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College of Informatics

Graduate School of Information Management

Master

A Study on Communication in International Collaborative  
Projects

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## 樹德科技大學博碩士論文授權書

本授權書所授權之論文為授權人蕭竹峰在樹德科技大學資訊學院資訊管理系所組 99學年度第一學期取得  博士  碩士 學位之論文。

論文名稱：A Study on Communication in International Collaborative Project.  
指導教授：張鐸 博士

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ABSTRACT

Recently, Viet Nam has become one of the most attractive countries to the foreign investors. Among investing countries, Taiwan is on top of the list in both the number of projects and the total invested capital. A majority of Taiwanese-invested companies are medium to large enterprises and there is a shortage of mid –level managers who will be responsible for managing day-to-day activities of local workers. Realizing problem encountered between Taiwan executive and the Vietnamese labor, the Taiwanese government encourages Universities to develop projects to produce mid-level Vietnamese managers for Taiwanese oversea companies. Further, Taiwanese Government initiated a Master Program for Vietnamese students to foster future Vietnamese mid-level manager and to bridge the gap between Taiwanese executives and Vietnamese labors. The program is called “The Industrial Technology R&D Master Program” Based on the case study of this program, the purpose of this study is to understand the influence of communication in international collaborative project with three-folds: (1) Identifying factors influence on communication in the international

collaborative projects; (2) Evaluating the effectiveness of the project on communication aspect; (3) Comment on improving the communication of participants within the project as a whole. The result of this research and the lesson learned can assist the success of the future international collaborative project.

Keywords: International Collaborative Project, Collaboration, Communication, Communication Skills, Communication influences

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Research Background

### 1.1.1 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in East Asia and Vietnam

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in East Asia's transitional economies, especially China and Vietnam, has burgeoned in recent years (Mirza and Freeman, 2007). Vietnam attracted 1117 FDI projects about US\$ 64.011 billion registered capitals in 2008.

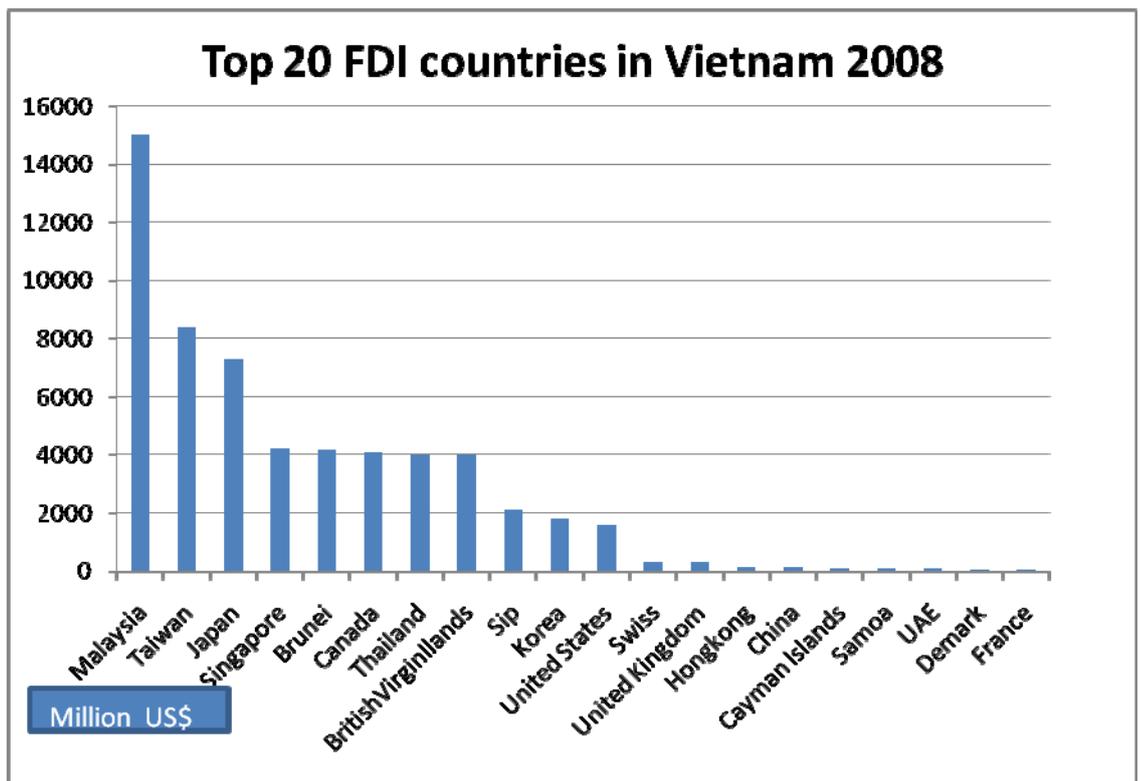


Figure 1. Top 20 FDI Countries in Vietnam 2008

Resource: (<http://www.vietpartners.com/statistic-fdi.htm>)



In top 20 FDI countries in Vietnam 2008 although Malaysia is the first country invest into Vietnam with 15,500 million US\$ beside that Taiwan is the country has FDI in Vietnam with nearly 9,000 Million US\$. The third is Japan with 7,000 million US\$. After that is Singapore, Brunei, Canada, Thailand, BritishVirginIslands with nearly equal FDI in Vietnam.

#### 1.1.2 Taiwanese FDI in Vietnam

After the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1996, when China fired missiles in the vicinity of Taiwan, the Taiwanese government actively promotes a “go-south policy,” encouraging investment in Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries (Wang and Hsiao, 2002). Vietnam has more advantages in this situation because there are no quotas for Vietnamese exports to the European Union, but only Chinese goods can’t have advantage like Vietnamese exports not also Chinese goods musts pays more quotas for export to European. In recent years, Taiwan has invested in Vietnam with over 1,400 projects, worth about US\$ 7.7 billion (MPI, 2005). More Taiwanese company that established early smalls company in Vietnam include that are Sanyang Industry Co, Formosa Group, Ta Ya Electric



Wire and Cable Co, Pou Chen Corp. Tina Chen - one spokesman in one of big invest company (Pou Chen)- had said "Low-cost, quality, and diligent [Vietnamese] young workers are the first factors that attracted Taiwanese companies." Pou Chen is the world's largest shoemaker that makes footwear for renowned clients such as Nike Inc, Adidas AG, Reebok Ltd. and Puma A. All through the 1990s and up until today, Taiwan has been the number one investor in Vietnam.

### 1.1.3 The Industrial Technology R&D Master Program for Training Vietnamese Mid-Level Managers

Currently, the Industrial Development Bureau of Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Education in Taiwan have sponsored a collaborative training program to produce the mid-level manager for the oversea-based Taiwanese companies in the world (hereafter called The Industrial Technology R&D Master Program or IT R&D program for short).

The Project consists of six parties. They are the Government, Academia, Industry and Vietnamese college graduates. In The Government, there are The Ministry of Education (MOE), The Ministry of Economic Affair (MOEA) and The Industrial Development Bureau (IDB). The Academia is Shu-Te University. In



Industry, there are the company A and company B. who are having processing projects in Vietnam. The product of this project is Mid-level managers with Master's degree.

