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PERCEPTIONS OF TRUST, TRUST BUILDING, AND MAINTENANCE BETWEEN JAPANESE EXPATRIATES AND U.S. HOST NATIONALS IN A MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION

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PERCEPTIONS OF TRUST, TRUST BUILDING, AND MAINTENANCE BETWEEN JAPANESE EXPATRIATES AND U.S. HOST NATIONALS IN A MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION

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Dedication

To my loves, Leoto and Kaito, who made me a Mama during my Ph.D. journey and gave me the strength I never knew I had…

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Abstract

This study examined characteristics of trust in the workplace for Japanese expatriates and U.S. American host nationals, how they build and maintain trust in one another, as well as similarities and differences in such processes with individuals of the same and different national cultural backgrounds, by relying on sensemaking theory. Semi-structured, individual interviews were conducted with 16 Japanese expatriates and 16 U.S. host nationals working at a Japanese manufacturing company across the U.S. Findings revealed that competence and skills, teamwork and collaboration, and open/honest communication were important characteristics of trust in the workplace for both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals, with some cultural differences. In building and maintaining trust, both parties looked for these characteristics in others' behaviors and used them as cues to make sense of whom to (continue) trust(ing); each party, however, identified some unique, specific behaviors that contributed to their trust building and maintenance processes. Further, both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals shared some similarities in how they built and maintained trust with those of the same and different cultural backgrounds, such as competence and skills. However, they also encountered many cultural differences in their relationship development process (e.g., work ethic), which affected how long they took and how much effort they put into establishing and maintaining trust with their colleagues of different cultural backgrounds. These results are discussed in the context of trust in intercultural communication in multinational organizations. Theoretical implications for trust and organizational communication literature are discussed, as are practical implications for individuals working in multinational organizations and corporations who engage with host nationals in the U.S. and expatriates.

Keywords: expatriates, host nationals, trust, culture, organizational communication

Chapter 1: Introduction

The workplace has become more diverse, and it is nowadays common for employees with different cultural backgrounds to work together. Many organizations are expanding their business opportunities overseas, and there are more opportunities than ever for individuals to go to another country as an expatriate (Stahl et al., 2002). Expatriates are individuals sent overseas by their organization's headquarters to work temporarily in a foreign subsidiary, usually for more than 12 months, to accomplish certain tasks and organizational goals (Shaffer et al., 2012). During their international assignments, expatriates play a significant role in organizational development (Kraimer et al., 2016) by functioning as an intermediary of knowledge transfer between the foreign subsidiary and the headquarters in their home country (Kobrin, 1988; Riusala & Suutari, 2004), and by training host nationals (Harzing, 2001). Scholars have examined expatriates' experiences because residing in another country to manage a foreign subsidiary is not an easy task and comes with many challenges (e.g., Black, 1988; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Thus, further research into expatriates' experiences is needed as it can help enhance their international assignments.

Furthermore, in completing their daily duties and international assignments successfully, expatriates' relationships with host nationals become key to their success (van Bakel, 2019) because host nationals can provide valuable information, such as local and cultural information (Vance et al., 2009) and social support (Sokro & Pillay, 2020) that help expatriates socialize and work effectively in their new environment. Additionally, relationships with host nationals are essential for expatriates to complete their international assignment (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004) and increasing job performance and effectiveness (Kraimer et al., 2001). Thus, it is important to examine expatriates' relationships and exchanges with host nationals.

In relationship building, the development and maintenance of trust between expatriates and host nationals is also critical (Fee et al., 2015) because trust is associated with information and knowledge sharing/flow among them (e.g., Shimoda, 2013; Toh & Srinivas, 2012). However, individuals' cultural backgrounds play a part in how they define and build trust with others (Bird & Osland, 2005), especially in intercultural work relationships, such as those between expatriates and host nationals. In turn, depending on one's culture, what they perceive to be important elements in developing trust (Rodriguez & Wilson, 2002) or if individuals see others as inherently trustworthy or not (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961) can vary, which potentially affects important characteristics of trust in the workplace for individuals, and how they build and maintain trust with one another in the workplace. Especially in multinational corporations where expatriates and host nationals with significantly different cultural backgrounds interact (e.g., Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals), their cultural variability may influence essential components of trust as well as how they develop and maintain trust in the workplace, revealing unique aspects about these processes.

Trust in the workplace has been studied widely, with topics such as factors that lead to trust (e.g., R. Kramer, 1999; Mayer et al., 1995) and outcomes of trust (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2007; Schockley-Zalabak & Morreale, 2011) being examined. Although limited, some research acknowledges that communication plays a significant role in trust building such that the quality and amount of information exchanged between individuals affect their trust (Ellis & Shockley-Zalabak, 2001; Thomas et al., 2009). Trust building and maintenance in the workplace are essentially aspects of sensemaking, defined as the process of making sense of and assigning meanings to things or events that happen around us (Weick, 1995). Not knowing whom to trust causes anxiety, which makes individuals engage in sensemaking to determine whom to (continue

to) trust by assigning meaning to others' behaviors (Weick, 1995). Sensemaking is a communication process (Weick et al., 2005), and individuals may rely on communication messages or the behaviors of others in building and maintaining trust with one another. Thus, using sensemaking theory, this study examines what characteristics trust in the workplace has for Japanese expatriates and U.S. American host nationals in a multinational corporation, as well as how they build and maintain trust with one another through communication.

This study is important for a number of reasons. First, this study offers an important piece of knowledge that considers the consequences of culture in the workplace. One's own culture affects how individuals define and build trust with one another (Bird & Osland, 2005). Some studies have examined trust building in interorganizational relationships in intercultural settings—for example, how language plays a part in trust building among international business partners (Henderson & Louhiala-Salminen, 2011), and how tension and interpersonal affect can influence trust in business negotiations with oversea business partners (Lee et al., 2006). In addition, some studies have examined how expatriates and host nationals can build trust through talk (Shimoda, 2013), and important elements in trust building such as work competence and interpersonal affect (Crossman & Noma, 2013). However, studies on characteristics of trust in the workplace and trust building and maintenance through communication between expatriates and host nationals who have different cultural backgrounds are extremely limited. Examining this aspect brings a new contribution to our understanding of trust across cultures. Furthermore, this study offers a multitude of practical communicative strategies that expatriates and host nationals can use to build and maintain (trust) relationships, which can lead to overall positive experiences in the workplace. These communication strategies may also be incorporated into the

socialization and training of employees in multinational corporations, which highlights practical applications of this study that go beyond the academic setting.

Second, antecedents, outcomes, and trust building between supervisors and subordinates in the workplace are well studied (e.g., Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005; Kelley & Bisel, 2014), but research on trust between coworkers is limited (Lau & Liden, 2008). Although many expatriates may have a management position during their international assignments, expatriates and host nationals are not always in supervisor-subordinate relationships; they may work together as coworkers, a different type of relationship that has not been studied much. While research on trust building in the supervisor-subordinate relationships between expatriates and host nationals is important, when these individuals are coworkers, they may use different strategies to build and maintain trust. Therefore, by adding this unique context of coworker relationships, this study will add new insights to the trust literature not only in communication, but also in the fields of management and human resources, which contains several studies on expatriates and host nationals.

Third, although literature on trust building in organizations has been well established (e.g., Schindler & Thomas, 1993), it is almost unknown how durable and stable trust among employees can be (R. Kramer & Lewicki, 2010). Reina and Reina (2015) argue that trust can be maintained when one's intention (i.e., what one says) and actions (i.e., what one does) are consistent. However, there may be more communication strategies that employees use to maintain trust among individuals in organizations. Literature on relational maintenance in organizations discusses strategies that employees use, such as task interdependence (Sias et al., 2012), sharing of quality information (Sias, 2005), and frequent and informal conversations (e.g., Waldron, 1991). These relational maintenance strategies in the workplace may also be

transferred to trust maintenance strategies. Individuals may try to be more interdependent, have more frequent conversations, and share quality information in maintaining trust with their colleagues. Considering that research on trust maintenance is scarce, it is important to examine how individuals maintain trust once it is developed in organizations given the potential impacts that trust has in this context. This study will offer significant contributions to the trust literature by adding communication strategies for trust building and trust maintenance in the case of expatriates and host nationals.

Fourth, many studies on the relationship between expatriates and host nationals have been conducted outside the U.S. (e.g., Ang & Tan, 2016; Crossman & Noma, 2013). According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (2019), many foreign owned multinational corporations operate in the U.S.; more than seven million workers are employed by these companies. It is likely that these multinational corporations in the U.S. have expatriates sent from their headquarters, including from Japan. Thus, many U.S. workers have the opportunity to work with expatriates on a regular basis. In terms of Japanese companies, there are over 8,000 Japanese companies in the U.S. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018). As with other multinational corporations, many U.S. host nationals may need to establish work relationships with Japanese expatriates. In addition, considering the significant cultural differences between Japan and the U.S. (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2010), Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals may perceive different components to be important in trust and/or build and maintain trust differently (Bird & Osland, 2005), which could affect their establishing of effective work relationships. Knowing important characteristics of trust in the workplace for Japanese and U.S. workers as well as how they build and maintain trust toward each other through communication in the workplace will provide valuable and practical knowledge regarding communication strategies of

trust building and maintenance between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals for multinational corporations. Such strategies can help multinational corporations enhance their employees' work experiences by increasing commitment (Ferres et al., 2004), proactive work behavior (Parker et al., 2006), and job performance (Tan & Lim, 2009), which will improve overall organizational effectiveness.

Fifth, much of the existing literature on expatriates and host nationals in multinational corporations focuses on expatriates' experiences (e.g., Chudnovskaya & O'Hara, 2016; Firth et al., 2014). Scholars have acknowledged the importance of paying attention to host nationals' experiences as well (e.g., van Bakel, 2019), given the significance of host nationals' influence on expatriates' overall success in their assignments. This study will examine the experience of *both* expatriates *and* host nationals regarding trust in the workplace, which is something that not many studies have accomplished. The experiences and perspectives of host nationals are important to examine as such knowledge can help expatriates socialize and work successfully with host nationals during their international assignments. Host nationals' perceptions toward expatriates are associated with information exchange and the social support expatriates receive from host nationals (Sokro & Pillay, 2020; Vance et al., 2009), as well as with how expatriates are treated in a foreign subsidiary (Arman & Aycan, 2013). Thus, this study will also expand the limited research on host nationals' experiences with expatriates, highlighting the reasons why paying attention to host nationals' experiences on trust building and maintenance with expatriates is important.

In what follows, first, I will review literature on expatriates and their international assignments, host nationals' experiences, and trust in organizations, including relationship maintenance in the workplace. Then, trust literature focusing on the relationships between

expatriates and host nationals and the effect of culture on trust building processes will be reviewed. Next, sensemaking theory will be discussed by applying it to trust building and maintenance processes, and the dissertation's research questions will be presented. Second, in the method chapter, I will discuss the research context, participants, data collection and procedures, the interview protocol, data analysis, and the validation strategies I employed. Third, the results chapter will present the study's findings, organized according to each of the research questions. Lastly, the discussion chapter will expand on these findings to include theoretical and practical contributions as well as limitations and future directions of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Expatriates and International Assignments

There are more opportunities than ever for employees to work in a foreign country as organizations expand their business globally, and employers send their employees abroad for international work assignments. On the one hand, many employees tend to accept an international expatriate assignment when offered by their company because they believe it will provide a learning opportunity, advance their career in the future (Stahl et al., 2002), and, consequently, lead to better pay and management experience (Carpenter et al., 2001). On the other hand, some employees feel obligated to accept an international assignment (Pinto et al., 2012) because they believe that declining an offer to work in another country will affect their career opportunities in the future negatively, and that those in management positions should not decline an offer to work in a foreign country (Stahl et al., 2002). Individuals also consider their family and work-life balance when making the decision to accept an international assignment or not (Dickmann et al., 2008). In general, employees who are satisfied, identify with their current job (Boies & Ruthstein, 2002), and have entrepreneurial personality characteristics (e.g., take initiative and risk, and are innovative; Chew & Zhu, 2002) tend to accept an international assignment for their career advancement. Consequently, individuals' traits and the motivation behind expatriates' acceptance of an international assignment may affect how they build and maintain relationships with host nationals.

The main responsibilities of expatriates are to manage and obtain knowledge about the foreign subsidiary, such as local operations and their success, and to act as an intermediary to communicate the knowledge they gain in the subsidiary back to headquarters in their home country (Kobrin, 1988; Riusala & Suutari, 2004). Expatriates perceive that they function as the

key person of knowledge transfer and have the freedom to develop what is necessary locally as well as what knowledge to be transferred to the headquarters (Riusala & Suutari, 2004). Additionally, the knowledge the subsidiary receives from their headquarters depends on the expatriates, which can affect overall performance in the subsidiary (Chang et al., 2012). Expatriates are also responsible for teaching host nationals the shared norms and values of the headquarters (Harzing, 2001) and play an important role in organizational development (Kraimer et al., 2016).

While expatriates function as the key personnel connecting the foreign subsidiary and the headquarters in their home country, working in another country is not an easy task. In fact, many expatriates experience challenges during their international assignment. One major challenge expatriates encounter is adjustment to the host environment. Black (1988) and Black and Stephens (1989) identified three different types of adjustment that expatriates experience when abroad in another country. The first type is called general adjustment, which refers to psychological comfort regarding the host environment, such as food and local living conditions. The second type is work adjustment, which refers to psychological comfort associated with work expectations and values in the host environment. Finally, the third type is called interaction adjustment, which can be defined as psychological comfort regarding interpersonal communication and different communication styles with host nationals. As expatriates move overseas, they experience challenges with various kinds of adjustment in order to work and function effectively in their new environment.

Several studies have examined these challenges that expatriates encounter. For example, role ambiguity, role novelty in the host environment, and expatriates' lack of language fluency can affect their adjustment in the new environment (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Role ambiguity,

in particular, has been found to be more significant in international assignments than domestic assignments and negatively associated with work adjustment (Black, 1988). In terms of interaction adjustment, expatriates experience various communication styles among different nationalities that limit interactions with one another, which affects decision-making processes and social ties (Lauring, 2011). In addition, differences in power relations, such as high- and low-power distance, can affect expatriates' interactions with host nationals. Power distance can be defined as the extent to which power inequality is expected and accepted in society (Hofstede et al., 2010). Expatriates' and host nationals' cultural backgrounds and the power distance levels of their home cultures may result in different preferences for leadership styles (i.e., authoritarian vs. democratic leadership) and expectations that derive from preferred leadership styles (i.e., taking initiative and sharing ideas vs. waiting for directions from their supervisors), which makes communicating with one another challenging (Chudnovskaya & O'Hara, 2016).

Furthermore, host language competence among expatriates affects interactions with host nationals. Specifically, when expatriates are not competent in the local language, inability to communicate messages as intended (Du-Babcock & Babcock, 1996) leads to information loss (Peltokorpi, 2010), and host nationals may exclude expatriates from information flow in the team (Peltokorpi & Clausen, 2011). The communication challenges that expatriates encounter may limit their interactions with host nationals, which can significantly influence their work relationships. As a result, these challenges may prevent them from building and maintaining trust with one another.

Despite these challenges, expatriates' adjustment to their host environment is associated positively with their intention to complete their international assignment (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), job performance, effectiveness in their job duties, and maintaining good relationships

with host nationals (Kraimer et al., 2001). Also, expatriates' personal characteristics, such as self-efficacy (e.g., belief in one's competence), ability to emphasize and work effectively with others (Hechanova et al., 2003), cultural and psychological motivation (Firth et al., 2014), cultural flexibility, and willingness to establish relationships and communicate with host nationals (Black, 1990) affect expatriates' adjustment to the host environment. In addition, when expatriates are competent in the local language, they can develop and maintain good relationships with host nationals, which increases their performance (Panda et al., 2022). Moreover, other external factors such as perceived organizational support (Kraimer et al., 2001), organizational culture (Panda et al., 2022), and trainings before and after arrival in the foreign subsidiary (Ko & Yang, 2011) also play a part in expatriates' overall adjustment and job performance. Many factors contribute to expatriates' adjustment to the new environment, including building interpersonal relationships with host nationals, which is crucial in order to perform and complete their international assignment. Trust building with host nationals is an important part of developing interpersonal relationships, and trust between expatriates and host nationals can affect their overall work performance and success in their organizations.

