made components.</p>
EA-3	A long-term relationship strategy that exists between the manufacturer and the suppliers is important, even for companies which were established a long time ago.
EA-4	The Chinese market is particularly important to us. We have a flexible purchasing strategy and benefit from the fact that we produce vehicles in China for the domestic market and can use the international purchasing assessment to select the domestic or international suppliers.
EB-1	<p>The international party is responsible for international purchasing. The international party dispatches a director with a good understanding of Chinese culture to formulate strategies.</p> <p>Project management of vehicle production is implemented between the manufacturer and supplier.</p>
EB-2	<p>The international party now recognises the fact that integration in China is important.</p> <p>Therefore, the Chinese party has taken responsibility for the purchasing strategy.</p>
JC-1	The international party should adhere to local policy. The international party will require suppliers from its own country to have a presence in China. It will then establish a partnering relationship.
JC-2	<p>A profit community should be formed through our interdependence with suppliers.</p> <p>Having shares in the supplier establishes and furthers loyalty and trust, benefiting the relationship between our companies.</p>
JC-3	<p>A communication committee is formed to establish a diversified strategy.</p> <p>This results in a profit community being established through one of the manufacturers' parent parties investing, purchasing, and establishing factories with the supplier.</p>
UC-1	A contract with the supplier can be used to satisfy the international party's requirements.
UC-2	<p>We maintain a strong focus on service as well as production. Therefore, planning and design go hand-in-hand with buying and selling. Our relationship with our suppliers must reflect this. [Petroni and Panciroli, 2002—once suitability has been verified, subtle management is required to develop a supplier into a full service provider. The term 'full service provider' means that the supplier provides excellent logistical and technical services.]</p>

UC-4	Due to the popularity of European luxury cars in the Chinese market, the supplier should continually improve their products in order to increase the good reputation of our brand.
UC-3	We view the relationship between our joint venture and the supplier as a long-term one. It is just as important as the relationship between the parties in the joint venture.
S2-2	There are profitable selection tendencies. It is fair for a manufacturer to select suppliers. They do not consider the relationship or background. For example, if the manufacturer only values guanxi, but the suppliers delay too much, this will negatively affect the schedule of the manufacturer's operations.
S2-3	International agents will provide technology to cooperate with Chinese manufacturers in order to establish a joint venture to and support key suppliers. The suppliers' product intersection is reduced and each supplier management operates on its own terms.
S3-3	The purchasing department adopts a matrix structure of two dimensions: category management and process management.
S3-4	The manufacturer has designed specific supplier management strategies. In particular, they stated a requirement of 'core supplier strategy' to suppliers.

C.4 Operation measurement criteria empirical data

Interviewees	Code 4: Operation measurement criteria Concepts
EA-1	The supplier is screened according to the practical assessment principle. Partner strength, product quality and cooperation degree should be ranked. Responsibilities should be fair, just and transparent.
EA-5	The level of requirements of all countries is different. Automotive brands of different countries have different profit margins. Suppliers recognise manufacturer development direction. Culture and common development are recognised. Reliable, credible and powerful supplier.
EA-2	Supplier benefits should be balanced against manufacturer benefits, which can guarantee the success of the operation. Operational capability, responsibility and diversification on special parts.
EA-4	Indicators are reflected in action, supplier investment, development strength, commitment, supplier scale, investment strategy, intellectual property, product life cycle and economic cycle, etc.
EB-1	Product supporting amount, product acceptance, supplier development ability and service attitude are also important.