There are many factors that influence to the success of the international collaborative projects, such as: leadership, communication, trust, decision making, roles and responsibilities, financial and human resources. In many factors affect to the success of collaborative project, communication is very important. Because this project consists of many parties, therefore, effective communication is a necessary factor for the success of international collaborative project. If one of the parties does not communicate effectively with the other parties, the result will cause misunderstanding between parties.

## **1.2 The Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study are: (1) identifying factors influence on communication in the international collaborative projects; (2) evaluating the effectiveness of the project on communication aspect; (3) recommending on improving the communication of participants within the project as a whole.

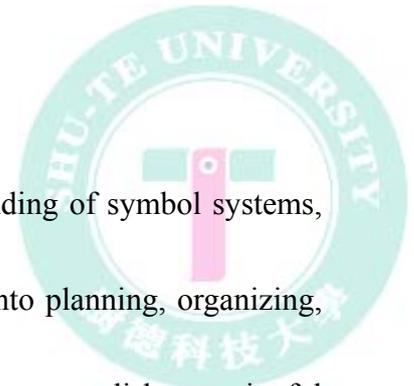


## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

This review of literature is intended to establish a theoretical foundation for determining the success communication factor in international project and the success factors in communication described in the introduction. Firstly, definitions of communication and international collaborative project from different perspectives are compiled. Secondly, the research framework of effective communication in international collaborative project is set up with the foundation of the literature, and relevant cases of communication in collaboration projects are reviewed. Thirdly, the fitness of factors influence effective communication is examined in terms of its constituent elements. Lastly, in effective communication we will review communication skills which consist of two types of communication and member relationship.

### **2.1 Definitions of Communication**

Anderson (1972) said communication is an activity of sharing. Communication is the exchange of an information, thought and emotion between individuals of groups (Boyaci, 1996). When we live we must communicate with people. That is always true. And communication is the key to develop and keep relationship and to build a strong social support network. Communication is the process by which information is



exchanged between individuals. It requires a shared understanding of symbol systems, such as language. So we can say communication brings life into planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling. Communication is the way we accomplish meaningful work by coordinating the efforts of individuals and groups.

Communication is also a process in which thoughts and ideas are exchanged mutually and the meanings are transferred between people by means of symbols such as language and gestures (Himstreet and Batty, 1969). One of research of National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs for Persons with Severe Disabilities identify communication is a process that allows organisms to exchange information by several methods. Communication requires that all parties understand a common language that is exchanged with each other. There are auditory means, such as speaking, singing and sometimes tone of voice, and nonverbal, physical means, such as body language, sign language, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, or the use of writing.

And one definition of communication in The Webster's Dictionary talks about Communication as "sending, giving, or exchanging information and ideas." And we "send, give, and exchange information" every single day whether we are aware of it or not. Sometimes we communicate non-verbally, whereas other times we communicate



verbally.

Around the world subject have many researchers defined five types of organizational communication systems: from below to up, horizontal, fascicular and reticular types of communication systems. While the first three systems may be called formal communication, fascicular and reticular types of communication systems are classified as informal constructions (Hersey, Balnchard & Johnson, 1996).

But we can give the definition implies a simple is one-way action where person A takes knowledge from his or her head and simply pours (transfers) it into the head of person B. Obviously, communication is not so simple. Person B may refuse to accept A's ideas and may instead wish to present his or her own ideas (give feedback). Or person B may completely misinterpret A's message.

Communication is the process of people sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings with each other in commonly understandable ways. (Cheryl and Cordell, 1997). Even if an organization carries out its tasks more efficiently than expected, it should know that its achievement will not last long if it doesn't show the same efficiency in communication (Tutar, 2002).

A research by Yammarino and Naughton (1988) demonstrates a positive



relationship between the amounts of time spent communicating and important work outcomes such as the level of effort expended by employees and employee job satisfaction. As a result of these and similar findings, many organizations have invested significant financial and human resources toward developing effective and efficient internal communication systems to facilitate the communication of relevant and timely information to employees at all levels of the organization.

#### *The process of communication*

Communication starts with an idea, a thought or an emotion. The process that takes place when somebody wants to communicate an idea is as follows: the sender translates an idea into symbols and sends a message to the receiver, who decodes the message into information. A very simple process, but in interpersonal communication many things can go wrong. For example, there is little chance that the decoded information corresponds to the original idea if the sender decides to use the Chinese language as symbol for his idea and the receiver does not understand Chinese. Communication can lead to transfer of information when the symbols can be translated, and even then it is still uncertain whether the information corresponds to the original idea. Feedback is necessary to check whether the information is right (Baker, 1996).

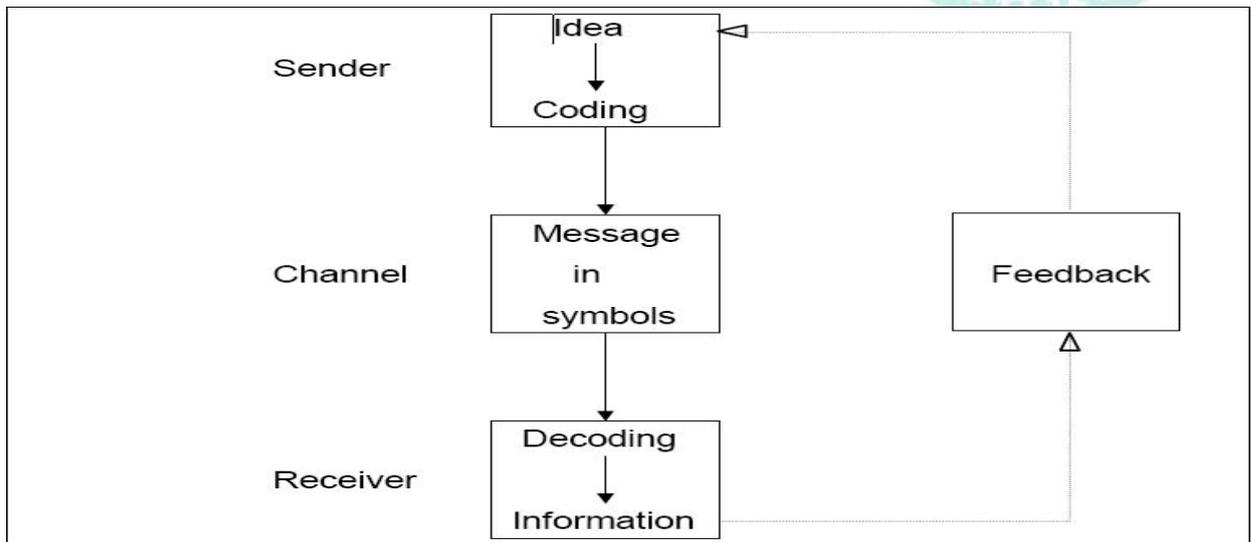


Figure 2. The Communication Process

An enormous number of factors influence interpersonal communication. All players in the process have their own particular characteristics like expectations, attitudes, prejudices, history, values and beliefs, moods, likes and dislikes, abilities, etc. This module deals with these factors more detailed in the following chapters. In our normal daily conversations we tend to forget about all these influences. The feedback principle, for example, is seldom used, which all too often leads to misunderstandings or conflicts. The readback/hearback loop is a compulsory feedback mechanism in Air Traffic Control and in interpersonal communication often simply forgotten. (Baker,



1996).