Host Nationals' Experience

In building better interpersonal relationships, expatriates' experience as well as understanding host nationals' experience becomes important. Although the vast majority of literature on expatriate-host national relationships is based on expatriates' perspectives (Takeuchi, 2010), several scholars have focused on host nationals' experience with expatriates because, as with expatriates, host nationals tend to encounter some challenges in their interactions with expatriates (Fee, 2020). Furthermore, expatriates' relationships with host nationals are critical during the former's international assignment (van Bakel, 2019). One

important role of host nationals, similar to expatriates, is information/knowledge management and sharing. Host nationals can help expatriates socialize in the new environment, serving as vital liaisons by providing cultural knowledge and local information, facilitating communication, serving as information resource brokers, and training expatriates (Vance et al., 2009). Host nationals are more likely to share information and knowledge to help expatriates socialize in and adapt to the host culture when they perceive that they are treated fairly by their company (Toh et al., 2012). In other words, if host nationals feel that the treatment they receive from their company is not fair compared to that of expatriates, they may not be as cooperative in their interactions with expatriates. Consequently, they may not be willing to share crucial information with expatriates, which can hinder trust building and maintenance with one another, and affect expatriates' overall effectiveness (Toh & DeNisi, 2003, 2005).

Another important aspect regarding host nationals that scholars have examined is their willingness to help or support expatriates. For example, host nationals' positive attitude toward expatriates is related to their willingness to work with and provide social support for expatriates (Sokro & Pillay, 2020). In other words, when host nationals perceive that expatriates are effective, efficient, and professional in the workplace, they are more likely to continue working with and providing support to them. By contrast, when host nationals have negative attitudes toward expatriates, it can harm their relationship with expatriates (Wyant & M. Kramer, 2022). Arman and Aycan (2013) argue that host nationals who are more open to new experiences and diversity, high in extraversion, as well as those who have had prior work experience and quality relationships with expatriates in the past are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward expatriates.

Additionally, host nationals' perceived quality of relationships with expatriates (Varma et al., 2009), personality traits, such as agreeableness (Wang & Feng, 2014) and interpersonal affection (i.e., whether they like expatriates; Varma et al., 2016b) are associated with their willingness to provide support to expatriates. Yoon et al. (2021) argue that host nationals high on pro-social motivation (i.e., agreeableness and collectivism) and epistemic motivation (i.e., seeking and processing information in depth) are more likely to provide role information and social support to expatriates. Moreover, the more host nationals have on-the-job interactions with expatriates, the higher quality their relationships get, which, in turn, leads to host nationals' willingness to support expatriates (Wang & Toh, 2021). Furthermore, when a company is highly committed to the interests and needs of their employees and corporate social responsibility initiatives, host nationals' perception of organizational support and organizational identification increase, which, in turn, leads to host nationals' willingness to support expatriates (Shen et al., 2018). Therefore, the social support that expatriates receive from host nationals depends on host nationals' individual traits and motivations, perception toward and quality relationships with expatriates, as well as organizational factors.

In addition, host nationals' perceived similarity with expatriates plays a significant role in their relationships. Host nationals tend to categorize expatriates as in-group or out-group, based on whether they feel they have similar values with expatriates or not, which affects their willingness to provide social support and share valuable information (Varma et al., 2011). When expatriates are categorized as an out-group, they are less likely to receive support and information from host nationals (Peltokorpi, 2010; Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2014). Moreover, foreign managers' adaptation of behaviors typical of host nationals increases host nationals' perceptions of similarity and managerial effectiveness, which affects their intention to associate with and

trust foreign managers (Thomas & Ravlin, 1995). However, those who view their nationality as more important than expatriates' behaviors are less likely to increase their perceived similarity, managerial effectiveness, and intention to associate with expatriates (Thomas & Ravlin, 1995).

Although Templer (2010) argues that host nationals may have ethnocentric attitudes toward expatriates from different cultures/countries, and that such ethnocentrism can affect expatriates' work adjustment, Syed et al. (2014) assert that the nationality of managers does not matter as long as host nationals see them as competent enough to manage the subsidiary. Also, Varma et al. (2016a) argue that host nationals do not seem to develop interpersonal affection toward expatriates simply based on their culture, nationality, or job position. Instead, they tend to consider similarities at a deeper level, such as shared values, in developing affection (Varma et al., 2016a), which affects their willingness to provide social support and share useful information (Varma et al., 2011).

In sum, it is evident from previous research that the way expatriates are treated in a subsidiary depends on host nationals' perceptions toward them (Arman & Aycan, 2013). If expatriates' experience is largely affected by host nationals' experience with them, then the former's trust building and maintenance with the latter may also be affected by host nationals' experience with expatriates. Although most of the literature has focused on supervisor-subordinate relationships between expatriates and host nationals, host nationals' experience with expatriates in coworker relationships also matters because the major role of host nationals, such as sharing information and providing social support, should be the same in either relationships. Host nationals may provide even more valuable information and social support to expatriate coworkers because they feel closer to them as coworkers than as managers. The development and maintenance of trust between expatriates and host nationals in coworker relationships may

also play an important part in host nationals' roles. This study, examining host nationals' perspectives on trust building and maintenance with expatriate coworkers, will provide a deeper understanding of trust between these individuals and help both expatriates and host nationals build relationships with one another.

This section reviewed literature on the experiences of expatriates and host nationals in multinational corporations. To examine the process of trust building and maintenance between them, it is important to review literature on trust in organizations and discuss how it applies to expatriates' and host nationals' relationships. In the following section, such literature is discussed, including the definition of trust, antecedents and outcomes of trust, and the role of communication in trust building in organizations.

Trust in Organizations

Trust plays a significant role in organizational success by bringing creativity and innovation that lead to bottom-line results (Shockley-Zalabak & Morreale, 2011). Trust is defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor" (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712). Being vulnerable indicates that a trustor is taking the risk of losing something important; trust refers to their *willingness* to take that risk, regardless of whether they have control over the other party or not (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust is studied at different levels in organizational literature, such as individual, team, and organizational levels (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012); this study focuses on trust at the individual level – trust between expatriates and host nationals in a multinational corporation.

Scholars have identified various factors that affect trust in organizations. For example, propensity to trust – the willingness to trust others – plays a part in the likelihood that an

individual will trust others, especially when information about the other person is not available yet (Mayer et al., 1995). Moreover, ability, benevolence, and integrity are three important characteristics that affect a trustor's perception of the trustee's trustworthiness (Colquitt et al., 2007; Mayer et al., 1995). Ability refers to a trustee's skills, competencies, and characteristics; benevolence refers to a trustee's intention to do something good to the trustor; and integrity refers to a trustor's perception of whether the trustee does or does not follow a set of principles that the trustor considers acceptable (Mayer et al., 1995). These three characteristics of a trustee play a part in a trustor's perception of the trustee's trustworthiness, which leads to trust or distrust between them. In other words, when all three characteristics are perceived to be high, the trustee is considered trustworthy, and trust is based on the interrelationships of these three characteristics and the trustor's propensity to trust (Mayer et al., 1995).

Along with the characteristics discussed above, R. Kramer (1999) also identifies six bases of trust in organizations: dispositional trust, history-based trust, third parties as conduits of trust, category-based trust, role-based trust, and rule-based trust. Dispositional trust explains that one's intention to trust or distrust depends on general beliefs and expectancies about other people that the trustor will learn through trust-related experiences. History-based trust suggests that trust depends on the cumulative interactions between individuals. Such interaction histories provide information on whether to trust the other person or not (R. Kramer, 1999). Third parties as conduits of trust indicates that third parties are important source of trust-related information via gossip in organizations (Burt & Knez, 1995), although such information can be skewed, based on what the third parties believe about the focal person (R. Kramer, 1999). Category-based trust describes that a trustee's membership in a social or organizational category, such as gender, can affect a trustor's judgment of the trustee's trustworthiness. Role-based trust indicates that trust

can be built based on the role a trustee has in the organization, instead of specific information about the trustee. Lastly, rule-based trust explains that trust building depends on individuals' shared understanding of the rules regarding appropriate behavior, such as the open-lab stock policy that allows employees to access and bring home all kinds of equipment (Miller, 1992), which indicates managers' trust in employees. Such managers' trust in employees, in turn, leads to employees' trust in managers (R. Kramer, 1999).

Along with the general antecedents of trust discussed above, other scholars have also examined the factors that lead to specific interpersonal trust in organizations. For example, Schindler and Thomas (1993) identify that integrity, competence, loyalty, consistency, and openness are important factors of employees' trust toward a supervisor, subordinate, and peer. Leaders' traits, such as positivity and transparency, can also affect subordinates' perceived trust in them (Norman et al., 2010). Moreover, among the three characteristics of trustworthiness – ability, benevolence, and integrity – Tan and Lim (2009) found that only benevolence and integrity were associated with trust in coworkers. However, the authors argued that their participants were Chinese in Singapore, who generally emphasize relationships; hence, a trustee's ability may not be as important to determine whom to trust as it would be for other cultural groups, such as U.S. Americans. Additionally, procedural justice – one's perception of an organization's fairness in resource distribution – is strongly associated with trust toward managers (Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005). Further, individuals tend to trust a coworker when their leader also trusts that focal coworker (Lau & Liden, 2008). In turn, leaders affect their subordinates' perceptions of others. Individuals' perceived similarity with their leader (Huang & Iun, 2006) and shared values between managers and subordinates (Brashear et al., 2003; Gillespie & Mann, 2004) also promotes trust between them due to reduced uncertainty about the

leaders' future behavior (Gillespie & Mann, 2004). As discussed above, many factors contribute to shaping trust between individuals in organizations. In building trust between expatriates and host nationals in coworker relationships, individual traits such as integrity, benevolence, competence, loyalty, consistency, and openness (Schindler & Thomas, 1993; Tan & Lim, 2009), their supervisor's trust (Lau & Liden, 2008) or even similarities (Huang & Iun, 2006) between particular coworkers may play a role.

In addition to studies on antecedents and factors that lead to trust, scholars have also examined outcomes of trust in organizations. Shockley-Zalabak and Morreale (2011) argue that trust is essential to achieve bottom-line results and enhance creativity and innovation. Individuals who trust others are more likely to perform tasks better, engage in more citizenship behavior – employees' behaviors that benefit organizations but are not their formal roles (Bateman & Organ, 1983) and engage in less counterproductive behavior – employees' behavior that affects organizational functions or property, or the effectiveness of employees, which can negatively affect the organization (Colquitt et al., 2007; Fox et al., 2001). In addition, as benefits of trust, R. Kramer (1999) argues that organizations can reduce transaction costs, enhance spontaneous sociability among organizational members, and promote voluntary deference to authorities. Trust can reduce transaction costs, such as time, because it enhances spontaneous sociability, such as cooperative behavior, which enables individuals to engage in actions to help others without being monitored or being forced to reciprocate. Trust also promotes individuals' obligation to the organization, such as following rules and directions, and increases their voluntary deference to authorities (R. Kramer, 1999).

In terms of the outcomes of specific interpersonal trust, trust between coworkers is associated positively with perceived organizational support, affective commitment, proactive

work behavior (Parker et al., 2006), and negatively with turnover intention (Ferres et al., 2004). Similarly, trust in coworkers is related to trust in organizations (Clelland & Zarankin 2012; Tan & Lim, 2009), which, in turn, leads to organizational commitment and job performance (Tan & Lim, 2009). In addition, trust between coworkers in teams is positively associated with motivation for joint effort (Dirks, 1999), and effectiveness of decision-making, which helps teams perform certain tasks better than those with coworkers who do not trust one another (Alge et al., 2003). Employees communicate with coworkers about work-related issues (Stevenson & Gilly, 1991), and such interactions may contribute to building trust between each other and may enhance positive attitudes toward work and organizations.

Further, trust in coworkers and supervisors is associated with employee satisfaction, which affects employee loyalty (Matzler & Renzl, 2006), and employees' increased perceptions of organizational openness (i.e., it is safe to express themselves in the organization), which, in turn, lead to employees' involvement in the organization (Thomas et al., 2009). Moreover, if subordinates trust their organizational leaders, they are more likely to support organizational goals, engage in extra-role behaviors (i.e., organizational citizenship behavior), and identify themselves as having a closer relationship with their leaders (Caldwell & Hansen, 2010).

In sum, interpersonal trust leads to positive outcomes in organizations, in general, although trust may also cause negative consequences as it is possible that individuals take advantage of being trusted and betray others (Reina & Reina, 2015). The studies discussed above regarding trust in organizations are not specifically about expatriates and host nationals; however, based on these findings, interpersonal trust between expatriates and host nationals may also bring positive outcomes in organizations, leading to overall organizational success. Thus, it

is important to examine how trust is developed and maintained between expatriates and host nationals, adding this unique context of interpersonal trust to existing literature.

Although much research has been conducted on how trust is built and what trust brings in organizations, maintenance of trust among individuals has been largely ignored. Scholars acknowledge that trust is vulnerable (Reina & Reina, 2015), fragile, and ephemeral (R. Kramer & Lewicki, 2010); yet little is known about how the durability and stability of trust among individuals in organizations can be enhanced (R. Kramer & Lewicki, 2010). Reina and Reina (2015) argue that trust can be maintained when there is consistency between what an individual intends to do and what they actually do. To maintain trust in organizations is to maintain relationships. In examining how relationships can be maintained among coworkers in the workplace, Sias et al. (2012) argue that task interdependence plays a part in maintaining effective relationships among coworkers because employees are concerned about their relationships with their coworkers, which motivates them to minimize potential threats that can affect their job performance. Also, the quality of information employees receive from their supervisors or coworkers is associated with the quality of relationships among them (Sias, 2005). In addition, individuals use communication skills, such as conflict management, shared tasks, and positivity, to maintain relationships with coworkers, which then lead to outcomes such as organizational commitment, job and communication satisfaction (Madlock & Booth-Butterfield, 2012).

Further, some scholars have examined relationship maintenance with leaders using the leader-member exchange theory (LMX; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which explains that leaders and members develop either an in-group or an out-group relationship through a role negotiation process. High LMX, an in-group relationship between leaders and subordinates, is characterized as a high-quality relationship with mutual respect, trust, and obligation, and involves frequent

communication such as information sharing. Low LMX, categorized as an out-group relationship, has low mutual respect, trust, and obligation, and little communication between leaders and subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In terms of relationship maintenance with leaders, when relationships are high-LMX, employees tend to maintain them by demonstrating positive attitudes, following rules, and elucidating expectations. They also engage in frequent and informal communication, such as personal and task related conversations, because such communication can prevent their relationships from falling apart (Waldron, 1991, 2003; Waldron & Hunt, 1992). However, employees who have low-LMX relationships with their leaders tend to regulate contact with the latter as a relationship maintenance strategy to avoid any conflicts (Waldron, 1991; Waldron & Hunt, 1992).

As Reina and Reina (2015) argue, consistency between one's claims and actions may be one thing employees can do to maintain trust in others in the workplace. However, similar to strategies from relationship maintenance literature in organizations, there may be other communication strategies that employees use to maintain trust. For example, they may try to keep exchanging quality information, stay interdependent, display positivity, and have frequent communication with each other to maintain trust in others because such communication may increase the amount and quality of interactions, which may allow employees to maintain their quality, trusting relationships. Thus, considering that little is known about trust maintenance strategies in the workplace, this study, examining how expatriates and host nationals maintain trust toward each other, will provide significant contributions to the trust literature by adding new knowledge of communication strategies in trust maintenance as well as the unique context of expatriates and host nationals in multinational corporations.

Communication and Trust

Communication among employees plays a significant role in the development of trust. For example, small talk (Mislin et al., 2011), being available/accessible (Cameron & Webster, 2011; Lievens & De Corte, 2008), genuine emotional displays (Gardner et al., 2009), timely responses, in-depth feedback, and open communication (Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005) can promote trust between individuals. In addition, employees become trusted when they are committed to sharing information, speaking the truth, with good purpose, admitting mistakes, and expressing appreciation for work performed well (Reina & Reina, 2015). Quality of information (i.e., timeliness, accuracy, and usefulness) is also associated with trust between coworkers and supervisors (Thomas et al., 2009). In other words, when an employee perceives that the information they receive from their coworkers and supervisors is timely, accurate, and useful, they are more likely to trust their coworkers and supervisors. Furthermore, receiving enough information from supervisors and top management is positively related to employees' trust toward them (Ellis & Shockley-Zalabak, 2001; Thomas et al., 2009). Hence, information sharing (Nguyen & Rose, 2009), including quality and amount of information shared, is an important communication component of interpersonal trust building in organizations. Information sharing/exchange is one of the important roles of both expatriates and host nationals in multinational corporations, so sharing of information as coworkers may also be an important component of trust building between them.