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JC-1	The supplier should be selected according to the production standard of joint venture countries. The Chinese supplier standard is different from the international standard in their own country. The cost is low but responsibility is undertaken.
JC-2	High quality, high technology, high loyalty, willingness to reduce costs, rich product line and low cost, refined. Production, high-cost efficiency, and advanced labour productivity in the industry.
JC-4	High quality, high satisfaction, high loyalty, high technology and intellectual property.
UC-1	Have a global evaluation instruction; the decision must be based on evaluation results. On-site auditing, certification requirement.
UC-2	From the important to the basic capabilities are, 1, understanding English very well; 2, understanding international business rules; 3, communicate with and balance the Chinese and American parties efficiently; 4, advanced and high quality.
UC-4	First is ability – what the supplier can do. The second is descent – what supplier did previously. The third is attitude – what will the supplier achieve?
UC-3	Integrity, respect for contracts, quality, a time node, and certain cash-flow capacities. Honesty and credit are important.
S2-1	Automotive supplier production lacks effective methods for the protection of intellectual property, which makes the supplier lack the R&D initiative. The R&D achievements are easily copied by other homogeneous competitive companies. Besides, manufacturers need to reduce the cost and hope that more suppliers copy the new technique for manufacturing parts. In order to realise innovation, the manufacturers and the suppliers should enhance the protection of the intellectual property rights of the suppliers to improve the technology research and development and the application ability of the key suppliers.
S3-3	Manufacturer focuses on balanced development among the four considerable abilities, quality, technology and the cost of suppliers. The core intention is to devote to guaranteeing that a long-term and steady cooperation will be developed with sustainable competition and excellent suppliers.
S3-4	They select a few industry leaders from the core suppliers to form a global or regional network layout, which can supply the American companies' production bases around the globe. As their technology R&D capacity is outstanding, they can deeply cooperate with the manufacturers in segments; as their financial strength is abundant, they can support the expansion of manufacturers.
S4-3	Selection Indices: sincerity, good technology, reputation, credit, cultural background. Manufacturer will give preference to domestic suppliers, and then the Western European suppliers. Manufacturer will consider the product cost. They think that they can

	cooperate with the Chinese supplier, choose the localised supplier, and research and produce products according to the domestic standard, and that the manufacturer can send staff to provide technical support and help with research and development.
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C.5 Stabilise empirical data

Interviewees	Code 5: Stabilise concepts
EA-1	The supplier should be selected by a strict audit. Conditions and factors in all aspects should be guaranteed, and the partnering relationship will be more stable.
EA-5	Vicious competition among suppliers caused the most serious harm to both manufacturers and suppliers. If the supplier can be included in manufacturer development after the partnering relationship is established, this is beneficial for healthy operation.
EA-2	The supplier can participate from the start of the manufacturer's operational plan. Partnering relationship management requirements should be proposed in new projects and smooth operations.
EA-3	Following the establishment of the partnering relationship, manufacturers and suppliers should communicate together and mutually negotiate in dealing with problems that could arise. The manufacturer will terminate the supplier partnering relationship if the manufacturer discovers problems.
EA-4	Partnering relationship is formed from suppliers full competition. The partnering relationship can jointly develop with the supplier through performance measurement by compliance in quality, research and development, and delivery.
EB-1	Partnering relationship management is achieved in line with new product development. We should consider the quality and cost, aiming at continuously selecting the original supplier.
EB-2	After the first international joint venture fails, the international party obtains government policy support, and a new international joint venture is established. Some original suppliers are still reserved in the new international joint venture.
JC-1	Manufacturers and suppliers are involved in responsibility distribution during the signing of the partnering relationship contract. The supplier should be responsible for recalled liability, but if the components of cars are defective, the manufacturers should bear certain management responsibilities.