## **2.2 International Collaboration**

Have many researcher say about collaboration in the world but few researcher said about international collaboration until now. The following are relevant definitions of international collaboration from different perspectives.

### *Focusing on collaboration among individuals*

Schrage (1995) said collaboration as “the process of shared creation: two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own”. Iivonen and Sonnenwald (2000) said collaboration is human behavior that facilitates the sharing of meaning and completion of activities with respect to a mutually shared super ordinate goal and which takes place in a particular social, or work, setting.

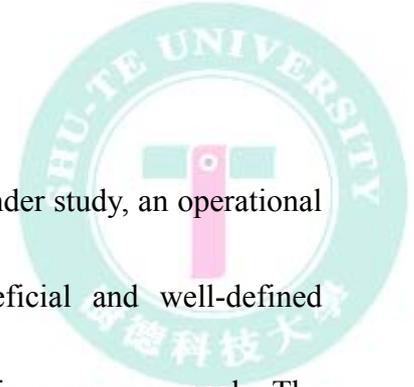
### *Focusing on collaboration among organizations*

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) define collaboration as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals”. They also emphasis characterize the collaborative relationship as a durable and pervasive one, which aims to accomplish common goals (e.g., success and rewards)



through a jointly structured and shared responsibility. In the past collaboration had defined as “through organizational and inter-organizational structures where resources, power and authority are shared. People are brought together to achieve common goals, which could not be accomplished by a single individual or an independent organization” (Kagan, 1991).

Collaboration is any joint activities by two or more agencies that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately (Bardach, 1998); and collaboration is a positive, purposive relationship between organizations that retain autonomy, integrity, and distinct identity and thus, the potential to withdraw from the relationship (Cropper, 1996). Snavely and Tracy (2000) note that “Collaboration refers to working closely with other organizations where their missions overlap and intersect, and where the combining of resources leads to enhanced service effectiveness and efficiency. Service integration - concrete steps taken to break down organization barriers— is central to the process of forming collaborations.” A service integration approach calls upon agencies to combine organization structures through such procedures as sharing office space, sharing client information, sharing staff and coordinating staff assignments, and jointly applying for grants or engaging in joint budgeting” (Kagan, 1993).



Considering the characteristics of the IT R&D program under study, an operational definition of collaboration is defined as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: (1) a definition of mutual relationships and goals; (2) a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; (3) mutual authority and accountability for success; and (4) sharing of resources and rewards” (Mattessich & Monsey, 1993)

### **2.3 Communication in Collaborative Project**

The importance of communication in the project success was stated by many scholars and researchers, such as, Anderson (1972). Beardsley, 2003. Boyaci, 1996. Marjatta Huhta, 2002. Bambacas and Margaret Patrickson, 2006. Joyce M. Czajkowski (2006) in his research on Collaboration Success Measurement Model pointed out that communication is one of most important factors influences on the success of international collaboration project.

Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey (1993) stated 20 factors that influence the Success of Collaboration. Among them there are 2 factors related to Communication: (1) open and frequent communications; (2) established informal relationships and



communication links. Carolyn Parkinson (2006) also stated that communication is one of the factors building successful collaborations

#### **2.4 Factors Influence Effective Communication**

In the 1991 edition of Supervision, 725 upper and middle managers were surveyed and cited the ability to communicate ideas and plans in front of an audience as the number one skill in terms of upward mobility, surpassing negotiation, selling and persuasive talents. (The association to advance collegiate schools of business, 1998)

A study of the top 1000 advertising executives in 2001 stated that strong presentation skills (55%) was the single most important business asset to possess. Specific industry experience was ranked a distant second (23%) and management experience at only 3%. (The association to advance collegiate schools of business, 2001)

In July of 2002, The Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business conducted a survey of MBA graduates and found that they felt that the ability to communicate effectively was the single most useful skill in their career. (The association to advance collegiate schools of business, 2002)

#### **2.5 Communication Skills**

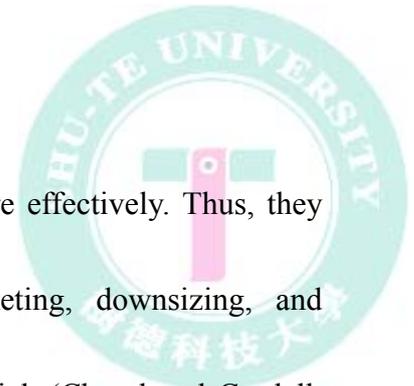


A survey conducted in 1986 by the Journal of Business Communication of Fortune 500 vice president shows that 97/100 percent “believed that communication skills had affected their advancement to a top executive position”.

Hattersley and McJannet (2005) said “the best idea in the world can fail if it’s not communicated effectively”. Communication skills are important to managers in the roles they execute. Even though managerial tasks may have changed the challenge with advances in technology, workforce diversity, globalization and the emphasis of working in teams accentuates managers’ need to communicate effectively (Linstead et al., 2004).

Research considering the effectiveness of communication between management and employees (Hunt and Baruch, 2003) and its impact on commitment (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2004) suggests that it is the way the human resource management (HRM) practices are communicated that is a key concern in promoting commitment. Effective communication is considered a vital part of effective HRM. However, management literature most frequently considers communication in the context of Industrial Relations.

Communication skills are a major concern for any organization. Managers and employees who are skilled communicators have fewer misunderstandings, make fewer

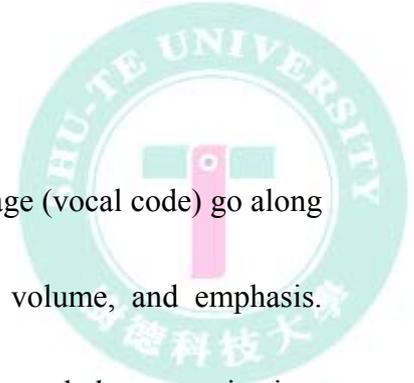


mistakes, create less waste, and deal with disagreements more effectively. Thus, they are more productive. And in this time of global marketing, downsizing, and technological advances these communication skills are essential. (Cheryl and Cordell, 1997)

Effective communication skills are: the ability an individual displays in effectively communicating with everyone in professional manner and in the personal department; A bridge of understanding between organism cultures and individuals (Sandelands, 1999).