Moreover, many scholars have focused on trust through communication between leaders and subordinates. Leaders' communication styles, such as assertiveness, clarity, and supportiveness, contribute to subordinates' trust in them, whereas verbal aggressiveness, such as raising their voice or verbally insulting employees, is negatively associated with trust (Yang et

al., 2020). Also, transformational leadership (e.g., inspiring and caring about employees and also challenging employees; Gillespie & Mann, 2004), and servant leadership (e.g., placing employees as the highest priority that needs served; Joseph & Winston, 2005) lead to trust in leaders among subordinates and teammates. In sum, communication among individuals in organizations plays an important role in trust building with one another, and these communication strategies discussed above, even those found in supervisor-subordinate relationships, such as clarity, assertiveness, or supportiveness (Yang et al., 2020), may contribute to trust building between expatriates and host nationals in coworker relationships.

Scholars have also examined trust between leaders and subordinates using LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), specifically focusing on the trust aspect of LMX, as some scholars identify the theory as capturing the trust building process (Bauer & Green, 1996). For example, LMX is associated with subordinates' trust in their leaders, which leads to the former's citizenship performance – activities (not necessarily task-related) that provide positive contributions to their organization (Martin et al., 2016). In addition, trust between coworkers is likely to lead to high LMX with their supervisors because when they trust their peers, they tend to achieve higher job performance, and, consequently, their supervisors may see them as trustworthy, which can lead to a high-LMX relationship between a supervisor and their subordinates (Han, 2010). Further, leaders' trust in their subordinates indicates that there is a high-quality relationship (high LMX), which is positively associated with leaders' risk-taking behavior, such as delegating certain important tasks to their subordinates (Brower et al., 2000).

Kelley and Bisel (2014) found that leaders determine if their organizational members can be trusted by developing storylines (predictably good, unpredictable, and predictably bad) to predict members' future during the role negotiation process – the process by which subordinates'

roles are communicated, defined, and routinized. Predictably good members are more likely to achieve in-group, high LMX status, whereas predictably bad members can be characterized as having out-group, low LMX status. Unpredictable storylines are rare because leaders are motivated to determine whether the members can be categorized as either predictably good or bad (Kelley & Bisel, 2014). Based on research on trust from an LMX perspective, it is evident that many studies on trust development in organizations have focused on supervisor-subordinate relationships; however, that is not the only relationship that requires trust development. Coworkers also need to (continue to) trust one another to enhance their positive attitudes toward their job and organization. Since LMX does not apply to coworker relationships, this study, examining trust building and maintenance in expatriate-host national coworker relationships, will be guided by Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory. Scholars argue that trust building is, essentially, a sensemaking process (Caldwell & Hansen, 2010; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012), and sensemaking is a social process that involves communication (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). As this study focuses on how communication messages and behaviors affect trust building and maintenance between expatriates and host nationals, sensemaking is an appropriate theoretical framework to apply in this context.

As the existing literature indicates, communication among individuals plays a significant role in trust development. Employees communicate with each other daily, and trust can be built and maintained through communication, such as sharing information and speaking the truth (Reina & Reina, 2015). It is important to examine how communication contributes to building and maintaining trust between expatriates and host nationals because it will provide practical communication strategies that both expatriates and host nationals can use daily. Although not much attention has been paid to trust maintenance, communication behaviors such as

information exchange (Sias, 2005) and frequent conversations (e.g., Waldron, 1991) are important in maintaining relationships in the workplace by increasing the amount and quality of interactions, which may lead to maintenance of trust. Thus, examining how communication between expatriates and host nationals can develop and maintain trust will offer significant contributions to the trust and communication literature by providing theoretical knowledge as well as to multinational corporations by offering practical communication strategies they can utilize to enhance expatriates' and host nationals' work experiences.

Trust between Expatriates and Host Nationals

Besides trust being critical in organizations for bringing success (Shockley-Zalabak & Morreale, 2011), scholars also acknowledge that trust is important between expatriates and host nationals (Fee et al., 2015), and has been examined as such when investigating relationships between these individuals. Toh and Srinivas (2012) argue that the more host nationals perceive that expatriates share commitment toward mutual goals and that their organization is supportive (perceived organizational support), the more they trust expatriates, which, in turn, leads to the former's willingness to share information with expatriates. In other words, host nationals' perceptions toward expatriates affect trust and information exchange between them. Additionally, in knowledge transfer between expatriates and host nationals, when the receiver is high on cultural intelligence (i.e., cultural competence), the sender tends to perceive higher levels of trust in the receiver, which facilitates knowledge transfer and the acquisition of knowledge (Hsu et al., 2021). Information exchange is essential in increasing group performance among diverse group members (Zheng & Wei, 2018); however, when there is a lack of trust, communication problems arise (Shen & Kram, 2011; Sriussadaporn, 2006), and information and knowledge flow is restricted (Shimoda, 2013). In fact, Hong et al. (2016) found that host

nationals perceived that expatriates hoarded knowledge and information because they believed that expatriates did not trust them.

The relationship between trust and information sharing is not always one directional. In other words, not only does trust affect information sharing between expatriates and host nationals, but information sharing can also foster trust between them. Thus, the relationship is reciprocal. Shimoda (2013) argues that talk can promote trust between expatriates and host nationals. Through talk, from small talk to talking about one's feelings, individuals can exchange information, which leads to better interpersonal relationships. They can also build or enhance trust by expanding their networks beyond the boundary between expatriates and host nationals (Shimoda, 2013). Thus, trust and information exchange affect each other in the relationships between expatriates and host nationals, in which trust enhances information exchange, and, in turn, information exchange also promotes trust.

In examining how expatriates and host nationals build relationships, Crossman and Noma (2013) identified perceptions of a Japanese concept, *sunao*, which can be translated as open-minded, straightforward, honesty, tolerance, or flexibility, as an important factor that helps determine who can be trusted between Japanese expatriates and local Australian employees. Both parties expected the other party to be sunao to build and develop trust, and failure to demonstrate sunao hindered trust building processes between them (Crossman & Noma, 2013). Similarly, Ang and Tan (2016) found the work competence of both parties to be the most important element in the early stages of trust building between expatriate supervisors and host nationals. Specifically, observing the other party's work competence leads to cognition-based trust, which refers to rational, character-based trust (i.e., competence, reliability, integrity; McAllister, 1995) in the initial trust building process. However, over time, cognition-based trust

transforms to affect-based trust, which refers to emotional exchange-based trust (i.e., reciprocal care, concerns for well-being; McAllister, 1995), through expatriates' behavior such as taking a risk in protecting host nationals when issues arise, adapting to host nationals' communication styles and native language, and spending more time with host nationals (Ang & Tan, 2016). Although scholars acknowledge that trust between expatriates and host nationals is important (Fee et al., 2015), research examining how they develop trust is limited, especially in respect to how communication affects their trust building. Talk (Shimoda, 2013), personal relations and connections (Guo et al., 2018), and expatriates' communication behaviors (Ang & Tan, 2016) can promote interpersonal relationships and trust; however, no study has examined what kind of communication messages or behaviors both expatriates and host nationals can facilitate the development and maintenance of trust between one another.

Although Crossman and Noma (2013) and Ang and Tan (2016) examined how trust can be built between expatriates and host nationals, research on this topic is extremely limited. Ang and Tan's (2016) study provides an insight into how expatriate supervisors and host nationals build trust in multinational corporations, but expatriates and host nationals are not always necessarily in supervisor-subordinate relationships – they can be coworkers, too. There may be some differences or similarities in how expatriates and host nationals build trust as coworkers as compared to those in supervisor-subordinate relationships. In addition, their study focused primarily on how expatriates can build trust effectively with host nationals. They suggested examining host nationals' perspectives on trust building with expatriates as a future direction of research. Moreover, their participants were expatriates of Asian descent (e.g., Singaporean, Malaysian, Indian) and of European descent (e.g., American, Canadian), and Chinese host nationals in multinational corporations in China. Although participants in Crossman and Noma's

(2013) study included Japanese expatriates, it was in the context of a Japanese company in Australia. Thus, examining how Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals in coworker relationships build and maintain trust through communication in a Japanese multinational corporation located in the U.S. will provide a new and important contribution to the literature. Specifically, this study will offer knowledge about trust building and maintenance in this unique context of Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals in coworker relationships, as well as practical communication strategies that they can employ to develop and maintain trust in one another in a multitude of other multinational corporations in the U.S.

Trust and Culture

Along with investigating trust between expatriates and host nationals, scholars have also examined interpersonal trust within and between organizations in intercultural and cross-cultural contexts. For example, research has found that, when building trust in intercultural business partners between Finnish and Russians, knowledge of partners' business culture was more important than knowledge of national culture (Weck & Ivanova, 2013). Specifically, understanding and adapting to the other party's practices of doing business based on cultural and first-hand knowledge obtained through interactions was critical in developing trust with intercultural business partners (Weck & Ivanova, 2013). In the context of U.S.-Mexican relationships, U.S. managers perceived that trust was built based on economic and strategic cooperation, whereas social and affective aspects were important elements in building trust for Mexican managers. Also, both parties acknowledged that commitment to the relationship was higher in high trust relationships, which led to interdependence that is critical in doing business with each other (Rodriguez & Wilson, 2002).

Moreover, Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen (2011) argue that language plays a part in trust building among European business partners. In other words, relationships can be built more easily if both parties speak a shared language; however, language can also inhibit trust in situations in which a native speaker talks fast, and a non-native speaker cannot understand them (Henderson & Louhiala-Salminen, 2011). Furthermore, scholars have examined the relationships among tension, interpersonal attraction, and trust. In the context of intercultural business negotiations, tension felt by the Chinese negatively affected trustworthiness via low interpersonal attraction toward Americans, whereas tension felt by Americans and interpersonal attraction toward the Chinese negatively and directly affected the trustworthiness of the Chinese partners (Lee et al., 2006). Reducing tension and increasing interpersonal attraction toward each party can promote trustworthiness in intercultural business negotiations. Moreover, similarities between business partners across the world play a role in trust, such that when oversea business partners share a similar cultural ethnicity, trust is higher between them (Jiang et al., 2011). As these studies demonstrate, one's own culture affects how business partners build trust. Knowledge of partners' culture is important in developing trust with one another, and, depending on one's culture, elements that individuals see crucial in developing trust may vary.

Directly relevant to the focus of this study, scholars have examined several aspects of trust between Japanese and U.S. Americans in the workplace. For example, both Japanese and the U.S. American managers in a company described employees from their own national group to be more trusting of others. Interestingly, however, both the Japanese and the American managers rated their Japanese employees to be more trustworthy than their American employees, although both managers described the two groups as trustworthy, in general (Omens et al., 1987). Moreover, examining how supervisors' communication tactics affect trust building in their

subordinates among Japanese and Americans, Yamaguchi (2009) found that trust was affected by rational, soft, and hard communication tactics for the Japanese, whereas Americans placed more importance on procedural justice in trust building. More specifically, for the Japanese, supervisors' use of rational (i.e., use of logical arguments and factual evidence to influence subordinates) and soft (i.e., displaying a favorable attitude, loyalty, and friendship to appeal to subordinates) communication tactics was positively related to trust. Hard communication tactics (i.e., claiming authority, making demands, being a menace, and persistent reminders to get subordinates to accept a decision) was negatively associated with trust. For Americans, when they perceived that the procedural justice of their supervisor was fair, they were more likely to trust the supervisor, and communication tactics only played a minor role in determining whom to trust (Yamaguchi, 2009). Thus, there is a difference between Japanese and Americans regarding what elements affect trust toward their supervisors, which means that these elements may be based on what they perceive to be important aspects of trust in the workplace. In other words, some individuals may consider relational aspects as more important, whereas others may see job competence as more important for trust in the workplace (Tan & Lim, 2009). Furthermore, in the context of Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals in coworker relationships, there may be similar and/or different communication messages/behaviors that they rely on to establish and maintain trust in one another.

Along with research on trust in intercultural work relationships and cross-cultural comparisons, some models of cultural differences can explain trust in different cultures. Bird and Osland (2005) argue that, although the importance of trust in relationships may be universal, one's own culture may play a part in how individuals interpret trust and how it is established. For example, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) value orientations classification includes the

human nature orientation (i.e., what humans are essentially, at their core), which contends that people can be good, evil, or a mixture of good and evil (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Cultural beliefs that people are, at their core, good, may translate into individuals viewing others as trustworthy. When people believe that others are trustworthy, their relationship may develop more smoothly, and it may be easier for people to develop trust in their relationships. However, when individuals view people as evil, they are more likely to believe that people are untrustworthy. It may take longer for them to develop relationships with others; therefore, it takes more time to establish trust (Bird & Osland, 2005).

Similarly, one of Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, individualism-collectivism, may also affect how individuals build trust. In individualistic cultures, people emphasize individuals' interests over the group's interests, and focus on the "I" identity, whereas in collectivistic cultures, people prioritize the group's needs over individuals' needs, and focus on the "we" identity (Gudykunst, 1994; Hofstede et al., 2010). People in collectivistic cultures are more likely to value relationships and harmony with members of their group and acknowledge distinct differences between in-group and out-group members than people in individualistic cultures (Gudykunst, 1994; Matsumoto, 1990). Consequently, people in collectivistic cultures tend to develop long-lasting trust with in-group members, but it takes longer to establish trust with out-group members (Bird & Osland, 2005). In contrast, people in individualistic cultures are more likely than people in collectivistic cultures to trust others with whom they are unfamiliar, unless they find that those people are untrustworthy (Bird & Osland, 2005).

These cultural differences are relevant for the study of Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals. According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), historically, people were considered evil in the U.S. based on the views of Puritan ancestors, but the orientation tended to be toward a

mixture of good and evil. In Japan, people are viewed as naturally good, based on Shintoism, the Japanese religion (Danylova, 2014; Young, 2013). Japanese culture and common values are largely influenced by Shintoism, which affects the mentality and behaviors of Japanese people (Danylova, 2014). This influence of Shintoism shapes how people and the world are viewed, essentially as good and sinless (Danylova, 2014). Thus, based on these fundamental cultural influences, Americans could be more likely to see people as both trustworthy and untrustworthy, whereas the Japanese could see people as trustworthy. These views on the trustworthiness of others may affect how individuals develop and maintain trust in others.

In addition, Japan is considered a more collectivistic culture compared to the U.S., which is higher in individualism (Hofstede et al., 2010). Thus, Japanese people are more likely to develop trust with their in-group members than Americans are. This trust may also last longer for the Japanese than for Americans (Bird & Osland, 2005). However, it is more challenging for the Japanese to establish trust with out-group members than it is for Americans. For Japanese people, the circle of trust tends to be smaller, and they prefer interacting with fewer individuals (i.e., in-group members) than proactively attempting to expand their circle (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021), which can affect their trust development in Americans when they come to the U.S. Also, in collectivistic cultures such as Japan, people are group oriented and value relationships and harmony among in-group members (Gudykunst, 1994; Matsumoto, 1990). Consequently, Japanese people, and Japanese expatriates in this study, may consider relationship aspects as important for trust in the workplace.

Americans, who are more individualistic, are more flexible in developing trust with in- and out-group members, until they learn that the other person is untrustworthy (Bird & Osland, 2005). Americans generally have higher trust in others, and their circle of trust is wider than that

of the Japanese (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021). Thus, compared to Japanese expatriates, U.S. host nationals may be more likely to trust the Japanese in the workplace. Also, Americans tend to focus on individuals' needs over their group's needs (Hofstede et al., 2010) and getting things done in the workplace. Thus, when they think about trust in the workplace, they may place importance on individuals' job competence and ability, compared to their Japanese counterparts. As discussed above, these cultural differences may affect how both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals interpret the meaning of trust in the workplace, such as relationship based or job competence based, as well as how they develop and maintain trust in each other based on their cultural beliefs regarding the trustworthiness of others and emphasis on group or individual orientations.

Meanwhile, however, some researchers have argued that differences in national cultures do not affect trust building. For example, Kiyonari et al. (2007) found that reciprocal, mutually beneficial exchanges among Japanese and Australians were a more significant source of trust than the difference in their nationality. National cultural backgrounds did not matter as long as the individuals had favorable, person-to-person exchanges. Additionally, Kuwabara et al. (2007) argued that reciprocity and being treated as a trustworthy partner played a more important part in trust in strangers between Japanese and Americans than their nationality. Thus, traditional cultural differences may affect how trust is build and maintained between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals; however, when there is a reciprocal relationship between them, that relationship may outweigh their national cultural backgrounds in establishing and maintaining trust in the workplace.