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JC-2	We provide technical support and engineers are dispatched to their suppliers. Suppliers also could dispatch engineers to the manufacturers to learn new technology. Otherwise, suppliers can exchange, compete and improve technology through supplier association.
UC-1	Follow standard procedure in order to stabilise partnering relationships and use data to measure supplier performance.
UC-2	Communicate advantage technology, exhibit the new or academic report to each other.
UC-3	If the partnering relationship can be stable, many aspects can be handled well. Greater influence can be wielded on us. The manufacturer divided suppliers into three categories: strategic suppliers, core suppliers and common suppliers to systematically manage the suppliers and provide the excellent small- and medium-core parts suppliers with better approaches and strong support. The approaches and support include opening partial technology platforms, helping us get advanced technical support, jointly doing research and development, and leading suppliers to participate in researching and developing core parts at the early stage when researching and developing new cars and lowering the cost. The supplier will disclose its cost structure and the manufacturer will help improve the operations management through cost analysis and provide technical support to help excellent suppliers find the space to lower the cost
S1-1	The manufacturer divided suppliers into three categories: strategic suppliers, core suppliers, and common suppliers to systematically manage the suppliers. They provide the excellent small- and medium-core suppliers with better approaches and strong support. The approaches and support include opening partial technology platforms and helping us get advanced technical support. Leading us to participate in researching and developing at the early stage. We will disclose our cost structure and the manufacturer will help us to improve the operations management through cost analysis. Also manufacturers provide technical support to help excellent suppliers find the space to lower the cost.
S1-2	In my opinion, we haven't formed a partnering relationship with the manufacturer; this relationship is only a business-oriented relationship, as there are many substitutes (the companies with same qualifications and circumstances). Compared with other suppliers: we have no difference. As a supplier, if the cooperation doesn't refer to strategy implementation, then it is far from a partnering relationship. At present, there are some suppliers who can make it, but we can't.
S1-3	We have formed a partnering relationship for five years and introduced advanced American management styles and management indicators. However, until now, they only make us maintain the level of operation that they brought five years ago, so the current platform is already unsatisfactory. At the same time, as we have cooperated for an

	extended period, the manufacturers make the low price for buying products and require us to buy production equipment; they merely treat us as a foundry.
S1-4	The advantage is we use the equipment and technology provided by our manufacturer to improve the production efficiency.
S3-1	The strategy of the American suppliers: focusing on the risk management; balancing the development between the research ability and the cost; enhancing the innovative cooperation with suppliers and realising a win-win procurement strategy.
S3-4	The management of the suppliers involves project management and partnering relationships management.
S4-1	Management the partnering relationship can realise the synchronous development between the manufacturer and us. Adjust the relationship could solve the technology and product upgrading problems in a way of a strategic alliance.

C.6 Adjust empirical data

Interviewees	Code 6: Adjust Concepts
EA-1	The department takes charge of the purchasing and can jointly oversee management of the supplier with other departments.
EA-5	Adjustment of the partnering relationship is beneficial for operations, which will satisfy the manufacturers' demands.
EA-3	Some suppliers are strong because of their powerful industry relations or technology. In this case, the manufacturer has to depend on the supplier and the partnering relationship.
EA-4	There are a few suppliers in the monopolistic competition market. If the manufacturer desires to break the monopoly and find another supplier, then both the supplier and manufacturer can form a partnering relationship, and suppliers can apply modifications based on problems identified by the manufacturers. Meanwhile, existing suppliers can be modified.
EB-1	Suppliers can operate in the system, the performance system can be considered, and the partnering relationship can be integrated and eliminated. If the supplier is powerful, a framework agreement can be signed. The existing supplier in the system can be given priority for new product development.
EB-2	Some original suppliers are retained, particularly those with better technology and a leading position in the industry.

Appendix C

JC-1	Establishment of a supplier branch company in China has a clear purpose. International investors conduct joint ventures in China due to the cheap labour and lower costs in order to introduce products with lower prices and of a higher quality.
JC-2	Mutual benefit and mutual compensation of resources can be achieved. The adjustment should be made according to supplier value.
UC-1	Follow standard procedure to resolve supplier-related issues.
UC-3	Work together and make a plan together. Respect each other's capabilities and ability or credit.
UC-4	It is difficult for suppliers to become partners. The manufacturer is essentially responsible for adjusting the partnering relationship, which is primarily based on market demand.
S2-1	Actively change the passive position, and supplier matches with the vehicle plants. It is for selling products and forming a quality guarantee and serviceability to further improve the bargaining power and sign the remitting agreement and realise zero risk management on the receivables to promote the stable development of the partnering relationship in the supply chain.
S2-3	The government and the industry organisations give full play to their function as a link to promote the fact that the manufacturer and supplier can cooperate closely in the field of technical research, and encourage equal participation by both sides to enhance the sense of responsibility to work together and create a win-win, thus establishing a more solid supply relationship.
S2-4	A solid reputation is a good indicator of our company and the willingness to import from our business by receiving quality products at a reasonable price. Our company researches reviews, feedback, and references, and contacts the deferent manufacturing factories to determine the most suitable course for their business.
S3-2	Every year, American companies hold a senior management conference to discuss tasks and negotiate the product pricing. They are very strict with the contract quality and the technological standards. During the honeymoon period five years ago, and at present, there have always been conflicts. We hope that when the American companies enlarge the order quantity, they can provide the Chinese suppliers with more chances to express their thoughts and profit margins.