## **2.6 Types of Communication Skills**

"Organizational communication is the exchange of verbal, nonverbal among people who working to accomplish common tasks and goals" (O'Hair/Friedrich/Shaver, 1998). Verbal communication skill is oral communication (Northeastern University, 2008) that using words and expressed by voice (eruptingmind.com, 2009). Non-verbal communication skills are made up of: Visual; Tactile; Vocal. Non-verbal communication skills are use of time, space, and image. (Bambacas & Patrickson, 2007; Northeastern University, 2008). Cheryl and Cordell in 1997 said about code in communication as basic element. The code is not the message but the symbols that carry the message. And have three basic communication codes: Language (verbal code) is spoken and written



words used to communicate thoughts and emotions; Paralanguage (vocal code) go along with spoken language, including tone of voice, pitch, rate, volume, and emphasis.

(Although many texts list paralanguage as a subcategory of nonverbal communication, we have elected to separate them in order to emphasize the importance of each); Nonverbal (visual code) is all intentional and unintentional means other than writing or speaking by which a person sends a message, including facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, appearance, posture, size and location of office, and arrival time at meetings.

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t being said”-Peter Drucker (1973). When you present face-to-face, people receive information through what you say verbally, how you sound vocally, and how it appears visually. The entire package must be synchronized for maximum benefit. In a study at UCLA in 1967, Dr. Albert Mehrabian found that when there are conflicts of trust and believability between the verbal (what is said), the vocal (how the voice says is) and the visual (what is seen of the speaker) the visual is overwhelmingly dominant. Research in his book “Silent Messages” shows the verbal is believed 7% of the time, the vocal 38% and the visual 55% of the time. Dr Mehrabian in his research found that 84% of communication is vocal and 16% is verbal.



Verbal communication:

Verbal communication is words what in our mind and we say that of saying what's on your mind with words. We often take this form of communication for granted saying things we regret and opening our mouths before we think about it. It's very important to become aware of what words you choose to use when communicating to others as well as to yourself.

Non-verbal communication:

Mary Bambacas and Margaret Patrickson 2007 say some of skills in communication. These are: Influencing; Leadership; Coaching; Problem solving; Resilience; Skills – communication Interpersonal; Verbal fluency; Written; Listening.

Research shows that our verbal communication is responsible for only 10 to 20 per cent of our message getting through to the other person, whereas 70 to 80 per cent of the impact is produced by our body language (Morris, 1938). When we try to read body language, there are two important things to look for: clusters and incongruence (Pease, 1984).

## **2.7 Members' Relationships**

The formal relationships: suppose transition of the information between different



decisional levels, inside the industrial unit, the information been sent, from one person to another, along the hierarchical lines (Mateu N-Petrisor, 2007)

Formal communication is a level of language used in official conversation, whether oral or written. It strictly adheres to the rules and conventions of a language, with emphasis on formality of tone, politeness and civility of expression, and an authoritative exchange (Daft and Lengel, 1986)

The informal relationships: is based on social relations born inside the industrial unit, without counting the hierarchical subordination relations (MateuN-Petrisor, 2007)

Informal relationship is an important mechanism to help achieve both the production goals and the social goals of groups (Robert E. Kraut, 2002). Since this study mostly review the literature of e-Learning, Qualitative method will be adopted.

After review literature with more author said about collaboration project , communication in international collaborative project, factor of communication we base on Czajkowski (2006) in his research on Collaboration Success Measurement Model and factors that influence the Success of Collaboration of Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey (1993) we have our research framework about two factors affect to an effective



communication. There are communication skills and member' relationship. This is our research framework with three hypotheses.

## 2.8 Research Framework

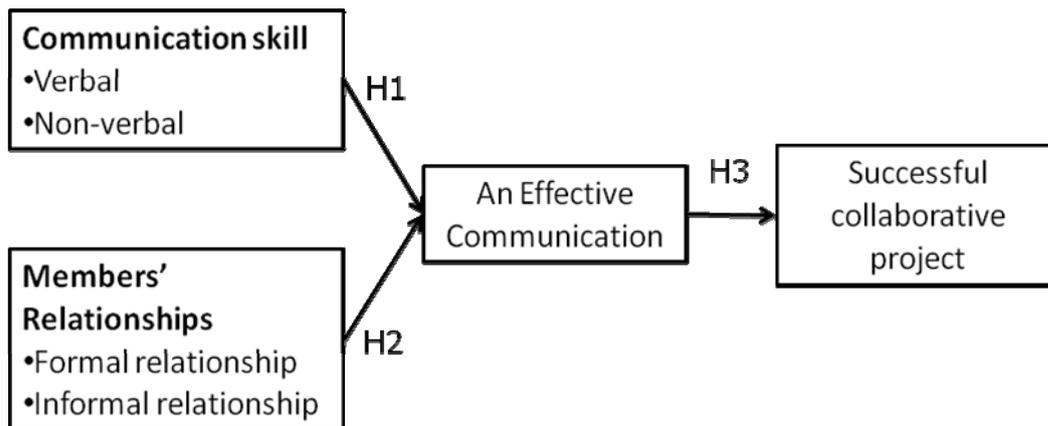


Figure 3. Research Framework

**H1:** If collaborative group members have effective communication skills then communication between party members will be effective in the collaborative project

**H2:** If collaborative group members established formal and informal relationships then communication between party members will be effective in the collaborative project

**H3:** If there is an effective communication in the international collaborative project, then the project will be successful



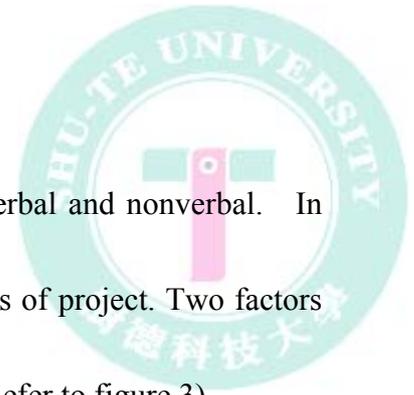
## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

Qualitative Research is collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. Quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things, qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. The nature of this type of research is exploratory and open-ended. Small numbers of people are interviewed in-depth and/or a relatively small number of focus groups are conducted. Qualitative research methods can be, and are, used by researchers with quite different epistemological positions. Qualitative researchers tend to be concerned with meaning (Carla Willig, 2001)

In our research we use 3 steps for collecting qualitative data and this method focus on understanding deeply of human behaviors. Three methods are: (1) identify success factors of communication; (2) focus groups; and (3) face-to-face structured interviews.

### **3.1 Identify Success Factors**

Base on the literature review, we found the factors that influence the success of collaborative project is communication dimension, leadership dimension, trust dimension etc. The success factors of communication have two dimensions. They are: communication skills and member relationship. In communication skills we have 2



factors influence to the success of project. Two factors are verbal and nonverbal. In member relationship we have 2 factors influence to the success of project. Two factors in member relationship are formal and informal relationship. (Refer to figure 3)

### 3.2 Focus Group

Focus group research has long been prominent in marketing studies (Morgan, 1988), because we can seek to tap emotional and unconscious motivations not amenable to the structured questions of conventional survey research. Moreover, the communication among in this step we verify the factors influence success of the project and factors influence communication in IT R&D project, and verify and design the questionnaire for the next step. Six participants are selected from executives of industrial partners, from project managers of academia-industry collaborative projects, from experts of Shu-Te University. During the discussion, irrelevant factors are deleted and newly identified influencing factors are added. This update list of influencing factors becomes the success factors of international collaborative projects and the success factors of communication.