So far, literature on the experiences of expatriates and host nationals, trust in organizations, trust between expatriates and host nationals, and cultural influences on trust has

been reviewed. In examining trust building and maintenance between expatriates and host nationals, sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995) was proposed as the theoretical framework for this study. In what follows, sensemaking theory will be reviewed, incorporating discussions of how the establishment and maintenance of trust are, essentially, sensemaking processes.

Sensemaking

Sensemaking is the process of making sense of and attributing meanings to things or events that happen around us (Weick, 1995). Although individuals engage in sensemaking in everyday life, sensemaking can be observed most clearly when individuals experience uncertainty and ambiguity, which cause anxiety. It is this anxiety that motivates individuals to engage in sensemaking by attempting to answer two questions: "what's the story here?" and "now what should I do?" (Weick et al., 2005, p. 410). These questions bring an event and meanings into existence, and their interpretation becomes the springboard to action, which allows individuals to determine how to act in the future (Weick et al., 2005). Sensemaking is "an issue of language, talk, and communication" (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409); therefore, communication is what makes sensemaking possible.

Trust building is, essentially, a sensemaking process (Caldwell & Hansen, 2010; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). As Weick (1995) argues, sensemaking becomes more salient and visible when individuals experience ambiguity and equivocality that induce anxiety. When individuals are unsure about whom to trust, they may experience anxiety, which then motivates them to engage in sensemaking to figure out whom to trust. In examining how leaders developed storylines (predictably good, unpredictable, and predictably bad) to determine whether and when to trust their members by making sense of the predictability of members' performance, Kelley and Bisel (2014) noted that unpredictable storylines were anxiety inducing; leaders were motivated to

engage in sensemaking and resolve such storylines into either predictably good or predictably bad ones. Thus, their study demonstrates that trust building is a sensemaking process. Individuals need to make sense of whom to trust because not knowing whom they can trust causes anxiety; once they figure out whom to trust, they can act appropriately in the future (Weick et al., 2005).

In the context of relationships between expatriates and host nationals in a multinational corporation, anxiety may be more salient because of differing cultural backgrounds and the arrival of new expatriates every few years. When a new expatriate arrives at a foreign subsidiary, the expatriate is not adjusted to the new culture and work environment yet. Therefore, they may not know how to communicate with host nationals, and host nationals may also not be sure how to interact with the expatriates. Even more, both parties may not be sure whether they can trust one another, which can cause anxiety as well. As they work together and interact with each other daily for several years, they can develop and maintain trust; however, when expatriates are transferred back to their home country after several years, and new expatriates arrive, host nationals (and the new expatriates) must start over again. Thus, both expatriates and host nationals need to make sense of whom to trust to soothe their anxiety and determine future actions to work together effectively. Host nationals, in particular, have to engage in sensemaking every time a new expatriate arrives at the subsidiary.

In addition, the maintenance of trust may also involve sensemaking. Although trust building may be more anxiety inducing as people do not know if they can trust certain individuals, trust is vulnerable (Reina & Reina, 2015). Events out of the ordinary may occur that cause anxiety and require individuals to soothe their anxiety by making sense of what is going on (Weick, 1995), which can result in either continuing to trust or leads to distrusting others. For example, one way to maintain trust is consistency between one's intention and action (Reina &

Reina, 2015). In the context of expatriates and host nationals, even after they develop trust toward each other, if an expatriate says that he/she will complete an important task by certain date and does not accomplish it repeatedly, a host national may question their trust toward the expatriate, which can cause anxiety and require them to make sense of their trust relationships. Thus, the process of both trust building and maintenance is a sensemaking process, and expatriates and host nationals may need to constantly engage in sensemaking.

Sensemaking involves several key components (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005) that are relevant to trust building and maintenance. First, sensemaking is grounded in identity construction. Weick (1995) argues that the "establishment and maintenance of identity is a core preoccupation of sensemaking" (p. 20) because how an individual assigns meaning to the environment depends on how they define themselves and vice versa. In other words, who they are as a person affects how they interpret what is happening around them, and this interpretation also affects who they are as a person. Consequently, changes in the definition of one's identity result in changes in one's definition of what is out there (Weick, 1995). In terms of trust building and maintenance, how individuals determine whom to trust and whom to continue to trust will affect whom they will be in the future, which will affect their work relationships. In other words, when an expatriate trusts and continues to trust a host national, that will affect the expatriate's identity as to who they are and how they work with the host national in the workplace.

Second, sensemaking is both retrospective and prospective (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Individuals engage in sensemaking after an event has occurred based on retrospective connections with their past experience, but, at the same time, they think about the actions to take in the future (Weick et al., 2005). When individuals are trying to build and maintain trust in the workplace, they may think about their past experience with others, retrospectively, to make sense

of whether to trust them, which will determine how to work with individuals in the workplace. Indeed, both expatriates and host nationals may retrospectively think about their experiences with one another in making sense of trust. The result of sensemaking will determine how they work with each other in the future.

Third, sensemaking is concerned with enactment (Weick, 1995). Individuals' actions can make it possible for them to see and interpret meanings, which then become the constraints and opportunities for future actions. In the workplace, individuals may enact a certain behavior, such as trying to assign some tasks to others to see their performance or simply ask work-related questions and make meaning of certain individuals' trustworthiness; their sensemaking will determine whether those certain individuals can be trusted. For example, an expatriate may ask a host national for help with a task to assess the host national's performance, which will help the expatriate make sense of trust in that host national.

Fourth, sensemaking is a social process. Communication is the main element in sensemaking, and sensemaking occurs through communication among people (Weick, 1995). In trust building and maintenance, individuals may retrospectively think about communication they had with others they are trying to deem trustworthy or not. Or, in the sensemaking process, communication with other members in the organization may help make meaning of certain individuals' trustworthiness. In making sense of the trustworthiness of an expatriate, a host national may think about the communication they had with the expatriate or other host nationals who were talking about that expatriate. Such retrospective accounts of the communication a host national had with others can help them make sense of trust in that expatriate.

Fifth, sensemaking is ongoing – it never starts and never stops (Weick, 1995). Individuals engage in sensemaking constantly; it is usually fast and occurs beneath their consciousness.

However, when individuals find that the current state of the world is different from what they expected, sensemaking slows down and becomes visible, in which case individuals put explicit effort into sensemaking (Weick et al., 2005). Also, when the current state of the world is different from expectations, individuals may experience ambiguity and uncertainty, which cause anxiety, and lead to sensemaking (Weick, 1995). In the workplace, when something different occurs, such as a new expatriate arrives, host nationals may not know much about this person, which causes anxiety and motivates the former to engage in sensemaking. Or, when something unordinary happens that threatens the trust host nationals and expatriates have established, individuals' sensemaking may become visible as they put explicit effort in sensemaking, such as trying to communicate more, asking for help, or assigning tasks, to determine trustworthiness, especially in the process of trust maintenance.

Sixth, sensemaking is focused on and driven by extracted cues. People extract cues or specific events from their experience retrospectively to use them as points of reference to generate stories. Again, in developing and maintaining trust with others, individuals extract cues retrospectively, such as cues from interactions with a particular individual in the past, to create stories that can help them determine whether to trust the other party or not. In the context of expatriates and host nationals, they may retrospectively extract a series of communications they had with one another in the past to make sense of whether they can (continue to) trust each other. Lastly, sensemaking is driven by plausibility not accuracy. Individuals do not need to perceive and interpret an event accurately. Instead, a plausible story can move them forward (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). In making sense of others' trustworthiness, individuals may apply plausible meaning to and interpret retrospectively extracted cues to see whether they can trust others. Such plausible meaning will move them forward toward trusting or not trusting others.

Although sensemaking allows individuals to make sense of what is happening around them and how to act in the future (Weick et al., 2005), sensemaking does not always result in positive outcomes. Failure to make sense can cause negative consequences, in which case individuals may act or behave inappropriately and question themselves or the world around them (Weick, 1995). Wyant and M. Kramer (2022) demonstrated negative outcomes of sensemaking occurred between expatriates and host nationals. Host nationals in their study were uncertain about expatriates' roles and responsibilities, and, during their sensemaking process, most of them found discrepancies between their expectations of what expatriates' roles and responsibilities should have been and what expatriates were actually doing. Consequently, host nationals reacted negatively to expatriates, which likely harmed the relationships between them. In turn, host nationals reached a plausible conclusion (Weick, 1995) that expatriates were spying on them to report what they were doing wrong to the president or the headquarters. Hence, host nationals' sensemaking of expatriates' roles and responsibilities failed, causing negative consequences in the organization. A similar situation may occur in the process of sensemaking of trust between host nationals and expatriates. As both sides make sense of whom to trust by extracting cues from their interactions with one another, they may end up not trusting each other, which is not ideal for them nor their organizations.

Wyant and M. Kramer (2022) argued that *sensegiving* or *sensebreaking* may play a part in creating positive outcomes during the sensemaking process. Sensegiving refers to "the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442), whereas sensebreaking is defined as "the destruction or breaking down of meaning" (Pratt, 2000, p. 464) that can help create alternative meanings (Bisel et al., 2017). As individuals attempt to make

sense of the world around them, if someone, especially organizational leaders, provides some important information (sensegiving) or breaks down meanings (sensebreaking) that are not favorable in the organization, the sensemaking process may result in outcomes that positively affect the employees and the organization. Therefore, sensemaking is not always a good, positive process, but sensegiving or sensebreaking may contribute to making sensemaking processes more effective and favorable.

Further, trust can be both a *product* and a *process* of sensemaking. As discussed above, when they do not know whom to trust, uncertainty and anxiety trigger individuals to make sense of whom to trust (Kelley & Bisel, 2014). When they figure out whom to trust, that trust is the product or result of sensemaking that determines how to act in the future. Trust can also be a sensemaking process facilitator, in that, when individuals trust someone, they are more likely to be influenced by information given by the trusted person (sensegiving) in making sense of any matter (e.g., merger, promotion, termination) in organizations. Thus, trust as a sensemaking product and process facilitator has complex and dynamic effects in organizations.

In sum, trust development and maintenance involve a sensemaking process that is motivated by the anxiety individuals experience toward others, which will determine their future interactions with these individuals. In multinational corporations where new expatriates are transferred every few years, anxiety experienced by both expatriates and host nationals may be higher than in other corporations. Such high anxiety will motivate expatriates and host nationals to engage in sensemaking to determine whom to trust and continue to trust through communication.

As discussed above, this study employed sensemaking theory to understand host nationals and expatriates' trust building and maintenance processes; however, some might see

uncertainty reduction theory (URT) as more fitting for this study. Initially developed by Berger and Calabrese (1975), URT posits that individuals seek information to be able to predict others' behavior or choose their own behavior when they experience uncertainty in interpersonal interactions. Essentially, URT and sensemaking share a similar concept: individuals generate meaning to understand their environment and cope with uncertainty (M. Kramer, 2014). However, M. Kramer (2014) also points out some differences between the two theories. For example, equivocality is present in sensemaking, in that there are multiple plausible meanings that could be assigned to events or things, which makes it challenging to prioritize one meaning over another (Weick, 1995). URT suggests that people seek information to understand situations that are not known or understood before, and assigning meaning is hard because of inadequate information (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; M. Kramer, 2014).

Additionally, sensemaking involves the recollection of past experiences for determining how to act in the future (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005), whereas URT indicates that people seek information in the present moment (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Moreover, sensemaking is often times grounded in identity construction, in which the meaning assigned to what is out there depends on how individuals define themselves and vice versa (Wick, 1995). Meanwhile, URT puts emphasis on understanding others and the environment (M. Kramer, 2014). Furthermore, sensemaking and URT are based on different epistemological assumptions, in that sensemaking research tends to adopt an interpretive approach and to employ qualitative research methods, whereas URT research is mainly based on post-positivistic, quantitative approaches (M. Kramer, 2014).

Based on these differences, sensemaking theory was deemed a better fit for this study than URT. Trust building and maintenance processes between expatriates and host nationals are

not unexpected situations that are not known or not understood before, as discussed in URT. The process itself is an expected situation, and expatriates and host nationals understand the situation. There are also multiple ways to assign meanings to their relationships – to trust, not to trust, or to trust with a little bit of suspicion. Also, trust building and maintenance processes between expatriates and host nationals are grounded in identity construction – in other words, whether they trust each other or not will affect who they are and their relationships with one another. Thus, trust building and maintenance is not only about understanding others and the situation as URT posits.

In addition, expatriates and host nationals would need to use past experiences retrospectively to make sense of whom to (continue) trust(ing) and prospectively to determine their future actions (as sensemaking theory posits) rather than actively seeking information whether to trust others in the present moment (as URT posits). Lastly, this study takes an interpretive approach and employs qualitative methods to understand expatriates' and host nationals' experiences with trust building and maintenance in depth, not quantitative methods to test hypotheses or models of trust building and/or maintenance. Therefore, sensemaking theory fits the research agenda and context of this study better than URT and helps us understand the trust building and maintenance processes of expatriates and host nationals in depth.

Research Questions

As discussed above, one's own cultural background affects how they define and establish trust (Bird & Osland, 2005), and what individuals consider important in trust building varies across cultures (e.g., Rodriguez & Wilson, 2002). If essential components of trust building are different across cultures, what individuals identify to be important in trust in the workplace may also vary from culture to culture. Thus, Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals may see

trust in the workplace differently. In turn, trust may be associated with relationships aspects among coworkers in Japan, whereas in the U.S., it may be defined in terms of job ability and competence of individuals (Tan & Lim, 2009). Therefore, the first research question asks the following:

RQ1: What characteristics does trust in the workplace have for U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates?

Scholars argue that trust is essential in organizational success (Shockley-Zalabak & Morreale, 2011) and proven to bring positive outcomes, such as high job performance and citizenship behavior (Colquitt et al., 2007), affective commitment (Ferres et al., 2004), and employee loyalty (Matzler & Renzl, 2006). Specifically, trust between expatriates and host nationals has been demonstrated to increase information sharing (Toh & Srinivas, 2012), which is critical in expatriates' adjustment to the local environment and relationship building with host nationals (e.g., Toh et al., 2012). This, in turn, can significantly affect their overall effectiveness (Toh & DeNisi, 2003, 2005). Although scholars acknowledge that trust between expatriates and host nationals is important, research on trust building between them is scarce. To establish trust in each other, both expatriates and host nationals may try to extract cues, such as communication messages or behaviors, to make sense of whom to trust (Weick, 1995). Therefore, the second research question proposed is:

RQ2: What communication messages and behaviors do expatriates and host nationals rely on to establish trust in each other?

In addition to trust building between expatriates and host nationals, little is known about trust maintenance in organizations, in general. Once trust is established, trust maintenance is needed because trust is vulnerable (Reina & Reina, 2015). Similar to relationship maintenance

among coworkers (e.g., Sias, 2005; Sias et al., 2012), there may be communication messages or behaviors that expatriates and host nationals use to maintain trust in each other. Thus, the third research question is:

RQ3: What communication messages and behaviors do expatriates and host nationals rely on to maintain trust in each other?

Lastly, based on the cultural differences between Japan and the U.S., there may be differences in how expatriates and host nationals establish and maintain trust when the trustees are expatriates versus host nationals, although some studies have demonstrated otherwise, that reciprocal exchanges have more significant effects on trust than their nationality (e.g., Kiyonari et al., 2007; Kuwabara et al., 2007). Japanese expatriates may be more collectivistic (Hofstede et al., 2010) than U.S. Americans. They may consider other expatriate coworkers as their in-group and host nationals as their out-group members (Gudykunst, 1994; Matsumoto, 1990), which may affect their trust in other expatriate coworkers and host nationals. Additionally, host nationals' categorization of expatriates as in-group or out-group has been found to affect their willingness to provide social support and share critical information (Varma et al., 2011). Such host nationals' perceptions of expatriates may also play a part in their trust building and maintenance processes toward expatriates as compared to other host national coworkers. Thus, the fourth and fifth research questions are:

RQ4: What are similarities and differences in trust building and maintenance processes between expatriates and host nationals compared to trust between expatriates and other expatriates?

RQ5: What are similarities and differences in trust building and maintenance processes between host nationals and expatriates compared to trust between host nationals and other host nationals?

Chapter 3: Method

Research Context

This study adopted a case study approach and focused on participants working in a Japanese manufacturing company in the U.S., which allowed the researcher to understand meaningful aspects of real-life events of the examined phenomenon – trust between expatriates and host nationals – in depth (Yin, 2017). The case study approach is preferred when researchers investigate contemporary events, the behavior of interest cannot be manipulated, and research methods, such as interviews and direct observations, are employed (Yin, 2017). Case study research is sometimes believed to lack rigor because researchers may not be following systematic procedures or presenting their findings with ambiguity and biased views, which occurs more frequently in case study research than other types of research (Yin, 2017). However, the researcher acknowledged the potential limitations of case study research and employed multiple validation strategies, such as peer review, member checking, and rich, thick description (Creswell, 2007), that will be discussed at the end of this method section, to increase the rigor of this study.