C.7 Solve conflict empirical data

Interviewees	Code 7: Solve conflict concepts
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EA-1	If the supplier cannot meet the manufacturer's demand, then we will adopt financial penalties through articles in the contract. The operations method is consistent for each company. The managers of the international party are distributed in all departments of the manufacturer. Therefore, compliance with the international party is not a determining factor.
EA-5	Cooperation depth is different, conflict is inevitable, such as cost and profit; however, the manufacturers' benefits should be protected first.
EA-2	International parties' work style is relatively rigid and operated completely in line with a flow. The international party often has a conflict with the supplier. Both parties should compromise; however, they should insist on a certain baseline. The manufacturer should accelerate operation speed and flow.
EA-3	Once the contradiction or conflict occurs, we would show more understanding of the customers' needs, and suppliers can better understand their own industries. Negotiating according to the causes of conflict, which should be handled according to the international model since China is sympathetic to this, can solve the conflict.
EA-4	Chinese and international headquarters are synchronously developed. The manufacturer is established by searching for the joint venture. The realisable technique can be thoroughly researched basically and locally. Conflict is always discovered at this stage. There are several front-end part manufacturers with own-industry alliances, as opposed to single ones. The manufacturer can discuss this when making decisions, and then the product can be designed and manufactured rather than designed in the final stage.
EB-1	Costs are controlled when problems arise. Technology and quality are optimised for cost control. A supplier management committee is established for specific topics and multi-level communication. Competition is introduced, aiming at the own product in the process of supplier cost control and analysis. Competition can be lucrative. Products can be improved and recalled through double-party exchange and joint recognition. Both parties can mutually compromise, and jointly make technological progress in compromise. Cash flow can be emphasised.
EB-2	Disputes when the product is not in line with Chinese situation or consumer demand, and suppliers must defer and improve.
JC-1	If the supplier does not have much ability to assume responsibility when conflict or problems arise, then the supplier will not need to take any responsibility, other than purchasing the products at a lower price.
JC-2	Both parties should negotiate in a friendly manner; conflict should be transferred if it is encountered, and can be solved for other projects.
UC-1	Each site is in charge of its own supplier; no cross-region conflict. Communicate more and listen to the suppliers' comments.

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UC-2	Based on JV perspective rather than any partner side perspective; keep the two parties balanced.
UC-3	There are two reasons for conflict – quality and cost. First, there are contract constraints, detailed supplier investigation flow and strict contracts, thereby reducing the incidence of problems. Second, advancement is advocated, and the supplier can interfere in advance for product process improvement and technology upgrading. Similarly, the incidence of conflict can be lowered.
UC-4	Compromise can be reached depending on market's supply and demand relationship if the component part is critical and the supplier is strong enough.
S1-4	When there is a conflict between an American order and the domestic order, we need to guarantee that we can complete the orders of large domestic companies by sacrificing the completion time of small orders from American companies.
S4-4	Service foremost, maintain a long-term customer partnering relationship with the best service and products.

C.8 Partnering relationship termination empirical data

Interviewees	Code 8: Partnering relationship termination concepts
EA-1	Once the relationship is terminated, previous accounts of the supplier should be checked, thereby completely solving the corresponding contact content.
EA-2	We hope to choose a familiar partner. It is risky to select a new partner. Chinese people are not willing to change. The original relationship can be maintained if the problem is not serious.
EA-3	Once terminated, we will not cooperate with the supplier, and the supplier should be eliminated from the supplier name list.
EB-1	Replacement cost is higher. They are not willing to make much adjustment.
EB-2	International joint owner breaches the contract unilaterally, and forcibly ends the partnering relationship with a huge loss.
EB-3	After the partnering relationship is formed, suppliers can be consolidated. Meanwhile, development can be improved. Ten per cent of suppliers in the final position should be eliminated.
EB-4	The international party influences the selection of the supplier. Both parties in the joint venture can upgrade the contradiction. Since the performance is not ideal, a new product cannot be produced immediately; therefore, many relationships should be forcibly terminated.