The Structure of Focus Group Questionnaires

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Success factor</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>
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H1	Communication Skills	Verbal	2
		Nonverbal	2
H2	Member Relationship	Formal	2
		Informal	2
H3	Communication in collaborative project		2

### 3.3 Face-to-Face Interviews

The most important method used in collecting qualitative data is interview. According to Riley et al. (2000), interviews are one of the most common methods for collecting primary data. Among different way of interview such as face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, computer-assisted interviews, and interviews through the electronic media (Sekaran, 2003) we chose to conduct face to face interview for this study. Structured questions were used as the base for the interviews, and they were asked further in order to get further explanations of the respondents' answers.

This step will help us become easy to gather the data and analyze data later on.

Base on the answer gather from the focus group, we analyze the result and gather the most important point to create a questions for interview. The draft questionnaire was used to send 9 students and the project manager for the clarity and understandable. After the modification we have a structure questionnaire for face-to face interview. Structured interviews consist of the interviewer asking each respondent the same questions in the



same way. The interview structured questionnaires help to solve the research problems and also provide opportunities for respondents to explain the topic in more detail.

#### The Structure of face to face Interview Questionnaires

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Success factor</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>
H1	Communication Skills	Verbal	2
		Nonverbal	2
H2	Member Relationship	Formal	2
		Informal	2
H3	Communication in collaborative project		2

## Chapter 4 Analysis and Finding



As mentioned in the methodology, focus group collect ideas from the representatives from the 4 experts of the “Industrial R&D Master Program” and after that we modify the questionnaire and conduct face-to-face interviews with five participants and manager in the IT R&D Master Program. In this section, we presented a summary of the main findings from focus group & interview.

### 4.1 Focus Group

The purpose this part is to verify the communication factor that influence to the success of the collaborative projects; and verify the factors that make an effective communication. We invited ten experts from the parties of the case project and the universities who are doing on the similar project. There are six experts in the focus group meeting. Base on the question asked, all the experts had some comments and suggestion for the communication in the international collaborative project.

#### *Communication in international collaborative projects*

In the table below, there are our questions and answers about factor communication in international collaborative projects.

Question 1: Do you think the effective communication is an important factor in the



success international collaborative project?

Experts	Answers
1	Yes, I do. I almost agree with this because with me I think the effective communication is an important factor in the success of the international collaborative project. In the international collaborative project ever parties must communicate open and frequent for effective communication.
2	I agree with experts 1 because with me I always must communicate with another person when I work. Every day in our projects I always communicate with more people and I must communicate with them for effective works
3	I am teaching in University and I always communicate with my student. In this project students and me always communicate so I think if we can communicate effective we will make project will success.
4	The effective communication with me is a most important factor. Because if I have a chance to join into some projects and I see effective communication have more affected to success of project.
5	With the high position in company, I very attend to communication in company. When we have business with another company we try to more effective communicate for success of corporate
6	Yes, I do. I agree with your idea. But I think we have a lot of factor important in the international collaborative projects such as cultural, trust etc.

All of experts agree with this question with 100% percent and they said effective communication is an important factor in the international collaborative project. After introduction about our project, our purpose of this research and each expert attend to the focus group. With answers of expert we saw the communication factor have effect to the international collaborative projects and the communication is the important factor in some factors of the international collaborative projects. Beside the expert have give our research know about another factor can affective to the success of the international collaborative projects.



Question 2: Do you think if the international collaborative projects lack the factor

communication, the projects will be fail?

Experts	Answers
1	Yes, I agree. If in the project lack the factor communication I think project will be fail.
2	Yes, I do. But I think sometimes your idea right sometimes idea wrong, in project have more factor for success and if lack factor communication project still work.
3	Yes, I do. Expert 2 say very right. I think in project not only need have more factor but also belong to the project manager want to continue or not.
4	I don't think idea of expert 2 and 3 because I think project will be fail if lack the factor communication.
5	I want to say again my idea every project always must have factor communication and this factor must effective for the success of the international collaborative communication
6	That is good question but you must say little about another factor for made clear about success of international collaborative project.

In the second questions experts agree with our idea and we can see factor communication have more affective to the success of the international collaborative project.

To support Hypothesis 3, the communication is one important element to be mentioned. All the experts agreed in this point, because they believe that no project can be successful without communication. During the process of the project, when the project proposed, to the time they started to recruited students, communication plays an important role to make every single step successful

*Factors that make the effective communication performance in international*



*collaborative projects*

In the table below, there are our questions and answers about factor communication in international collaborative projects. In this part we focus on Hypothesis 1.

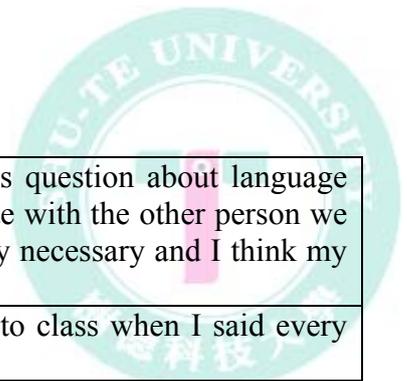
Question 3: Do you communicate openly with the other participants within the project?

Experts	Answers
1	Yes, I do. I often communicate openly with our parties and my students. Because in our project have more parties with private calendar so we must openly communicate for more detail in together calendar.
2	In our university we usually communicate openly together and made the purpose of our parties together with our.
3	Communicate openly can made for confusion with another person, may be sometimes you must say with another way for understanding. So with me I think you must use more ways to communicate with another person in project.
4	I can give some idea for you beside expert 3 you must use more skill for communicate with another parties don't do one way for all situation.
5	In our company openly is the first for doing on business, because if you don't openly when you communicate with another person you will make you and another will easy misunderstand your idea
6	Our company has the same policy like expert 5 company. We mobilize our employee openly when we communicate in company that will make a habit for our business.

In question 3 of communication skills we saw communicate openly with the other participants within the project is necessary but not enough for communicate so we ask experts for next question.

Question 4: Is your language skill enough for you communication?

Experts	Answers
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1	The first question you ask our about openly and this question about language skill is very intelligent because when we communicate with the other person we must use language for communicate. This skill is very necessary and I think my language skill enough for me communication.
2	Yes, I feel my language skill very good. When I go to class when I said every student understand and give me feedback is clearly.
3	My language skill not enough for me because you know we communication we can use more ways to communicate and you must have more than language skill for communicate with students
4	In our university we encourage our aboard student improve their language skill for study and research. So I think language skill is enough for our live.
5	In our company we made more class for our employee for attend. There are Chinese classes, account class etc for improves our knowledge and language is one of class we open.
6	Our company still have class for employee but we invite professor in teach for our.

In this question we can see the important point of language skill and language skill is the key in communication. After that we give them one question about nonverbal communication skill.