The specific company selected for this study has its headquarters in Japan and several branches in the North American region, as well as many more branches around the world. The North American region has its own headquarters in the Midwest; this office manages all the other branches across the U.S. There are approximately 60 Japanese expatriates in the region, who are transferred in and out of the U.S. from the headquarters in Japan, on average, every three to five years. The top executives of the headquarters and branches in the U.S. consist of Japanese expatriates. Most of the management positions are held by U.S. Americans, who manage host nationals. Many Japanese expatriates, who are not in the top executive positions,

are assigned management positions in the area of their expertise, to teach their knowledge and skills, and to support host nationals; however, the majority of them do not have any subordinates that report directly to them. Hence, these Japanese expatriates work closely with host nationals more as colleagues (rather than supervisors) in this company.

Japanese expatriates in this company have been transferred to the U.S. subsidiaries primarily to improve weaknesses, support product development, launching, and mass production, teach skills and train host nationals, and create clear structures for all kinds of areas, such as cost calculation and quality inspection, so that, in the future, host nationals in the U.S. subsidiaries could be independent without needing expatriates to be stationed regularly in the U.S. To accomplish such duties, Japanese expatriates work with host nationals closely, on a daily basis, in this company. They often work on projects together, and most of them have daily or frequent meetings involving both Japanese and U.S. Americans because frequent information exchange is critical in completing tasks. Each branch has an open office setting, in which desks are grouped according to sections, and both Japanese expatriates and U.S. Americans share the same offices. Thus, they can interact with one another whenever they need to. Considering the characteristics of the company as well as the nature of the relationships between expatriates and host nationals, this Japanese company was deemed to be a good fit for this study.

Participants

A total of 32 individuals from this company participated in this study. The eligibility requirement was that participants were either U.S. host nationals or Japanese expatriates who interacted and worked with each other on a daily basis. Thus, 16 Americans and 16 Japanese expatriates were recruited. Participants were mostly male, except for three female American employees. All Japanese expatriates were male. Their age ranged from 29 to 58 years old (M =

38, *SD* = 8.12) for Americans and from 32 to 56 years old (*M* = 41.9, *SD* = 7.16) for Japanese participants. American employees' tenure in the company ranged from 20 months to 25 years (*M* = 8.7 years, *SD* = 4.85 years). The length of their working with Japanese expatriates ranged from 4.5 years to 36 years (*M* = 12.4, *SD* = 7.93). Some Americans had transferred to various branches throughout their tenure and also had some experience working with Japanese expatriates in their previous jobs. Japanese participants' tenure in the company ranged from 12 years to 38 years (*M* = 20.7, *SD* = 6.75), whereas the length of their working in the U.S. ranged from five months to seven years (*M* = 2.7 years, *SD* = 1.65 years). One of the Japanese expatriates had previous experience working at another plant in the U.S. for 3.5 years. Some Japanese participants also had experience coming to the company's other U.S. branches as support for a short period of time before officially arriving as an expatriate.

All American and Japanese participants held a management position with or without subordinates reporting directly to them. Participants were from various branches of the company, including the headquarters in the U.S., and belonged to diverse departments/sections, such as quality control, production (manufacturing) engineering, information systems, human resources, sales, production performance, research and development, prototype, and new model.

Data Collection and Procedures

Upon approval from Institutional Review Board, individuals were recruited to participate in semi-structured individual interviews. Interviews provided opportunities to understand participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Tracy, 2020) about trust building, described in their own words. The author used her personal contacts to reach out to potential participants, and, in addition, used snowball sampling (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Participants were asked to refer others in the company who would be eligible and interested in participating in this study. Once

individuals agree to participate in the study, interviews were scheduled based on their availability during or outside their working hours.

During the interviews, conducted online via the Zoom platform, participants were first provided with information about the study, its procedures, compensation, risks and benefits and provided oral consent to participate, including their permission for audio and video recording of the interview and the use of direct quotes from their responses. Participants were also informed that they did not have to answer questions that made them uncomfortable and they could withdraw from the interview at any time. Then, the author asked semi-structured interview questions, prepared in advance (see Appendix A).

The interview started with demographic questions (see Appendix B) to acquire information about participants' position, age, tenure, and length of stay in the U.S./working with Japanese expatriates. After that, the author asked general questions, such as "Can you describe your job title and duties?" and then moved into interview questions related to the study's research questions, such as "Can you describe a time when you thought you could trust expatriates/host nationals?" Follow-up questions were asked for further probing into more detailed descriptions and clarifications (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). For example, if participants did not provide an elaborate answer to the question asking them about a time when they thought they could trust their colleagues, a follow up question, "What are some specific conversations or behaviors that made you think you can trust them?" was asked. Thus, when more details were needed to understand participants' answers, the author asked them for further details.

Participants were compensated for their participation with a $40 gift card upon completion of their interviews. Interviews were conducted in English with U.S. host nationals and in Japanese with all the Japanese expatriates to capture participants' understanding of the

questions in their native language rather than a second language in which they may have varied levels of proficiency. Interviews were audio- and video-recorded and ranged in length from 17 minutes to 64 minutes (M = 36.5, SD = 10.98). Audio recordings were then transcribed for analysis, yielding a total of 263 single-spaced pages of transcriptions. Interviews conducted in English were transcribed by a professional transcription service, whereas interviews conducted in Japanese were transcribed by a private individual whose first language was Japanese. The Japanese transcripts were translated by the author, who speaks Japanese as the first language and is highly competent in English. After data analysis, four participants (two Japanese and two Americans) were asked to review the findings and provide feedback to the author about them for the purpose of member checking (Creswell, 2007).

Data Analysis

A modified version of constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to analyze the interview data. First, transcripts were transferred to NVivo, after which the data were read and re-read for data reduction (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) to remove parts that were not relevant to the research questions for this study and to permit a more focused analysis. Second, open coding (Charmaz, 2000) was conducted to sort the data into categories and assign theoretical labels to it by constantly comparing participants' comments to others. The initial labels included "getting things done," "meeting deadlines," and "respond to requests." In the process of data reduction and open coding, unitization was conducted to unitize the data per each story provided by the participants, based on a set of answers the participants provided for each interview question. Each story was then compared to others when assigning theoretical labels.

The third step was focused coding, in which the author compared and grouped together initial labels from the previous step to create broader categories (Charmaz, 2000). During this

step, the initial labels mentioned above were grouped together as "competence and skills," for example, and these broader categories were presented as themes in the findings. Next, axial coding was conducted to seek connections and interrelationships among the categories related to the research questions in this study (Charmaz, 2000). For example, "competence and skills," "teamwork and collaboration," and "open/honest communication" were grouped together as these themes all pertained to the first research question. The author went back and forth between focused and axial coding until the categories provided a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences. Lastly, negative case analysis was conducted to seek deviant cases in the data that did not seem to align with the emerging themes (Tracy, 2020). This part of the analysis allowed the researcher to ensure that a wide variety of perspectives and experiences were included while also ensuring the fidelity and credibility of the findings (Tracy, 2020).

Validation Strategies

Creswell (2007) recommends that qualitative researchers employ at least two of the eight validation strategies he provides to enhance the quality of their research. In this study, four strategies were used: peer review, member checking, negative case analysis, and clarifying researcher bias. First, peer review provided the author an opportunity to have an external review of the research process (Creswell, 2007) by experts in qualitative research, organizational communication, and intercultural communication research. This process was conducted before and after the data collection and involved reviews of the method, interpretations of findings, and theoretical and practical implications, which helped the author refine and improve this study. Based on the peer review, the author made modifications to the dissertation's research questions and interview questions prior to data collection, then to themes and the discussion of findings after data were collected and analyzed.

Second, member checking was used to seek participants' views on the accuracy and credibility of the author's interpretations of the findings (Creswell, 2007). Four participants (two Japanese and two Americans) reviewed themes and their descriptions to check if their views were represented adequately and indicate whether something was missing from the findings. All four participants responded that these findings resonated with their experiences.

Third, negative case analysis was conducted as a validation strategy as well (Creswell, 2007). This process was conducted during data analysis, as understanding of the data progressed, and deviant cases and exceptions that did not fit in initial themes were categorized and presented as negative cases. Negative cases analysis allowed the author to ensure that the experiences of all participants were reflected in the findings.

Fourth, clarifying researcher bias is another way to maintain the quality of qualitative research. The author acknowledges that there might be potential researcher bias considering that she was born and raised in Japan, used to work with both Japanese expatriates and host nationals, and has some knowledge on their relationships in the multinational corporation from which interviewees were recruited. Her backgrounds and previous experiences might have influenced the way she approached this study, including planning the research and collecting and analyzing the data. However, external reviews on the method and findings by experienced scholars and the reading of her interpretation of the findings by some of the participants helped reduce potential biases. Thus, based on these strategies, the author was able to increase the rigor of this study.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study examined five research questions regarding: RQ1) characteristics of trust in the workplace for U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates, RQ2) communication behaviors and messages that they relied on to build trust, RQ3) communication behaviors and messages that they relied on to maintain trust, RQ4) similarities and differences in expatriates' trust building and maintenance processes with host nationals vs. other expatriates, and RQ5) similarities and differences in U.S. host nationals' trust building and maintenance processes with expatriates vs. other host nationals. The analysis revealed several themes for each research question, which are detailed below.

Table 1

Summary of Findings

Research Questions	Themes
RQ1: Characteristics of trust in the Workplace	1. Competence and skills 2. Teamwork and collaboration 3. Open/Honest communication
RQ2: Communication behaviors and messages that JEs and USHNs rely on to *build* trust	1. Competence, skills, dedication 2. Support from JE/AHN 3. Personal conversations within and outside the workplace 4. Third party information seeking 5. USHN's positional and transferred trust 6. JE's Trust in USHNs
RQ3: Communication behaviors and messages that JEs and USHNs rely on to *maintain* trust	1. Interpersonal communication 2. JEs' supportive and collaborative behavior 3. USHNs' competence and proactivity

RQ4: Similarities and differences in trust building and maintenance processes between JEs and USHNs vs. JEs and JEs	*Similarities/Facilitators of Trust* 1. Competence and skills 2. Interpersonal interactions 3. Teamwork and collaboration *Differences/Hindrances to Trust* 1. More time and effort with USHNs 2. Competence, dedication, responsibility 3. Work ethic and work-life balance 4. Clear and straightforward communication *Negative Case* 1. Friendliness and honesty of USHNs
RQ5: Similarities and differences in trust building and maintenance processes between USHNs and JEs vs. USHNs and USHNs	*Similarities/Facilitators of Trust* 1. Competence and skills 2. Interpersonal interactions *Differences/Hindrances to Trust* 1. More time and effort with JEs 2. Open, honest, and clear communication 3. Work-based vs. interpersonal-based trust

*JEs: Japanese expatriates; USHNs = U.S. Host nationals

RQ1: Characteristics of Trust in the Workplace for U.S. Host Nationals and Japanese Expatriates

The analysis revealed three themes regarding important components of trust in the workplace for U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates: 1) competence and skills, 2) teamwork and collaboration, and 3) open/honest communication. Although these themes were consistent among both groups, there were some unique nuances among Japanese participants.

Competence and Skills

Both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates indicated that trust in the workplace was associated with one's competence and skills. They mentioned trust meant that they could rely on someone with the ability to "get things done," "do what you say, say what you do," and

"meet expectations" in the workplace. For example, one U.S. host national participant mentioned:

> I guess, do what you say, say what you do. That's big to me. If you say you're going to do something, do it. If you say you're going to be on time or something, be on time or something. If you say you can't do something, say you can't do something. (assistant manager, 20-year veteran)

Another U.S. participant explained his idea of trust in the workplace as follows:

> When I think of trust… it's more like trust in somebody's competence. I don't care about a lot of things that go on in people's lives. I'd rather not know about it, but when I'm at work, I need people that I know take things seriously and can get things done. (assistant manager, 4.5-year veteran)

As these quotes illustrate, U.S. host nationals acknowledged the importance of one's ability to keep their word and meet deadlines for trust in the workplace. Similarly, Japanese expatriates explained that trust involved competence and skills. A Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for seven years as a senior chief engineer mentioned, "someone who can complete tasks that are their responsibility, and even if they can't complete the task, if I see them asking questions to or consulting with someone else, I feel like I can trust that person." Another Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four months as a chief engineer provided a similar account of what trust meant to him: "a person who does what they say. Even if they can't do it, I'm fine if they tell me they can't ... their effort [is important], as long as they are not forgetting [what they are supposed to do]." Thus, competence and skills were important aspects of trust in the workplace for both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates.

Teamwork and Collaboration

The analysis indicated that trust in the workplace involved collective behavior for both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates. Participants mentioned that it was essential to "work together towards the goals," "provide support," "cooperate," and "give and take" in the

workplace, and they could trust team members who did so. One American participant (section manager, 11.5-year veteran) mentioned, "…just, in general, teamwork or collaboration. If I'm stuck, or I need some advice, or I have too much to do, or whatever the case is, that either they'll notice, or that they'll help me if I ask them." Another American participant claimed:

> … do they have your back kind of situation…are they going to go behind your back ... and do their own thing or get their own direction, or are they going to work with you on that? So, a couple of those times where they go behind your back, it's enough to lose trust. (department manager, 14-year veteran)

These comments indicate that being a good team member and backing up one's colleagues are important elements of trust in the workplace. Further, another American participant (business administrator, 4-year veteran) mentioned how teamwork and collaboration could create "a healthy, non-toxic, productive environment," explaining that there was a colleague who was not collaborative and was hard to work with, which led to a toxic work environment and distrust toward the individual, resulting in some people leaving the company. Thus, collaboration among colleagues was an essential part of trust that could create a healthy work environment.

Japanese expatriates also indicated that teamwork and collaboration were fundamental to trust in the workplace. A chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for four years, mentioned, "What is important is … that you want to do something for others … not only you take something from them, but you also have to give something to them … to support each other." Interestingly, however, Japanese participants seemed to place more emphasis on collective behavior within an organization than American employees did. Some Japanese expatriates claimed that it was impossible to work alone in an organization as they mentioned, for example, "work is not something you can do by yourself," or that, "you can't possibly work by yourself," and "nothing can be done only with my ability." These nuanced expressions regarding work as a

cooperative task were unique to the Japanese expatriates in this study. In addition, one of the Japanese participants, a chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for five months, explained:

> What trust is… to me, you are working within an organization, so if you are just working alone with your own goal in mind, you are losing cooperativeness, and when others see you, they'll lose trust in you, even if you are a skilled worker. And this kind of individual, I think, won't help others even if they need help. You are working in an organization, so when someone needs help here and there, you have to have relationships where you can support each other, otherwise maybe an organization cannot keep going. If you become like, say in Japanese, 'madogiwazoku (the window gazing tribe, meaning "useless employees" in Japanese),' maybe no one will come talk to you. So, in order to avoid that, I would say, trust equals cooperation, I think [cooperation] is important.

His comments above also describe how working alone can lead to less cooperation, which can reduce the overall performance of the company, which can be problematic for organizations. In sum, collective behavior, such as teamwork and collaboration among colleagues, was an important characteristic of trust in the workplace for both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates. However, Japanese participants placed more importance on this aspect that U.S. host nationals by highlighting that one could not work alone in an organization.

Open/Honest Communication

The third common theme that emerged from participants' responses regarding essential characteristics of trust in the workplace for American employees and Japanese expatriates was open/honest communication, although there were some differences among participants. Americans claimed that trust involved open/honest communication, such as being able to "provide negative feedback," "disagree with others' ideas," "not speaking behind someone's back," and "tell the truth without being judged." One American participant mentioned:

> If you don't agree with something that I'm telling you to do, you're going to tell me, and then not essentially go behind my back and say, "Oh, now I have to do this thing that I don't believe in or I don't trust in." (assistant chief engineer, 8.5-year veteran)

Additionally, a female senior chief administrator, 25-year veteran, claimed trust meant that, "you can provide maybe negative feedback to [someone] about how they are, and they're not going to hold that against you." These comments indicate that one's openness to honest communication was an important characteristic of trust in the workplace for participants. Further, some participants also mentioned that confidentiality became key in open communication. A section manager, 10-year veteran, stated, "I can share confidential information and know that it's not going to go anywhere else."