JC-1	Once the contract is terminated or failed, both parties can solve the issue by taking a legal approach, which consumes much time and resources.
JC-2	Since the purchasing price in China is increasing, labour costs are expensive and it is difficult to set up factories there; therefore, many partners have to terminate cooperation. A factory can be set up in another country from the headquarters of the international partner, thereby reducing costs.
UC-1	Stop all activities, inactive supplier; keep the supplier records on file.
UC-2	All aspects should be based on contract flow in a commercial society and commercial relationships. New suppliers should be funnelled again even if the expenditure is high.
UC-3	Suppliers usually know when the relationship is terminated; manufacturer procedures are complete and standardised. The partnering relationship should be terminated according to the procedure. In addition, considering the feelings of others in this situation is very important.
S1-1	The partnering relationship is difficult to terminate unless serious conflicts or disagreements exist.
S2-1	The supply chain partnering relationship in China is more stable than that in international countries. There are two reasons for this: one is the stable status of the SOEs; the other is that the manufacturer (such as a European company) registered in China are well known to countrymen, and neither of the cooperative parties changes each other easily.
S4-1	The depth of cooperation between the German companies only reaches the level of 'keeping long-term cooperation.' It is hard for them to cooperate deeply and lower the price. The method of reducing price through adding pressure is not sustainable and will influence the relationship with suppliers.
S4-2	The German manufacturers do not form a complete effective supplier elimination system to remove the inefficient suppliers who have small purchase amounts and can be replaced in the system. At present, a supplier elimination system depends on the completion of the vehicle type's lifecycle and then naturally eliminates the suppliers. It does not connect the supplier elimination with a procurement strategy; therefore, there are some inefficient suppliers who occupy the management sources of suppliers.

C.9 Performance measurement empirical data

Interviewees	Code 9: Performance measurement concepts
EA-3	After the partnering relationship is established, it will be helpful to customers' loyalty and make customers comfortable, letting more people know the value of the brand.

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EB-1	After the new cooperation, the new partnering relationship is established, the person in charge of the Chinese Party has experience with Japanese companies, with a completely different style from the existing manufacturers and suppliers, and the senior executives are difficult to integrate.
JC-1	With a quality guarantee, the technical development ability is enhanced, and the cost control, product platform, generalisation, and delivery capacity have increased to some extent.
JC-2	Manufacturers and suppliers share together, make a breakthrough based on their investment in R&D and advanced technology, and enhance the brand's advantages.
UC-4	Changes exist, with a balance of supply and demand.
UC-2	The supply chain partnering relationship benefits our image.
S1-1	The manufacturers' pressure to reduce prices will be transferred to the suppliers. However, we also face cost pressure as the prices of the raw materials, resources and labour force are constantly increasing. Dual pressures make our profitability decline. In addition, as there are a large number of suppliers for the large-scale vehicle manufacturers, some suppliers adopt improper ways of surviving; thus, the industrial competition order is breached.
S2-2	The manufacturers prefer to have their own suppliers; however, a large number of suppliers lack cooperation, which will divert the resources and energies of manufacturers. If the manufacturers want to lower the purchasing cost and reasonably distribute resources and guarantee the supply quality of parts, they must integrate the parts business in the company.
S2-3	Finish the integration of our businesses, realise group management with the suppliers, and enhance the competitiveness of the supply chain, better financing, and make the manufacturer-supplier relationship develop towards the strategic partnering relationship.
S3-1	The relationship between the manufacturer and supplier and the status between them are very important. In addition, technological advances are important.
S4-2	The market of suppliers will be further integrated, which will result in the outstanding supplier resources being more concentrated, and the bargaining power of the supplier will increase. The supplier trends toward a modular procurement and tends to purchase products from the tier-one suppliers, which gradually increases the bargaining power of the tier-one suppliers.