Question 5: When talking, do you have eye contact with others?

Experts	Answers
1	When I talking with another person I always have contact eye with them. And that is my habit.
2	Yes, when talking if you don't look at eye with others I think that very impolite.
3	Yes I agree with expert 2. I often do that when I talking.
4	I usually do that like another.
5	When we talking beside eye contact we have more language can't send by voice we can use hand body language for our communication
6	Yes, I think that will make for understand what the other want to say.



The next question we give expert is question 6: when talking to each other, do you just listen to the content they say? If not, do you think that their body language make you understand them more?

Experts	Answers
1	I listen everything when I talking with another beside that I look their body language for understand what is the under idea what they said.
2	Yes, I agree with your idea.
3	I don't have idea in this question.
4	I agree with you and in my experience body language have more than 50% what exactly people say.
5	I often see body language of the other and I can guess emotion of them.
6	I agree with you. In my opinion I think if you don't listen to the content they say and understand their body language you will loss more information.

In this question the expert identify verbal factor strongly affect to communication skill.

Both formal and informal communication channel were used in during the process of the project, said the Expert 1. She is the project manager of the Industrial Technology R&D Master Program. In her opinion, when we could use both formal and informal channel flexibly, the effectiveness of communication will be doubled. Since in the project that consists of so many parties with different background, therefore, the flexibility is important.

The communication skills, such as, presentation, negotiation, conversation, are

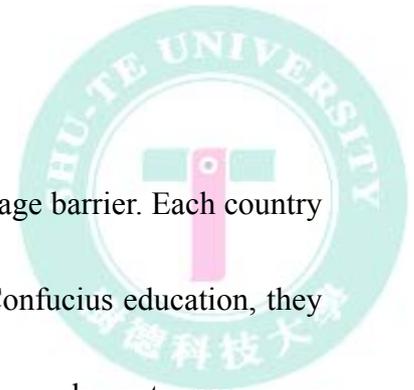


added by the Expert 2. He is having a similar project, and he is also doing a research on the international collaborative projects. In the project which exists in short time and complicated of many parties, using different skills of communication is really important.

The more people in the project could use the communication skills effectively, the more well performance of the communication will be.

Expert 1 raised the idea of using the nonverbal and verbal skill of communication. Using words through email, fax, and announcement is kind of the verbal communications. Whereas, the gesture, eyes contacts, habit are kind of non verbal communication. The people in the project should take care of all types of communication to have the better result. The Expert 1 also emphasized that if the manager of the project could have not only the verbal communication but also the nonverbal communication, then the participants in the project could have a good example to follow, not only with the information transformed by the verbal communication.

The other experts support the hypotheses and they added in the other factors that may influence on the effective performance of communication in international collaborative project. Experts 3, who have the experience of working with foreigners for



a long time, he shared his ideas on culture difference and language barrier. Each country has a specific culture and even they have the same origin of Confucius education, they also have some particular custom and behavior. Therefore, we have to pay more attention in culture factor. Language is obviously an outstanding problem. When students come to Taiwan to study, not all of them can speak and use Chinese well, for example in the case project. They come from different background and all most of them cannot speak Chinese fluently. Expert 3, 4 and 5 support the suggestion of having the pre-course for all the students before they get to the country to study.

With hypothesis 2 we have 4 questions

Question 7: Does communication among people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meeting and in informal way?

Experts	Answers
1	Communication need to be send with two ways formal meeting and informal way. We can combine both two ways for effective communication
2	If one project can be combine two way I think member relationship in project will close and each parties in project can be share everything with another parties.
3	I agree with your question but it very difficult for communication among people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meeting and in informal way.
4	In weekend I always have party with my student and I think that made our close nearly than.
5	In business, we must made relationship with another company and I agree with your question.
6	I agree with idea of expert 2.



Question 8: Are you comfortable discussing your worries and object with another parties?

Experts	Answers
1	We don't have problem when we discussing about our worries with another parties.
2	I usually do it with my students for their lesson or thesis.
3	You must discuss you worries with another parties because if you don't do that I think another parties will misunderstand you.
4	Yes, I am.
5	I often do that because in business if you don't do that everything will go to bad.
6	Yes, I am. But if you have close relationship with another parties you say with them about your worries and object easy than you don't have close relationship with them.

Question 9: What kinds of relationship between you and other parties in this project?

Experts	Answers
1	My kinds of relationship between me and other parties in this project is mix all type of relationship.
2	My relationship between me and other parties in project just is normal relationship.
3	With me I think that is formal relationship. Because my position is professor teach for student so I always made my relationship with them is formal relationship.
4	My relationship is same with expert 1.
5	We want to made all relationship with every parties in project and that will help our more in this project
6	In this time, that is formal relationship. But I want to establish informal relationship in the future; I want to emphasize again my idea in question 8. We must establish informal relationship with another for success of our project.

In both question 8 and 9 we can realize the important of member relationship factor



in communication.

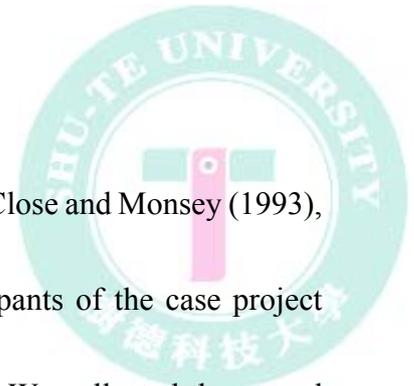
Question 10: How do you evaluate member relationship in this project?

Experts	Answers
1	I usually evaluate member relationship in this project base on share information between members.
2	I usually use different way to evaluate member relationship.
3	May be I base on the way student share information with me to evaluate that.
4	I don't evaluate member relationship in this project.
5	Until now I just evaluations our relationship between university and our company in meeting and paper.
6	In the future I think I will have member relationship close with another member in this project

Almost the Experts agree with the idea of building a strong relationship between the participants and the stakeholders. In other words, when people in the project could have good relationship with each others, then the communication will perform effectively. However, they also put the remark on trust and credibility of the information within the project. They also agree that gossip is the killer of trust.

Come to the end of the focus group, we have emphasis the influence of communication on the success of IT R&D Master program and also the influence of communication skills and member relationships on the performance of communication in the international collaborative project.

#### **4.2 Face-to-Face Interviews**



The questionnaire was adopted from Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey (1993), the content focus on examining the perspective of the participants of the case project with the importance of the communication in the case project. We collected the scored from all the interviews and also asked them for permission to record all the interviews.

With each question we have all participants' agreement and we also have deeply understanding with the uncovered problem in the case project .Successful collaborative groups communicate often and well. They keep each other up to date, discuss issues openly, and consistently convey an appropriate level of information to people outside the group. Communication styles and methods should reflect the diversity of the group. A large or complex collaborative group may even need staff dedicated to keeping communication flowing.

Personal connections also produce a more cohesive group. Communication cannot just happen via memos, email and newsletters. Members need to get to know each other and keep in touch.