Although data analysis revealed open/honest communication as an essential part of trust in the workplace among Japanese expatriates, the characteristics they associated with it were somewhat different from what U.S. employees explained. For the Japanese participants, open/honest communication involved not lying and being able to talk about anything, including non-work-related matters. For example, a chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for four months stated: "meaning of trust… what if I say, no lies. That's the big picture of trust… when I think about, oh I can trust this person or that person, that means these people don't lie…" Another expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for 3.5 years as a senior chief engineer mentioned:

> P: Hmm well, [trust means] that you can talk about anything, even a little thing.
> I: You can talk about anything…
> P: Yes, right. I don't really talk about my personal life though.
> I: So, only work-related matters?
> P: Yes. Like, when you trust someone, you can say anything about work, even little things [that don't necessarily have to be shared or discussed].

Contrary to this participant, another chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for four years, indicated that being open to conversations about personal lives was important for trust in the workplace:

> I don't think it's only about work. Really, like, when someone asks you about your family… for example, when there is news that a typhoon hit Japan and someone asks me if my family was okay, that shows their interests [in my life]. Not only about work, I

> mean, there are a lot of things related to work that you need to talk about, but as you chat a lot, if you can talk much more about other things, that leads to trust relationships.

As these comments above from Japanese expatriates indicate, open/honest communication is an essential part of trust in the workplace. Not only being honest and not lying but also chatting about anything regarding work *and* non-work-related matters were commonly acknowledged themes among Japanese participants.

In sum, RQ1 regarding important characteristics of trust in the workplace for U.S. employees and Japanese expatriates revealed three common themes: competence and skills, teamwork and collaboration, and open/honest communication. Although the themes were consistent among both participant groups, the analysis indicated some differences between the themes. For the theme of competence and skills, participants indicated that one's ability, such as getting things done and meeting expectations, was an important part of trust in the workplace. For the theme of teamwork and collaboration, findings revealed that providing/receiving support was key to trust in the workplace. Japanese expatriates emphasized more than Americans the fact that work should not be done alone, and that collaboration/cooperativeness was necessary in organizations. Lastly, for the theme of open/honest communication, Americans mentioned being able to provide feedback and disagree with others as part of open/honest communication, whereas Japanese participants claimed that not lying and chatting about any subjects including non-work-related matters constituted open/honest communication, which was essential for trust in the workplace.

RQ2: Communication Messages and Behaviors for Trust Building

For the second research question, the analysis revealed four common themes among both American and Japanese participants regarding communication messages and behaviors that they relied on to make sense of whom to trust: 1) competence, skills, and dedication, 2) support from

expatriates/host nationals, 3) personal conversations within and outside of the workplace, and 4) third party information seeking. In addition to these themes, some American participants commented that they trusted their Japanese counterparts from the beginning of their arrival in the U.S., which was not the case for Japanese participants. Further, Japanese expatriates stated that they trusted their American colleagues who were used to working with the Japanese or based on their positions/sections.

Competence, Skills, and Dedication

Both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates in this study relied on the competence and skills of others, such as their experience, level of expertise and involvement, being responsible, and getting things done, to make sense of whom to trust. American participants also commented that Japanese expatriates' dedication to work and the company was another important aspect for determining if their Japanese counterparts were trustworthy. One American host national mentioned:

> I'm real close with… a Japanese expat in [the plant], and we've worked on [a] project together. I've seen what they've done, their work, and I trust his judgment by just talking to him and hanging out with him. And he knows what he's talking about. (assistant manager, 20-year veteran)

His comments indicate that the Japanese expatriate's expertise and work they had done together in the project led him to start trusting the expatriate. Another assistant manager, 4.5-year veteran, stated, "I think it's just his dedication to the work … the hours that he puts in and then what he's done… We've been together now I'd say over three years, so we've had some time…" He continued and explained that he did not trust the expatriate in the beginning:

> When I first met him, I had no idea what he was going to be like or what… It was really the first time we had a customer complaint and the level of involvement that he took. That's when I thought, "well, this guy might actually be good. We might actually use this guy.

This participant's comments describe that observing the expatriate's behavior, his dedication to and involvement in work allowed him to develop trust in the expatriate over time.

Japanese expatriates provided similar accounts of how they relied on their American counterparts' competence and skills to make sense of whom to trust. One Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four months as a chief engineer, mentioned:

> When I request detailed information behind the costs [on certain parts and equipment] and ask them if they can give me the information by [a] certain date, they'll say "yeah, I can do it." Then, they actually do research and come back to me to explain [what they've found] … that made me think "oh, I can trust this person."

His comments indicate that his reliance on his American colleague's competence in completing tasks on time led him to make sense that he could trust his American colleague. Also, another Japanese chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for 2.5 years, stated, "… when we work on projects together, and I observe [host nationals work], some are proactive, involved in discussions, and good at making documents and presentations." He added that those individuals who were proactive in working for projects were the ones that he could trust.

Further, Japanese expatriates also relied on communication from their American colleagues about their progress on projects. A Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for three years as a chief administrator, described:

> …when they tell me where they're at in their projects compared to their plans, that makes me trust them. Any work comes with results, and in order to have good results, first, you need to be aware of the plans.

Other Japanese expatriates also commented on how communication from U.S. host nationals regarding their progress or concerns on projects made them appreciate how serious their Americans colleagues were about their work. Such behaviors allowed Japanese expatriates to trust their American counterparts. Observing others' competence, skills, and dedication to work helped both groups of participants make sense of whom to trust in their organization.

Support from Expatriates/Host Nationals

Participants in this study claimed that support from expatriates/host nationals was another aspect that helped them make sense of whom to trust. One's behaviors, such as speaking up or backing them up and providing good advice, were commonly mentioned by both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates. One U.S. host national stated:

> …maybe you're reporting something to someone in Japan or something, and the expat who's there, or attending, they could let Japan assume that the U.S. side made a mistake, or that we're not as capable as them, but I think they instantly get some trust if they will kind of defend or speak up for our people that we have working here. This probably goes without saying, but sometimes people that have never been here maybe make assumptions about how hard people work, or what we're trying to do, and definitely builds trust really quickly to see someone champion you or your co-workers. (section manager, 11.5-year veteran)

His comments show that he started trusting Japanese expatriates when they spoke up on behalf of host nationals in meetings with people (mostly top executives) in Japan. Additionally, another U.S. host national compared the current expatriate he trusted with a previous one, who used to report everything back to the headquarters in Japan regarding host nationals' performance:

> I think what I respect about the current expat we have is that he's not just there to report to Japan. He's there to help, he's there to support... But he's not just a secretary or something like that. Whereas the guy before was just literally there to report back and ... I don't want to say tattletale, but sometimes you felt that way. (department manager, 14-year veteran)

His comments illustrate how support from the current Japanese expatriate helped him make sense that he could trust this particular expatriate, unlike the previous one, who did not support host nationals.

Similarly, support from host nationals was an important cue for how Japanese expatriates made sense of whom to trust. A Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a chief engineer, commented on a specific host national he trusted:

> I try to tell [host nationals] something, even though my English isn't that great. And some people would laugh at me (and my English) thinking "what is this guy saying?" but then [a host national] understood what I was saying and told [the host nationals] "he's trying to say this, this, and this! Do you understand?" He explained what I meant to the host nationals. When that happened, I had been spending a lot of time with him daily, and I felt like we were understanding each other deeply, even though some language barrier was there…

He continued that this specific host national also helped him learn English by telling him not to use Google Translate and by practicing talking on the phone with him, which is a challenge for second language learners, in general, because they cannot rely on verbal cues such as facial expressions. This host national was always there to support the Japanese expatriate, which helped the latter build trust in the former. Thus, both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates relied on support from one another to make sense of whom to trust in this company.

Personal Conversations within and Outside of the Workplace

Personal interactions within the workplace and outside of it between U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates were important cues for them in developing trust in one another. Some participants mentioned how sharing emotions and relationship building outside the workplace helped their trust development. For example, an American department manager of 14 years mentioned about an expatriate who "was very rigid, very by the books" when he first arrived in the U.S., but slowly started opening up to the host nationals as they worked together. He continued to provide a detailed description of a specific time the expatriate disclosed his real feelings:

> So, something that is really shocking for me recently that I think built the trust a lot between me and my current expat is when he shared his real feelings, not what the company line was, not what you expect to hear, but when you see him share his emotions and how frustrated he is with the situation that's going on… I remember the first time, typical Japanese reporting system... I mean you report the same thing over and over and over. They want this tweak here, but then the next evaluator wants that tweak there, and no one's ever on the same page. I mean he told me he worked a hundred hours on one 20-page PowerPoint at some point because it kept going through this review… I remember

> he came to me one time and… he's like, "This is so f****** stupid." I'm just like, "Whoa," like I can't believe ... You don't see that a lot from the expats. Usually, they'll just buckle down. Maybe to their other expats, they share some frustration at the smoking booth or something like that. But typically [the host nationals] don't see that… So, when you started seeing the real personality or the real feelings behind it, I think that definitely showed some trust that he's opening up to us, that he wants to be part of the team. He's not just there to infiltrate or there to be the spy for Japan or work and then get out of there. But he wants to build that relationship.

The Japanese expatriate's disclosure of his real feelings in this particular situation was a significant moment for this host national, in which he felt the expatriate wanted to be a part of the team, with host nationals, which led the American employee to start trusting the expatriate. In addition to this personal, emotional interaction in the workplace, personal interactions outside the workplace also played a part in sensemaking of trust among host nationals and expatriates. One U.S. host national mentioned:

> I've took [an expatriate] fishing, we've done some stuff together… And then the traveling together for like quick run offs and… meetings and stuff like that… I mean, you start to learn who they are, what type of personality, their family, what they like to do, what they don't like to do. You know what I mean?... You understand that… Because that's what Americans do. I mean, we go side by side riding, we drink beer, shoot guns, you know? (assistant manager, 20-year veteran)

As these comments describe, personal interactions with the expatriate outside the workplace helped him get to know the specific expatriate better, and the personal information (e.g., who they are, what they like to do) he gained through such interactions allowed him to make sense of whether he could trust the expatriate or not.

Japanese expatriates also described similar experiences with their U.S. counterparts. One Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a senior chief engineer, explained his personal conversation with a trusted host national:

> I go get drinks with [a host national] a lot because we both like drinking, and he told me that he couldn't imagine moving to a foreign country by himself. Money might be good, but still he said he couldn't imagine being away from his family for several years and asked me how I did it.

He further explained that their honest and personal conversations, like the one in the example above, allowed them to understand and care about each other's situation, which developed respect and, eventually, trust in each other.

Another expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for two years as a chief engineer, described the importance of personal conversations and interactions stating that, even though host nationals tended to go home early compared to Japanese expatriates, and he did not have much time to talk about non-work-related matters, he tried to talk to them in the break room or go get drinks with them after work in order to get to know them better, which helped him make sense of whom to trust. Further, a Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for five months as a chief engineer, stated that, when Americans invited him to their house or parties, he thought that they were trying to get to know him to build relationships and trust, which also helped him understand who they were as individuals. Such personal knowledge allowed him to make sense of whom to trust among his colleagues. Thus, both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates tried to get to know one another by having personal conversations and interactions within and outside the workplace. Such knowledge became a significant cue in their trust sensemaking process.

Third Party Information Seeking

Some participants in this study mentioned that they had conversations with their colleagues about expatriates or host nationals in which they learned about specific individuals, which helped them make sense of whom to trust. For example, a U.S. host national (business administrator, 4-year veteran) mentioned: "we talk often about [expatriates] ... I'm close with a lot of the local staff, so we talk often about which ones we think we can trust." He continued by saying that he often talked with his U.S. counterparts about which Japanese expatriates had knowledge or skills in certain areas. Additionally, a U.S. host national, a section manager of 10

years, described a time when he heard about a new expatriate:

> So, just in conversation with American side, the corporate office, people said, "You're very lucky to be receiving this expat." And people who had worked with him before also had good things to say. And then when they told us what to expect with him, and then he started doing the things they said he would do, I thought, this is really good.

His comments indicate that he already had some information about the specific expatriate before their arrival, and this information played a role in making sense of whether he could trust the expatriate or not. Similarly, a Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for a year as a senior chief engineer stated, “whenever I hear stories about some host nationals, how they always try to get things done, or they understand the corporate directions and make progress, I think I can trust them.” The information he received from his Japanese counterparts helped him make sense of whether to trust specific U.S. host nationals or not.

Another Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for three years as a chief administrator, provided his insights on how the things people say could be revealing and influence trust in other people:

> I think rumors about a person are true a lot of times. So, when we try to evaluate someone’s performance, we ask 10 people, who work closely with the person, for their opinions… and usually what they say about the person is consistent, surprisingly… And so, when I hear about [host nationals] that they are responsible or a good thinker or working with purpose, that makes me want to trust them.

This example illustrates that Japanese expatriates trust other Japanese expatriates. Their endorsement or praise of U.S. host nationals made him trust the host nationals in question. Thus, information gained through conversations with others about Japanese expatriates/U.S. host nationals serves as an important cue for making sense of whom to trust.

Host Nationals’ Positional and Transferred Trust in Japanese Expatriates

The analysis revealed another theme that was unique to U.S. host nationals in this study. Some host nationals mentioned that they did not necessarily have to build trust in Japanese

expatriates because they had trust in their Japanese counterparts to begin with, from the latter's arrival in the U.S. Some Americans commented that they trusted Japanese expatriates from the beginning, in general, until others proved they were not trustworthy. In addition, their "automatic" trust in Japanese expatriates originated in the expatriates' position, as Americans made assumptions about expatriates' experience, expertise, and technical knowledge that they brought into the subsidiary. One U.S. host national mentioned:

> I think there's an implied trust most of the time because the [expatriates] that are sent are sent here to teach. Both at this company and my previous job, the expats that were sent here, it was often a steppingstone to a promotion or a new role when they would return and their success was tied and key to our success, if that makes sense. So, their role being to teach and to train… I think there's an implied trust in their expertise while they're here. I think there's more work done in trying to get them to trust us if that makes sense. (chief engineer, 4-year veteran)

His comments indicate that he trusted expatriates from the beginning of their relationship because of their expertise and mentoring role; he had to put more effort into getting expatriates to trust *him*. In other words, he had trust toward Japanese expatriates based on the position and responsibilities expatriates had. Another female host national (assistant chief engineer, 8.5-year veteran) explained that a previous expatriate that she worked with played a part in developing her trust in expatriates, in general:

> Well, for me personally, all of the expats that I've been assigned to work with… I would say the first expat that was assigned to work at [the plant] at that point, he was in a mentor role. So, I had… no better knowledge but to trust him. And the expats brought in since has [sic] been introduced to me through that person. So, that's why I have that trust because I trusted the first person's judgment and knew them going in.

As this quote illustrates, she trusted expatriates upon their arrival because they were introduced through another expatriate that she trusted while working together before. In turn, her trust toward the previous expatriate was transferred to the next expatriates without putting extra effort in attempting to build trust in the newer expatriates. Thus, some U.S. host nationals inherently

believed that Japanese expatriates were trustworthy due to expatriates' position and transferred trust from the previous expatriates. As a result, some Americans tried to work more to *gain* trust from their Japanese counterparts instead of trying to make sense of whether to trust them or not.

Japanese Expatriates' Trust in U.S. Host Nationals

Some Japanese participants in this study explained that they trusted Americans who were used to working with the Japanese, in general. They explained that Americans in certain sections worked more often with the Japanese. A Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for three years as a senior chief engineer mentioned:

> [This plant] has a long history [in the U.S.], and depending on the sections, they are more used to [working with] Japanese [people]. And these people listen to and understand what the Japanese side is saying or requesting… so, I feel like I can trust them.

His comments indicate that Americans who were used to working with Japanese expatriates tended to have more understanding of and better responses to what the Japanese side was trying to do compared to host nationals who had not worked with Japanese expatriates before. Thus, it was easier for Japanese expatriates to build trust in the former compared to the latter host nationals. Similarly, another expatriate, a senior chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for two years, explained, "so, generally speaking, in my section, everyone (Americans) is pretty smart. I didn't necessarily have to make [an] effort to build trust because everyone does their job." This quote illustrates that the U.S. counterparts this expatriate worked with in his section were responsible and did their job, so trusting them was rather effortless. Americans' experience of working with the Japanese and the section they belonged to were some of the unique cues that Japanese expatriates used to make sense of trust in their U.S. counterparts.

In sum, both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates relied on communication messages and behaviors to make sense of whom to trust as they developed trust in each other.