C.10 How to measure the relationship performance empirical data

Interviewees	Code 10: How to measure the relationship performance concepts
EA-1	After the partnering relationship is established, the supplier shall fully support the development of manufacturers, and even guarantee the production operation of manufacturers at the expense of their own interests for a short period.
EA-1	The quantity of sale number changes, with the corresponding reduction in cost.
UC-1	One supplier had business from a company for three years; this supplier had multiple issues at first, which caused several problems and even resulted in a loss of profit. This was improved in a short time through support from our supplier management team over the past two years as well as quality improvements and cost reductions; this supplier brought us 300K in savings (USD).
UC-4	Chinese market and law system, efficient government system, we consider performance from a long-term perspective. As a JV, we adopt international business systems, embody honesty and credibility, follow the rules, and do not play the game.
S2-4	Due to the cash flow back issue of main engine plants, the overall economic situation (overall background) deteriorates and it is hard to recover capital. Therefore, main engine plants face a serious financial problem. The supplier also faces a serious problem with regard to prepayment.
S3-2	The tier-one supplier has many partners that can to some extent help the supplier procure costs and income, which is helpful for boosting supplier income.
S4-3	Performance pressure primarily lies with the manufacturer because the supplier market is already mature and the manufacturer can purchase the supplier suitable for its own products according to its requirements. Furthermore, production and assembly are related to the establishment and management of the production line. Thus, a high investment in time and capital (such as automotive design) is not required.

C.11 IJV partners' relationship management empirical data

Interviewees	Code 11: IJV partners' relationship management concepts
EA-1	The company integrates the departments, with the integration of international-owned subsidiaries and joint ventures, and the operation is relatively smooth at present. The Chinese and international parties have a clear division of authority and responsibilities.
EA-2	The manufacturer proceeds without hesitation to support business operations in a key stage, but the practice of completely following the international parties in China is ineffective.

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EA-3	<p>Now we are one of the world's top 500 companies, with production bases established everywhere in China. Tacit coordination of both parties in a joint venture is crucial to smooth operations.</p> <p>After the joint venture with the Chinese Party, the international party is mainly responsible for smooth operations with the rise of sales.</p>
EA-4	The international party takes main responsibility. After the supplier is selected, the supplier will be sent back to their country of origin for auditing, which can be added to the supplier database after the audit has been carried out.
EA-5	The joint venture relationship for both parties with product localisation has a great influence on the partnering relationship.
EA-4	Chinese party and the international party are the same, and the policies have an external driving effect.
EB-1	The partnering relationship has positive tendencies. The international party is responsible for global procurement after entering the joint venture. The existing supplier should not only be in line with international standards but also should be consistent with Chinese standards.
EB-2	The termination of the joint venture relationship doesn't mean the supply chain partnering relationship dominated by international party is terminated when the new joint venture started; the international party will still dominate the partnering relationship.
EB-3	For the first time of cooperation, the international party sends the manager to China, taking turns in power with Chinese leaders. The international party is responsible for global procurement and management, with advanced management concepts and very high and specific demands, while the Chinese party has simple and honest companies with strong cultural deposits. The ability during joint venture period has improved more or less, but many problems still exist. For the second time of cooperation, as the Chinese party cooperated with Japan before, there could be a reduction in operational costs.
EB-4	It is actually very dissatisfied with the international party. After the establishment of the joint venture company, the personnel at a high management level are changed frequently, the companies' policy loses continuity, and contradiction and crisis would subsequently damage the image.
EB-5	Because the international party had a previous unsuccessful joint venture experience they changed to become more modest and prudent. The new cooperation is the only opportunity to seize the Chinese market.
EB-2	An international party guided the joint venture's supplier selection in the past. A Chinese party guides it at present, and a partnering relationship can be established for rapid response to the market.