Channels of communication exist on paper, so that information flow occurs. In addition, members establish personal connections – producing a better, more informed, and cohesive group working on a common project.



After verifying all the factors that make the effective performance of communication in focus group, we interviewed some participants, employees in the case project, the employees from the companies, and also the leader of the project. In this part, we presented the result of interview to validate these factors and uncover the problems might exist in terms of communication qualities, personalities, styles and credibility.

*The interviews with participants*

With Hypothesis 1 we had 6 questions

No.	Questions	Answer	
		Yes	No
1	Do you communicate openly with the other participants within the project?	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
2	Do you get the information as often as you need?	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
3	Is your language skill enough for you communication?	10 (100%)	0 (0%)
4	When talking, do you have eye contact with others?	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
5	Do you understand all what others' talk to you? If not, what do you think is the barriers for your understanding?	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
6	When talking to each other, do you just listen to the content they say? If not, do you think that their body language make you understand them more?	10 (100%)	0 (0%)

In the question 1 all of participants answer yes for our with 100% agreement. After we give participants question about Hypothesis 1 they almost support for our hypothesis



and emphasis communication skill is important in communication.

When we have the interview with student 1, one of the participants who will work for Company A later on. He was a student in Vietnam; he joined in the program in the year 2008 as a scholarship student. In the interview he mentioned about his ideas of an effective communication, and what he learnt from the other parties in project, and the implication to his dream job in the future.

He was a good student in terms of study and also activities in the University of Dalat. For the whole four years studying in Dalat, he works very hard and had scholarship for the whole time, however, he also joined into most of the activities with the students community. He said joining in to those kinds of activities, he could learn a lot, for example, he could learn the communication skills, presentation skills, and speaking English. He is a good student.

He almost gives a yes answer for our questions. And his emphasis again about information in communication is very important so he always communicates with another person when he needs information or wants to share information. He said he always has enough information that happens in project. But when we ask him about question 5, Does communication among the people in this collaborative group happen

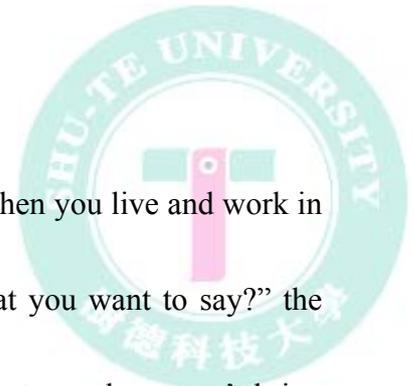


both at formal meeting and in informal ways? He told us about some of the conferences, meetings, and also some outings and closed lunch with the project manager. By those activities, they all have information by the formal or informal methods.

When we ask him about this question: how do you evaluate your communication skills? He just smiled and said “In Vietnam, I think I am confident with my speaking skill, but in Taiwan is very difficult for me do that because different language. Very funny but you know when I go to company work for 9 week I want to said with my boss, I wanted to equipment for my work but I must say it in three times. I talked with my boss with my words, my hand and I must draw it on the paper with 15 minute for one simple activity”

The second interview was with Student 2. Her major in the University is Chinese; therefore, she has the strength in languages; furthermore, she worked for a Taiwanese company right after she graduated from the University. In the interview with her, she shared her thought on the communication concept and showed her admiration to the PM and her communication style. In addition, she also shared the management style of the Taiwanese company that she worked before.

When she hears the first interview said that she smile together and said with the



first interview: “Why you don’t get your dictionary with you when you live and work in Taiwan? If you have one dictionary you can find exactly what you want to say?” the first interview say with her: “Yes, I know that but when we go to work we can’t bring dictionary every time. So the most important in communication with me is language skill.”

With our questions she all gives highest mark. She said she has more experience in communication before and she said because she has the strength in languages so she can communicate with student, university and company. So with the question 1, do you communicate openly with the other participants within the project, she said that they often have the meeting for new information, and they also have closed lunch time, therefore, they always have chance to communicate really often.

Student 3 has won the award for her national chemical implementation researches, and she is also the top student in Chemistry Department of her University. She is the best students of Ton Duc Thang University in Ho Chi Minh City. She is an out-going person; she said that when she was going to the university, she was aware that communication is really important. And now, she is in another country with so many new friends, and environment, she has to learn to become more effective in

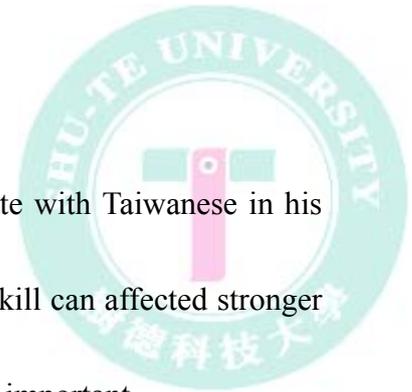


communication.

Student 4 is good at Automatic and Electronic Engineering; he also won award on creating and developing robots and robot remote software in the University, in the companies and also the national award for student researches. He is going to do the practical training and internship with Company B Hardware Company.

When we ask him about language skill question 8: “Is your language skill enough for your communication?” he answers with one real example: “Not enough. I has one example very interesting for your question that is cultural different. He goes to Taiwan study and work, because culture of Taiwan is different with Vietnam so we have some difficulty with language and the working culture. In Vietnam students or workers always be observed by their supervisors of professors or bosses but in Taiwan we have more time for do anything we don’t need to report for supervisor or boss if don’t necessary. We feel more freedom. But beside that environment change made we shocked so when university and company made well environment for us, we can study, research and work more effective.”

He said because he studies in Automatic and Electronic Engineering so his communication skills not effectively as another person. He said he will try to study



Chinese for improving language skills for easy to communicate with Taiwanese in his company in the future. He wants to emphasis again language skill can affected stronger to communication. He absolutely agreed that communication is important.

After we asked question we saw the Hypothesis 1 has support for our research.

With Hypothesis 2 we had 6 questions

No.	Questions	Answer	
		Yes	No
1	Does communication among people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meeting and in informal way?	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
2	Do you personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group?	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
3	Do you think the communications between you and other parties in this project are effective?	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
4	Are you comfortable discussing your worries and object with another parties?	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
5	What kinds of relationship between you and other parties in this project?	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
6	How do you evaluate member relationship in this project?	10 (100%)	0 (0%)

In the second part of face to face interview we focus on hypothesis 2. We get the same answer like the first part.

When we He was a teacher in Vietnam; he joins the program as a full scholarship student in the year 2007. He is now working for Company B Company. With his experience in doing the project in the school in Vietnam, he had his thought on



communication differently and also he could learn more from the effective project. In this interview, he first shared the perspective above communication and later he shared the lesson he learn about “communication and the art of communication” after two years studying in Taiwan.