Observing one's competence, skills, and dedication to work, including the level of one's experience and expertise, and getting things done, was an important part of their sensemaking process. Both groups of participants also acknowledged that supportive behavior from the other party, such as speaking up for them or providing guidance and information, was another cue that helped them make sense of trust in others. Being personal with one another within and outside the workplace allowed them to have more personal, sometimes emotional conversations that, eventually, led to trust in each other. Participants also used the information they gained through conversations with their colleagues to make sense of trust in their American or Japanese counterparts. Additionally, some Americans tended to trust Japanese expatriates from the beginning of their work relationship because of the Japanese's experience and expertise as well as the former's previous relationship with other trusted expatriates. Lastly, Japanese expatriates easily determined that Americans who were used to working with the Japanese or who were in certain sections of the company were trustworthy because they understood the directions given by the Japanese or because they demonstrated responsibility.

RQ3: Communication Messages and Behaviors for Trust Maintenance

In respect to RQ3, the analysis revealed one common theme regarding communication messages and behaviors that both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates relied on to maintain trust in each other – interpersonal communication. Additionally, U.S. host nationals commented that support and collaborative behavior from Japanese expatriates were important cues that helped the former make sense of whether to maintain trust in the latter. Some U.S. American participants also mentioned that no maintenance was necessary once trust was established as long as there was no behavior that undermined that trust. Japanese expatriates commented that host nationals' competence and proactivity at work helped them with their

sensemaking process and maintaining trust in the latter. Overall, once trust was built between U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates, maintenance was enacted in daily communication with repetitive, consistent behavior among the participants.

Interpersonal Communication

Both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates commented that interpersonal communication was an important cue for making sense of whether to maintain trust in one another. Specifically, they mentioned that knowing about others' personal lives, maintaining daily contact and conversations, and the sharing of honest thoughts and emotion contributed to maintaining their trust in the other party. One U.S. host national (section manager, 11.5-year veteran) stated:

> …in the evening, when a regular day work starts to kind of dial down, just some casual conversation about something I know that they like, and vice versa, either their kids, I know some of them have certain hobbies. And I think that's what I find to be really obviously important.

Another U.S. employee (assistant chief engineer, 6.5-year veteran) also commented:

> I think as the relationship gets better, like the personal relationship gets better, I think the trust naturally increases with it as well. So, when you first meet an expat, I trusted the expat, because he had experience. But then, as I hung out with him or talked to them, chit chatted with them and got to know their personal lives better… the friendship got improved, I think the trust naturally improved with it.

Their comments indicate that Japanese expatriates' sharing of their personal lives, such as aspects about their family and hobbies, helped host nationals understand the Japanese on a personal level, which allowed them to make sense of whether to continue trusting the expatriates.

Japanese expatriates also shared similar experiences, such as how host nationals' personal involvement and sharing of their honest thoughts helped them maintain trust in host nationals. One chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for four years, commented:

> For example, [host nationals in the quality section] helped celebrate my birthday. I thought, "oh, it's not all about work." I felt like they were my family. Everyone tipped in to buy me a Coach bag. I was so happy that they went above and beyond for me. I sometimes get upset with them (about work), but I was so glad they took time to celebrate my birthday.

He continued by stating that such host nationals' personal involvement with him made him think that they were more like a family for him, which made him realize that he could continue to trust them. In addition, another Japanese expatriate, a chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for three years, claimed:

> I talk a lot with our assistant manager, and one day he asked me how long I was going to stay, and I said maybe two to three more years, then he said, "I don't like this company much, but I won't quit while you are here." That moment, he disclosed his honest thoughts, I felt like I could still count on him.

His comments indicate that the host national's sharing of their honest thoughts made him think that he could continue to trust the individual. A similar experience was described by another Japanese expatriate who mentioned that a trusted host national stopped him from returning to Japan while crying, when he had conflicting thoughts about whether to stay in the U.S. for two more years or return to Japan after completing his initial three-year assignment. This host national's sharing of honest thoughts and emotion helped the Japanese expatriate make sense that he could continue counting on the host national. Thus, interpersonal communication, such as knowing about others' personal lives and sharing of their thoughts and emotions through daily contact and conversations, became important cues in making sense of whether to maintain trust in one another or not.

Support from Expatriates and Expatriates' Collaborative Behavior

U.S. host nationals in this study mentioned that getting consistent help and support from expatriates and expatriates' involvement with host nationals and collaborative behavior constituted important cues in their sensemaking process of trust maintenance. For example, a

U.S. participant, a bilingual business administrator of four years, talked about an expatriate he trusts:

> Every time that there's a problem with one of our developments, he really gets involved and I see him working all day and all night to try to correct the problem. Even after most people go home, I still see him working, having meetings about the problem with the Japanese staff (in Japan). I see him calling Japan, and then the next day he's still working on it. So, just constantly around the clock, I see how dedicated he is to fix the problem. I feel like I can continue trusting him…

He further explained that this expatriate constantly provided support for host nationals and tried to help the company, which made him trust the expatriate even more. Another American assistant manager of 20 years also stated:

> I feel like if we were working toward the same goal and we have specific targets we're trying to reach or whatever, as long as he has that best interest at heart and the best interest of associates in the plant-wise, I will learn to re-trust that expat.

His comments show that observing expatriates' collaborative behavior helped him maintain his trust in them. Thus, Japanese expatriates' supportive and collaborative behavior was an important cue for host nationals' sensemaking of trust maintenance with expatriates.

No Undermining Behavior

Some U.S. host nationals commented that trust maintenance was not necessary once trust in Japanese expatriates was developed. A section manager of 20 months of experience, explained that, "as long as there's no intentional deceiving," he did not necessarily have to maintain trust in expatriates. In other words, once he built trust in expatriates, unless they did something negative that made him lose trust, he did not make a specific effort to maintain trust. Similarly, another U.S. host national mentioned:

> It's almost like at this point he would have to do something out of character to undermine my trust in him… Once we've forged that trust, now it would have to be something out of character to undermine it. But I don't think there's any sort of maintenance, I think the door's wide open. He's got my trust. (assistant section manager, 4.5-year veteran)

He also described a time when everyone else challenged the expatriate and his continued trust in the expatriate:

> Well, there was a time where… [the expatriate] had pointed out a concern with a process that we temporarily discontinued, internally. Several of us were invited to this meeting and [the expatriate] brought it up... [he] already brought it up to the president [before then]. And… our department manager, the American, started being really aggressive and rude, and started accusing, in terms and in words that the interpreter wasn't passing along, couldn't be kept up, but accusing [the expatriate] of just trying to impress the president and not really trying to be concerned [about the issue]. Even then I was like, "You got this guy wrong. He's not." So, even when I've seen other Americans challenge him, I've spent so much time with him, I think I have a better pulse on his intentions than them, so even incidents like that don't make me question [my trust in him].

This participant's response illustrates that, since he already trusted the expatriate in question, he did not think that any maintenance was necessary; his trust would not be undermined even when the American side challenged the expatriate. Thus, some participants did not acknowledge that they necessarily had to maintain trust once it was built; their trust would not be lost unless their Japanese counterparts did something out of the ordinary to undermine this established trust.

Host Nationals' Competence and Proactivity

Japanese expatriates mentioned that host nationals' competence and proactivity were important cues in their sensemaking of trust maintenance with host nationals. Such behaviors of host nationals included being proactive in projects, thinking about the future of the company, exhibiting leadership, and going above and beyond. One Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for a year as a senior chief engineer, mentioned:

> Like, let's say when [host nationals] have projects, or something that needs to be done, and they try to think carefully and find answers proactively… or when I see that they are determined to make progress. They want to make progress, so they involve others and try to solve problems. When I see this kind of behavior, it's reassuring that I can rely on them and everything will be fine.

After trust was built, seeing host nationals' proactive behaviors helped this Japanese expatriate make sense that he could still count on and trust them.

Another Japanese expatriate, a chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for 3.5 years described comments from a trusted host national that made him think he could continue to trust the host national, stating that, "when we were on break together… he said something like, 'I want to improve this' and 'I want this company to be like this in the future.'" This Japanese expatriate learned that the host national was thinking seriously about the company and its future, which allowed him to make sense that he could continue trusting this person. Other Japanese expatriates also mentioned that they thought they could continue trusting host nationals when they observed the host nationals taking leadership, involving their subordinates, and allocating tasks to handle big issues with customers, or when host nationals said, "I will do it, you can count on me." Thus, for Japanese expatriates, host nationals' competence and proactivity played a key role in making sense of whether to continue trusting the latter or not.

In sum, both American and Japanese participants acknowledged that interpersonal communication, such as sharing information about their personal lives or their honest thoughts about various aspects discussed, was important for sensemaking of their continued trust in each other. In addition, U.S. host nationals commented that expatriates' constant supportive and collaborative behavior helped them make sense of whether to continue trusting them. Some host nationals also commented that, as long as the other party did not undermine this trust, no maintenance was necessary once trust was established. Lastly, Japanese expatriates noted host nationals' job competence and proactivity in making sense of trust in host nationals.

RQ4: Similarities and Differences in Expatriates' Trust Building and Maintenance Processes with Host Nationals vs. Other Expatriates

The analysis revealed eight themes capturing similarities and differences in how Japanese expatriates built and maintained trust in U.S. host nationals and with other Japanese expatriates.

In terms of similarities, Japanese expatriates perceived competence and skills, interpersonal interactions, and teamwork and collaboration as important in trust building and maintenance as they pertain to both U.S. host nationals and other Japanese expatriates. These similarities ultimately facilitated Japanese expatriates' trust building and maintenance with both American and Japanese counterparts. As for differences, Japanese participants commented about the time and effort it took to build and maintain trust, differences in competence, dedication, and responsibility at work, work ethic and work-life balance, and clear and straightforward communication. These differences became hindrances to trust in U.S. host nationals. Further, the negative case analysis revealed that, unlike most Japanese expatriates, a few of them stated that it was easier to build and maintain relationships with and trust in U.S. host nationals than their Japanese counterparts.

Similarities/Facilitators of Trust

Competence and Skills. Japanese expatriates in this study claimed that one's competence and skills were important cues in building and maintaining trust in the workplace, no matter who the other individuals were – Japanese or Americans. Competence and skills included behaviors such as completing tasks, meeting deadlines, asking questions and advice, and being reliable and honest. One Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four months as a chief engineer, stated, "host nationals and Japanese… in building [trust], the similarity is that… work is work, no difference in [the importance of] getting things done at work, so I think that part is the same." His comments indicate that the importance of one's ability to complete tasks in trust building in the workplace is the same for both Japanese and Americans. The same person also commented:

> And also, not lying or the feeling that you can rely on people, I don't think there is any difference either. Thinking of some specific example, when some American staff were

> working with a Japanese expatriate, I heard them saying, "[the Japanese expatriate] doesn't really give me good answers whenever I ask him questions." So, to me, how we think about trust is not that different, not so much of big ideas or anything. Simply, someone who doesn't lie or the feeling that everything will be okay when you ask someone to work on certain tasks.

As this quote illustrates, he acknowledged that being reliable and responsible led to trust in the workplace, which did not differ between Japanese and Americans.

Another Japanese expatriate, a senior chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for two years, also commented on how one's competence was important in building and maintaining trust in both Japanese and Americans:

> Hmm, maybe it's the same. Do what was requested, share what was requested with the host nationals and provide support [to complete the requests] … Maybe it's all the same. Of course, it's important that you answer questions, make decisions, complete tasks on time, being responsible and take leadership when there are some issues in their section…

Thus, for Japanese expatriates, one's competence and skills were important cues in making sense of their trust building and maintenance with both U.S. host nationals and other expatriates in the subsidiary.

Interpersonal Interactions. Japanese participants indicated that interpersonal interactions, such as complementing each other, having open, honest communication and non-work-related conversations, were essential in building and maintaining trust in both U.S. host nationals and other Japanese expatriates. Some Japanese participants emphasized the importance of person-to-person interactions no matter who the interaction partners were, host nationals or other expatriates. One expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a chief engineer, stated:

> Even with Japanese, speaking the same language, there are people with whom you can't build trust. So, that means it's not the language [that matters]. Absolutely not. And, you can't build trust in anyone who doesn't say "thank you" or "you're welcome," right? So, I really think [trust building is] just between people, [it's about] "heart to heart (uttered in English)."

His comments indicate that no matter where the other persons were from or what language they spoke, trust could be established as long as interactions were genuine and involved some personal aspects, too.

Also, another expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a chief engineer, claimed:

> Similarities … basically, everyone is trying to accomplish the same [goals] whether you are expatriates or not. So, I think it's important to acknowledge both Japanese and Americans when they are doing a good job. If you don't hear any feedback from others, you don't know if you're doing a good job or not. So, I think it's important to communicate that they are doing good [to build and maintain trust in each other].

His comments show that communicating positive feedback to colleagues is important in trust building and maintenance no matter whether they are Japanese or Americans. Other expatriates also commented that non-work-related conversations and expressing one's feelings played significant roles in trust building and maintenance with both Japanese and Americans. For instance, a chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for two years stated that, "Of course, work is work, so you need to get things done. But, when it comes to trust, I think it's better if you can talk about something other than work." Another expatriate echoed by saying, "Well, it doesn't matter [if you are from] Japan or America, as you work together [and build and maintain trust], you have to express your thoughts honestly, to some extent" (senior chief engineer, 3 years in the U.S.). Thus, Japanese expatriates valued person-to-person interactions in building and maintaining trust in both their American and Japanese counterparts.

Teamwork and Collaboration. Japanese expatriates acknowledged that teamwork and collaboration were equally important in building and maintaining trust in both Americans and other Japanese expatriates. They stated that observing one's effort to work toward the same goals, with shared purposes with others, having similar visions, and working in challenging

situations together helped them build and maintain trust in the workplace. One Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for 2.5 years as a chief engineer, mentioned that trust building and maintenance processes were the same for both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals because both parties "have the same goals … [and] want to develop and make something good." Sharing and working toward the same goals helped them build and maintain trust no matter who the other individuals were.

Another Japanese expatriate, a senior chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for a year, explained how being aware of shared purposes was important in trust building and maintenance with both Japanese and Americans:

> So, when you have one-way communication and say, "do this, do that" to someone, for both expatriates and local staff, you can't really be on the same page. Especially after I came to the [United] States, I started thinking that without having shared purposes or if you are not aware of the purpose of doing anything, trust building will not go well. And [without shared purposes], if you request anyone to do this or that, of course they don't respond to that …

He realized, after coming to the U.S., that sharing the same purpose and being on the same page helped working with others, which eventually led to the development of trust. In addition, another expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for three years as a chief engineer stated, "Both in Japan and the U.S., trust is built in the process of creating good results when you have some tasks that are challenging and work hard with others. And there is no difference on that [between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals]." His comments indicate that the same processes for building trust in challenging situations occurred for both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals. In sum, Japanese expatriates saw similarities in how they built trust in U.S. host nationals and other Japanese expatriates based on competence and skills, interpersonal interactions, and teamwork and collaboration, which facilitated their trust building and maintenance processes with both parties.

Differences/Hindrances to Trust

More Time and Effort with Americans. Most of the Japanese expatriates mentioned that trust building and maintenance generally took more time and effort with U.S. host nationals than with other Japanese expatriates. Some Japanese participants commented how trust building would go more smoothly with other expatriates because they were in the same situation, with similar challenges, as themselves. One participant, a senior chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for 3.5 years, stated,

> So, between expatriates … basically, most of us don't have prior experience as expatriates, so we are all in the same situation, and we have that in our mind as we work [together] … like we have the same kind of challenges, so it's quicker to build trust [with other expatriates].

His comments indicate that expatriates shared similar challenges in the new environment, so it was easier to understand each other; hence building relationships and trust in one another also came easier. Similarly, one of the Japanese participants, who had been in the U.S. for three years as a chief engineer, described:

> There are only two expatriates [in this plant], in addition to the president, so it's more like we are comrades and trying to accomplish our missions together … it doesn't work at all if there's conflict between us, and we're trying to cooperate and support each other.

Although there were many Japanese expatriates in the U.S. headquarters, each regional plant in the U.S. only had a few expatriates at a time. Thus, expatriates were in a situation where they had to build and maintain good relationships and trust in one another to accomplish their duties.

Further, some of the Japanese expatriates stated that it was easier to get to know each other and find common ground with other Japanese expatriates compared to the U.S. host nationals. For example, one participant, who had been in the U.S. for seven years as a senior chief engineer, commented:

> Because there are not many Japanese [here], so it's easier to get along with them … some expatriates may [have] unique [personalities], but they are not weird people. So, we get to know each other sooner and talk about various topics.