EB-1	The international party attaches great importance to the integration into the local culture, bringing positive factors. The Chinese party has many years of experience in joint ventures, with more advantages than the previous one, which can help the joint venture to make a quick response.
JC-1	The international party needs to meet the local requirements in China, and each country has a corresponding limit.
JC-2	As a global company, it transfers technology and makes an agreement. It balances short-term and long-term cooperation, enhances the capacity of sharing resources, and integrates advantageous resources to create a completely industrial chain.
JC-2	Mutually respect and identify the values, accept win-win cooperation, and accumulate international management experience, to create an international influence and competitiveness.
UC-1	International investors have two main roles in the joint venture company (in China): the technical provider and the procedure provider. They guide the Chinese party to use their solutions to produce products or conduct the operations in services. The products or services need compliant standards based on the destination, as different nationalities have their own requirements. Mostly, both sets of international needs are addressed.
UC-5	The international party signs the new cooperation agreement with China and makes the original import brand achieve localisation. It establishes the new joint venture and an independent way for production and sales, officially entering the mainstream car brand camp. The localised new brand and the integrated channel become an important step in the development of the international party in China.
UC-2	Healthy and sustainable, the company has been prepared for operations improvement.
UC-4	Pay more attention to our partner's Mianzi, especially for the leader of the Chinese party.
UC-2	The joint venture seems like a family, well prepared for problems through discussion.

C.12 Alignment between China and other cultures' empirical data

Interviewees	Code 12: Alignment between China and other cultures concepts
EA-5	The standards for a joint venture are different, the profit made without the use of national brands is different, the depth of cooperation is different, and there are contradictions in the cooperation with the current joint owner, although things are basically running smoothly.
EA-2	The international party works very inflexibly; is inflexible in making plans and procedures. The Chinese are more anxious and eager for quick success and instant benefits. Many

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	things shall be delayed if not in complete accordance with the progress of the international party. Contradictions do exist, but mutual consultation is possible, and both parties make compromises under the condition that the international party adheres to a certain baseline and increases the process and operation speed; however, the standards must be in accordance with the requirements of the international party.
EA-3	The international party works rigorously, complying with rules with no racial discrimination, and it has a fair operation environment, upholding human rights.
EB-4	The company's management personnel and shareholders lack long-term strategic vision and lack communication in cooperation. The international party over-emphasises its dominance and the frequent changes of personnel at the Chinese party reflect the contradictions between them; the international party tries to adopt a strong attitude in China, asking for discursive power. The Chinese have their own culture and will express themselves in another way. The international party does not listen to the opinions of the Chinese party and tends to be overconfident.
JC-1	Cost is an important factor that affects the level of cooperation between two parties.
UC-3	Completely different, it is difficult to balance the relationships of Guanxi and Renqing.
UC-4	The key differences between American and Chinese culture: Americans choose their partner first and then establish a partnering relationship. However, China finds a relationship first and then chooses a partner.
S2-4	If the person is in Europe, they can work in the European way. This may be understandable in China, but will definitely be considered unacceptable in other places. Their executive force and competitive power are poor. Considering reducing the cost of production, the Italians and Chinese don't have the bottom-line. When problems appear in the project, there is often no one to take responsibility. European working efficiency is high. Although work time is short, Europeans will do their best to work hard during each hour. Chinese companies repeat tasks excessively; thus their production efficiency is low. Europeans value the Chinese; they think the Chinese are relatively good and their ways of doing things are not that different from the European ways. When they make contact with Japanese clients, they think that the Japanese are very strong in terms of their sense of hierarchy and others must respect Japanese culture or they will not cooperate. The Japanese are more concerned about public image and what others think of them.
S2-2	In cooperation, Chinese people lack a holistic point of view. For example, if the cup is broken, then Chinese people will repair it, but will not consider the fact that the cup was not fired correctly. The American people's method of working is systematic and well-rounded, but Chinese people think it is unnecessary to work in great detail. American companies will consider whether it is worth lowering the cost and will ask personnel to analyse the effects; Chinese companies lower the price for the sake of

	reducing the price. When Chinese companies reduce the cost, they spend more time studying how to lower the price.
S2-1	There are many conflicts between Chinese companies and American companies as their ways of thinking are very different. The Chinese tend to lower the cost, but the American side pays more attention to the quality. In terms of profits, both sides measure the cost and quality according to a scale. Generally, the project leader determines what action to take.