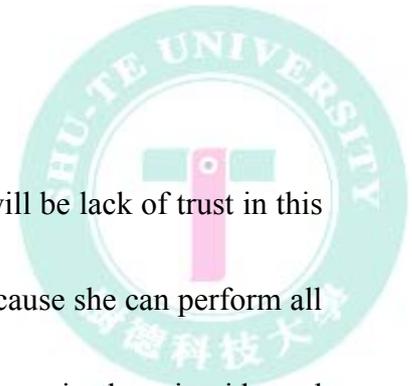
He also gives highest mark with our question when we ask him. When we give him one question about relationship, do you personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group, He answers with serious face: “Everything I can say just one word “relationship” ”. We don’t surprise because he has close relationship with his parties in Vietnam. We ask him what you think about your relationship with other parties. “I want to say more about relationship, we sometimes must take relationship with both channel formal and informal. You must made relationship by formal meeting, using paper, document memo etc or informal party with food, drink some fun playing if you can.”

We face to face interview with one participant a Chinese Vietnamese student, he is going to work for Company B in the future. He is a hard working student. In the interview, he emphasized on the important of communication skill and member relationship in communication.



Come from a commercial Chinese family, he believes that communication skills are really important to every aspect of life, and it is more important for an effective communication in international collaborative project. In addition, he said that member relationship is valuable and we could say that relationship is money; therefore, member relationship management is extremely important to have an effective communication.

We ask him about relationship between his with the companies. Question: (How do you evaluate your communication skills and member' relationship in this project?). He said: "He gives 9 marks for his communication skill although he can say with 3 language fluency. And about the member relationship he said: "with me I think trust is really important in communication and made relationship between student and university, company. I think if we can build trust between parties of project work will done well. For example, "I trust in the manager project and my future because she made for me one chance to go to the board to study and research. I am very thankful the manager project. So with me I think if we have trust between people we will resolve easy". He strongly agreed with me that trust is very important. We ask him: Have any problem about trust in this project? He said: "we have little problem about trust in project because more parties attend in project with private agenda and they don't have



enough opportunity to commute with another parties so there will be lack of trust in this case. But I think the project manager is an important person because she can perform all the communications that make the other parties feel they always in the win side and could get their own purpose. And that made relationship between parties close”

Through the interview with this part, we validated the formal and informal relationship, the two important relationship qualities. And the hypothesis 2 was support for our research

With Hypothesis 3 we had 3 questions

No.	Questions	Answer	
		Yes	No
1	Do you think the effective communication is an important factor in the international collaborative project?	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
2	Do you think If the international collaborative projects lack the factor communication, the projects will fail?	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
3	Do you think the international collaborative projects need members must communicate open and frequent?	9 (90%)	1 (10%)

In the question for hypothesis 3 one again we have support for our research.

Almost 90% participant attends to the face to face interview support for that.

Interview with the manager of the Industrial Technology R&D Master Program

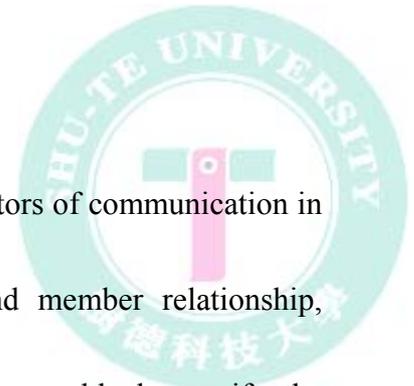
She has been working as a manager of the project from the beginning. The interview with the project manager is conducted with very open way and we could



record her interview. Through this interview we found the support for all the factors in our hypotheses. She has been working for the Department of Information Management of Shute University for more than five years. She is in charge of all the documents and paper work. She worked directly under the supervisor of project manager, and also she had a chance to work with many other project managers and parties. In the interview with her, we have a chance to approach a larger concept of communication.

In her opinion, communication skills are really important in the international collaborative project. She told us the very first time when she proposed for the project. How she used the communication skills and negotiation skills to make all the parties found that they win in the project. By using email, memo, fax, and formal meeting or conference we would announce the important information; and through the outing, vacation or close lunch, we could deeply understand the perspective of our participants about the process. We always use many communication skills, channels, and apply them flexibly for different situation.

In her opinion, communication skills and member relationship are really important in the international collaborative project.



To conclusion, the focus group which could verify the factors of communication in international collaborative project, communication skills and member relationship, whereas, the interview validated the factors. In addition, we could also verify the importance of communication in international collaborative project. Besides, they also indicated some problems that hidden behind the communication in the international collaborative projects.

We also summarize problems and their suggestions for all the hidden problems in next section. After conducting interviews with different participants, there are some key problems were found as follow:

- *Culture and language differences*: It is difficult for students to understand all an assignment which are given by Professors or Supervisors, and sometimes this problem leads to misunderstanding and get unexpected results.
- *Trust*: It is necessary to have more relationship channel between student and companies or students and university.

All experts believed that communicating consistently was a key factor to maintaining a successful collaboration. They commented, “Communication is extremely important. Also, the consistency of the communication I certainly feel that is a factor for



maintaining collaboration”. “There is no doubt in my mind that communication is one of the strongest factors. If you don’t have a regular meeting time set aside where you’re talking about what you’re doing in your partnership, how it’s going, what needs to be changed, what’s going well ...I don’t think it’s going to last. I think it’s the open communication between the two”

To conclusion, the focus group which could verify the factors communication skill and member relationship, whereas, the interview validated the factors. In addition, we could also verify the role of communication in international collaborative project.



## Chapter 5 Conclusions

### 5.1 Discussion

In our research we have find out success factor for international collaborative projects, one factor important is communication. In communication have 2 factor affected were communication skills and member relationship. After review literature we have research framework and base on our research framework we used qualitative research method with focus group to verify the factors and interviews once again validate them

**H1:** If collaborative group members have effective communication skills then communication between party members will be effective in the collaborative project: supported.

**H2:** If collaborative group members established formal and informal relationships then communication between party members will be effective in the collaborative project: supported

**H3:** If there is an effective communication in the international collaborative project, then the project will be successful: supported

Our research will help improve the performance of the IT R&D Master Program,



and give the suggestion for the other international collaborative projects. If the international collaborative project want to get the purpose is complete with well result, it must pay attention to improve the communication. Communication is very important in the international collaboration projects so the other projects may be focus on improve communication for the success.

In the process of focus group and interviews, all of participant agree with our hypotheses and we found out some problem in communication, they are differences in culture, language and trust.

Firstly, we have to pay attention on culture issue to have the suitable communication channel and build the trust and relationship with other parties who are in different culture. Paying attention on culture factors also help to prevent the possible misunderstanding and mistake in communication those may cause the lack of trust in building the relationship between the parties.

Secondly, that is the issue of language. For example the program that is processing in Shute University, in which, the students cannot fluently use Chinese, and English is also not their mother tongue. Therefore, we would pay more attention on this issue to have the language pre-course and deeply concentrate on practical Chinese in use for the



students getting easier in communication in the companies also in daily life.

Lastly, we need combine more language for easy communicate.

## **5.2 Limitation and Future Study**

The limitation of our study is used just one research method is the quantitative research to have deeply studied all the factors that influence on communication in the international collaborative project. We need to use more research method for our research in future. Especially, we suggest for the further study on the aspect of culture, language differences, and member relationship.



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