C.13 Business environment uncertainty empirical data

Interviewees	Code 13: Business environment uncertainty concepts
EA-5	Broad environment attracts buyers and the support from local government policies is very important.
EA-3	The international party is a company with a long history and inheritance. The high-end car market competition is very fierce in China. Many people in charge of the international party are integrated into the Chinese family, and start to embrace Chinese thinking methods as well.
EA-1	Benefits from Chinese localisation policies; production and sales have increased to some extent.
EB-1	Both Chinese and international parties have different understandings of the Chinese market; when the Chinese market becomes strong, the international party does not make any new products and China will not make additional investment. In the later commercial revival plan, the Chinese market plays an important role in the global automotive development plan of the international party.
JC-1	Manufacturer competes on a global scale, so the passenger cars produced by the international party are extremely competitive. They also compete with automotive manufacturers from other countries around the world. As for the automotive exporter, whether the international party itself or local manufacturers, competition and sales are distinct. For example, China has restrictions on car imports and the policy requires the establishment of local branches and the pursuit of local suppliers.
JC-2	Support for government policies.
JC-3	There are many factors affecting the supply chain partnering relationship, such as cost. The partnering relationship after a joint venture can also be adjusted in case of any changes to Chinese policy.

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UC-1	The company is required to be compliant with local requirements (government regulations, law, authorisation, etc.). It makes the supply chain in the joint venture adopt characteristics from both sides.
UC-4	Our company is at the top level in the market.
UC-5	The entire Chinese automotive market is in the doldrums; due to a downturn in the market environment, the company still launches new products under localisation, and the policy is an important step in the development of the company in China.
UC-2	American brands have no advantages in the Chinese market; in comparison, however, European luxury cars are more acceptable to Chinese customers.
S1-1	Along with changes to the internal and external situations, manufacturing companies face serious market competition and the challenge of profit margins. The integration of the supplier market leads to an increase in bargaining power, and management difficulties brought about by the manufacturer's own development increases challenges in three ways; this requires the manufacturers to develop a clearer supplier relations strategy and a management method to improve their ability to control and bargain with high-quality suppliers, along with a more systematic and scientific cost analysis method to realise the goal of lowering costs, and a more sensitive risk control system to cope with the dynamic conditions of procurement which will be complex and difficult in the future.
S2-1	Huge challenges are faced, including: significant impact on the economic environment; the price of raw materials and labour costs continue to rise; the selling price in the vehicle market and the cost of purchasing parts is constantly decreasing; developing a mature auto market is hard; and international-invested manufacturers and international-invested suppliers face pressure with high-end technology and supply chains. The overall survival pressure is very challenging.
S2-3	Cooperation between manufacturers and suppliers, the local government on the supply chain integrates superior resources to promote manufacturers in order to obtain greater development. The powerful combination of manufacturers and suppliers that are influential in the industry can mutually promote each business and guarantee that the share of supply chain is stable, which is conducive to long-term development.
S3-2	The environment for manufacturer has gradually improved year by year, which can help improve productivity and quality. However, productivity and quality cannot continuously be improved due to the increase in cost.
S4-1	In order to improve market competitiveness, manufacturers have to choose the best parts on a global scale. Suppliers also need an international platform to enter the global parts supply system to facilitate rapid development. Manufacturers and suppliers have already joined forces through overseas mergers and acquisitions. The success of

	purchasing an overseas business fills in the domestic technical blanks of the suppliers in key fields.
S4-2	Purchasing management is facing severe challenges that are primarily reflected in the fierce competition of the vehicle market and the future integration trend of the parts market. It gradually transfers from quality competition to the competition in terms of quality and profitability; thus, it requires companies to pay attention to the establishment of quality and the promotion of profitability.
S4-3	Along with the acceleration of product localisation of various brands, competition for resources will intensify, and the production base will face increased competition. As the competition becomes more powerful day-by-day, the main engine plant shall control high-quality supplier resources in advance.

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