Another Japanese expatriate, a chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for three years, mentioned:

> You get to know [Japanese expatriates] more quickly, but also your judgement [on whether you can build relationships with and trust in them] goes also quickly because it doesn't take long to get to know them … [with Americans], we understand the cultural differences between us, and I feel like it takes time to find common grounds …

Japanese expatriates thought that it was quicker to build trust in other Japanese expatriates because it did not take much time to get to know each other as they were in the same (challenging) situations most of the time, and perhaps also because of their shared cultural background.

Competence, Dedication, and Responsibility. Japanese expatriates in this study described the differences between U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates in terms of their work abilities, dedication to the company, and responsibility at work, all of which were essential in trust building and maintenance. Specifically, Japanese expatriates commented that they already knew that other Japanese expatriates were competent, and there was a gap between U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates, which made it challenging to build and maintain trust in their U.S. counterparts. For example, one expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a senior chief engineer, mentioned:

> I have to ask [host nationals] their progress [on projects] every day [otherwise nothing gets done]. If I want them to understand ten things I say, I often have to check in with them and ask them whether they are doing what they are supposed to do. I have to check in repeatedly. There is no [host national] who does all the ten things after I ask them once…

He continued that, if he did not check in constantly with host nationals, their understanding of requests and assignments gradually shifted, and they ended up doing something completely

different than needed. As a result, this difference between Japanese expatriates and Americans in the ability to complete their jobs made it more challenging for Japanese expatriates to build and maintain trust in their U.S. counterparts.

Additionally, Japanese participants explained that U.S. host nationals were less dedicated to the company than Japanese expatriates. One expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a chief engineer commented:

> [Host nationals] lack in their dedication to work for the company for a long time… they just think about their pay [at the moment], so, for example, when I tell them that all the 70 locations across the globe need to be profitable, they will tell me "I don't care." They are just happy as long as they get paid … whereas expatriates are sent overseas with specific assignments, and we have to do things that the Japanese president [in the headquarters in Japan] told us to [while thinking more globally] …

Similarly, another Japanese expatriate, a senior chief engineer who had been in the U.S. for four years, claimed:

> There are a lot of [host nationals] who think they can just quit if they don't like working here. They are not like [expatriates] who work for the company until we retire. If they find a company that pays 10K dollars more, they will switch their company easily.

These comments indicate that U.S. host nationals' dedication to the company was not as high as that of Japanese expatriates, which made it difficult to have shared purposes and goals in mind, therefore, more challenging to build and maintain trust in the host nationals.

Further, some Japanese expatriates also claimed that job responsibilities were clearly distinguished among host nationals, which sometimes prevented one another from helping with their tasks. A Japanese senior chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for a year, stated:

> So, in a lot of areas, there are clear distinctions… In Japan, sometimes we help with tasks and duties of other sections, I mean [host nationals] do that to some extent, but the difference is significant, and the job duties and responsibilities are clearly defined in each section.

He continued by stating that the clear distinctions of job duties and responsibilities in each section sometimes prevented Americans from helping and collaborating across sections. In addition, a chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for three years, described how Americans tended to seek benefits more than Japanese expatriates:

> Americans don't want to do anything that doesn't benefit them, I feel like. They always tell me "no benefit" [whenever I request them to do something]. They say, "I don't want to do it because there is no benefit." I'm not saying it's a bad thing, they might be right… But for Japanese, without thinking about benefits, they will do a lot for others whom they trust. [Even if Americans trust one another] I feel like they seek benefits more [than the Japanese].

He thought that U.S. host nationals only did things that benefited them, which also sometimes inhibited them from working on tasks or helping others. These differences in clear job responsibilities and seeking of benefits became obstacles to trust building and maintenance for Japanese expatriates.

Work Ethic and Work-Life Balance. Japanese expatriates mentioned that the difference between them and their American counterparts in work ethic and work-life balance made it more challenging for them to build and maintain trust in American employees. Specifically, they mentioned that Americans tended to go home after their work hours were over even if their tasks were not complete for the day, which resulted in not meeting deadlines and caused issues building relationships and trust. One expatriate, a senior chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for seven years, stated:

> For people here, their family is the No.1 priority, and a part of me still can't completely accept it, but sometimes they just don't meet deadlines and leave tasks unfinished [because they go home right when their work hours end].

Another Japanese chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for 2.5 years, also mentioned:

> … so, you hear it in cultural trainings, but [Americans] may have some family issues, or there are a lot of dual-income households, so they often go home early [in order to take

> care of their family]. I feel like I have to take that into consideration [to work with them] because they have some time constraints …

He continued that, due to such time constraints, Americans had made it challenging for him to build and maintain trust in them:

> … in a way, it affects my trust [toward them]. Sometimes, I honestly want them to stay longer [to complete their tasks before going home], but I understand their family situations, too, so I just have to be more mindful about it. If I pressure them to stay, I feel like they'll quit.

Further, a chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for four months, described his struggle in getting used to his American coworkers' work ethic:

> For example, when Japanese workers have something that needs to be done, they will work overtime for four hours or even five hours to get it done. I don't expect host nationals to do the same, I know that it's a part of American culture, and Japanese expatriates have to accept it … but from the Japanese perspective, I still find myself thinking "why do you go home [even when you're not done with your tasks]?" or "why do you go on a vacation [without completing your assignments]?" I haven't been here that long, so I may not be understanding the culture well, and I know I have to accept it … but I still don't think I can accept it 100%. It may be that the Japanese norm is wrong, it's not right to work overtime for four to five hours. Americans may be right … Maybe there is no right or wrong, it's just a cultural difference, but the difference makes it difficult to work together…

These expatriates' comments indicate that U.S. employees' prioritizing of their family or their life outside work was different from what the typical Japanese employees were used to—prioritizing work over their family or private life, in general. It was still difficult for some Japanese expatriates to understand this difference in priorities; it even made it more challenging for them to work with their U.S. counterparts because, sometimes, tasks were not completed, which affected their trust in their American colleagues and their trust maintenance processes.

Clear and Straightforward Communication. Japanese participants made comments about the difference in clear and straightforward communication between Japanese and

Americans that affected their trust in such relationships. For example, a chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for 3.5 years, stated:

> With the Japanese, they will understand what's not being said and proceed with their job … and you don't really have to directly complement them for that … we have an official evaluation system so you will be evaluated periodically. But in the U.S., you have to complement them directly [for their work] so they can be motivated to work more.

His comments indicate that, for U.S. host nationals, it was important to provide positive feedback directly, even a simple "thank you," about their work, unlike for Japanese expatriates. In other words, without communicating positive feedback, Americans might not have been motivated to work, which resulted in not getting things done, affecting the trust Japanese expatriates had in these relationships.

In addition, Japanese expatriates also commented on the need to communicate details clearly when providing negative feedback to their American counterparts. An expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a chief engineer, mentioned:

> I think that Japanese people can accept harsh words [at work] … [but with host nationals] you will need to listen to them, and you can't just say "no, it doesn't work." Instead, you will have to say, for example, "there are some other ideas like these" … In Japan, if things don't work, then you can just say "no," and it's like a clear black and white difference, but if you do that in the U.S., I don't think you can build trust [with host nationals]. When you agree with them, you agree, [but when you don't agree with them] I feel like you have to provide some alternatives, adding one more thing to [the] disagreement. If you go with the Japanese way, Americans don't take it well, so I try to listen to them more carefully.

Similarly, another expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for 3.5 years as a senior chief engineer, commented, "I'm not sure how much I can say to [host nationals]. I'm still not sure how harsh you can be with them, or how much is too much in America [that can cause issues in relationships]." Both these expatriates perceived that, compared to Japanese workers, Americans were not used to the type of strong disagreement or harsh words that were generally used among Japanese workers. Additionally, they acknowledged that they would not be able to build and

maintain trust in their U.S. counterparts if they communicated with them according to Japanese cultural norms.

Furthermore, Japanese expatriates claimed that the language barrier they experienced made it even more challenging to communicate clearly with their American coworkers in the process of building and maintaining trust in them. One expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four months as a chief engineer, mentioned:

> With Japanese expatriates, we speak the same language … but with host nationals, it's so hard for me not to be able to communicate well because of the language. I try to talk with the vocabulary I know or with gestures, but when we talk about something more complicated, then I can't really communicate well. So, I feel like the language barrier is [a] big [obstacle].

His comments indicate that his inability to speak English fluently affected trust building and maintenance as it made communication more difficult. However, another expatriate, a chief administrator who had been in the U.S. for three years, described how the language barrier could contribute to trust building with their U.S. counterparts:

> With host nationals, language and cultural barriers absolutely exist, and [both Japanese expatriates and host nationals] experience that… It can be a challenge, but when you overcome that barrier and accomplish something together, that experience will build trust [in one another]. This process doesn't happen with other expatriates, so I think you can develop higher trust in host nationals than other expatriates… Between expatriates, trust won't get to [be] that high.

Because expatriates spoke the same language and did not have any language or cultural barriers, they did not have the same experience while communicating as they did with host nationals. In other words, language and cultural barriers can be challenging, but when Japanese expatriates overcome those obstacles in communication with host nationals, they can build a higher level of trust in U.S. host nationals than with their Japanese counterparts.

Negative Case: Friendliness and Honesty of Americans. Although most of the Japanese participants commented that it was more challenging to build and maintain trust in

Americans than with Japanese colleagues due to differences between themselves and host nationals, a few Japanese expatriates mentioned that it was easier for them to establish trust in their American counterparts because of the latter's friendly and honest characteristics. For example, a chief engineer, who had been in the U.S. for five months, mentioned, "I sometimes think that it's easier to build trust [with the host nationals] … they like "yes" and "no," and they don't prefer vague expressions. And they are friendly…". In addition, another expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a senior chief engineer, commented, "You can start talking about your hobbies [with host nationals] in the U.S. [to build trust], but in Japan, it takes years when you try to build trust in someone you meet for the first time." Their comments indicate that Americans' preference for straightforward expressions and friendly personality characteristics made it easier to talk to and get to know them, which helps building trust; this process would take longer with other Japanese colleagues.

Further, a Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for four years as a chief engineer, described his perspective on Americans' honesty:

> I have a higher level of trust in host nationals. I don't trust the Japanese. We share the same language, so I can see their two-sided part. Like, what you are saying and doing are different, I can see that in the Japanese … and Americans don't lie, and I think the Japanese lie [more often]. Americans will directly tell you "they can't" [when they can't do something that's requested], but Japanese won't say that. So, I trust Americans more [than Japanese].

Because of Americans' honesty, this Japanese expatriate claimed a higher level of trust in them as compared to their Japanese counterparts.

In sum, regarding RQ4, Japanese expatriates identified similarities and differences in how they built and maintained trust in Americans and other Japanese expatriates. For similarities, the importance of competence and skills, interpersonal interactions, and teamwork and collaboration were evident in trust building and maintenance with both Americans and other

Japanese expatriates. These similarities facilitated their trust building and maintenance processes. They also acknowledged differences, which hindered their trust in U.S. host nationals: the time and effort it took to build and maintain trust, differences in job competence, dedication to the company, responsibility at work, work ethic and work-life balance, and clear and straightforward communication, which all affected how Japanese expatriates established and maintained trust in U.S. host nationals. Additionally, some Japanese expatriates commented that it was easier to build trust in Americans because of their friendliness and honesty that were lacking in Japanese expatriates.

RQ5: Similarities and Differences in Host Nationals' Trust Building and Maintenance Processes with Expatriates vs. Other Host Nationals

The analysis revealed five themes regarding similarities and differences in U.S. host nationals' trust building and maintenance processes with Japanese expatriates and other host nationals. Competence and skills, and interpersonal communication were important elements of trust and facilitated trust building and maintenance processes with both Japanese expatriates and other Americans. In regard to differences, U.S. host nationals discussed differences in time and effort needed to build and maintain trust, open, honest, and clear communication, and work-based and interpersonal-based trust, which made it more challenging for them to build and maintain trust in Japanese expatriates.

Similarities/Facilitators of Trust

Competence and Skills. For U.S. host nationals, one's work competence and skills were equally important for the process of trust building and maintenance with both Japanese expatriates and other host nationals. One participant (senior chief engineer, 14-year veteran) commented, "Yeah, not an American or a Japanese thing. It's basically can I depend on you to do

what you say you're going to do and when you're supposed to do it." Another host national (plant manager, 14-year veteran) stated:

> I just feel like the similarities [between Japanese expatriates and U.S. Americans] are still there. If [someone] brings me a problem and trusts me to fix it, and I don't feel like that's any different than if the local side brought me a problem and trust me to fix it.

Their comments indicate that one's competence in accomplishing one's tasks was essential in building and maintaining trust in both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals. Further, a host national commented on how lack of work competence and skills could decrease trust no matter where the individuals were from:

> I think the similarities come down to… Can the associates, whether they're American, Japanese, can they actually deliver on your question or your request in a timely fashion? If I ask someone to do something for me or I need help and they help me, I can start trusting them more. But if they can't do those things, then I naturally will either stop asking them for support or whatever it is. The trust goes down. (assistant chief engineer, 6.5-year veteran)

Thus, similar to the Japanese participants in this study, U.S. host nationals acknowledged that one's competence and skills were a critical part of trust building and maintenance processes involving both Japanese expatriates and Americans.

Interpersonal Interactions. American participants commented that, regardless of where each individual was from, they were all human, and person-to-person interactions were an important part of trust building and maintenance. One U.S. participant mentioned:

> I think we're all human. So, in all reality, even though [Japanese expatriates are] here to teach us and to work, they do have families. They do have hobbies and things that they want to do over the weekend. So, as you start to break that wall, you learn that they're interested in sports. They're interested in going to concerts or travel and those types of things. So, as soon as you break that wall, that barrier, and they feel more comfortable, that's when you realize that we're all just human. (assistant chief engineer, 10.5-year veteran)

Another participant commented on the importance of finding common ground:

> We're not all that different, even though we come from opposite ends of the world. The expats that we have here now, like some of the very same things that the local people like, whether that's playing golf or fishing or playing basketball or whatever that is, you just have to find that common ground and make more of a human connection before there's a professional connect, I guess. If that makes sense. (plant manager, 14-year veteran)

As these comments describe, Americans acknowledged that having interpersonal interactions allowed them to find common ground with their colleagues, which made it easier for them to build and maintain trust in one another no matter where their colleagues were from because they were all the same human beings.

Additionally, a female assistant chief engineer of seven years stated, "Well, I think both [Japanese expatriates and host nationals] enjoy having a good sense of humor and being able to laugh at things," indicating that humor could also help build and maintain trust in both parties. Interpersonal interactions offered an opportunity for colleagues to share some laughs no matter whether they were Japanese or Americans. Such a human connection through shared laughter also contributed to their establishment and maintenance of trust. Thus, as illustrated by the comments above, U.S. host nationals emphasized that, regardless of whether individuals were Japanese or Americans, they were all human, and finding common ground through human connections played a part in trust building and maintenance with both Japanese and Americans.

Differences/Hindrances to Trust

More Time and Effort with Japanese Expatriates. A lot of U.S. host nationals commented that it took more time and effort to build trust in Japanese expatriates than in their American counterparts, mainly because of how they began their relationships. One American employee commented:

> I definitely think that... when we meet someone in America, I guess maybe American to American, I notice that… they start much closer to each other and they might start off as friends… And because of that, I feel like they can trust people in the beginning until

> maybe they have a reason where they can't… whereas Japanese people, they kind of set up more guarded and it takes them a longer time to [get close] and build trust, I think. (bilingual business administrator, 4-year veteran)

He thought that Japanese people did not start their relationships as close to one another as Americans did, so it took more time and effort to get to know Japanese expatriates and build trust in them. Another female participant described how trust relationships began differently between Japanese and Americans:

> [With Americans] I will trust you until you give me a reason not to trust you kind of thing. I think with the Japanese, it's exactly opposite, they won't trust you until you give them a reason to trust you… And I get it, but sometimes I wish they were more trustworthy from the start to build that rapport, because it would make things maybe a little bit easier to get their side of things or our side of things. (senior chief administrator, 25-year veteran)

Her comments indicate that it took more time and effort to build trust in Japanese expatriates because she had to give them a reason to trust her, whereas Americans might start off trusting one another.

Although it may have taken more time and effort to build trust in Japanese expatriates, some Americans commented that, once trust was established, that trust could be more meaningful and last longer. For example, an assistant chief engineer, 10.5-year veteran commented that, “It takes a long time, but it also is more meaningful than kind of the American side when you gain trust.” Another explained that, “I do feel like when you build trust in a Japanese person, it is more long term…” (assistant chief engineer, 8.5-year veteran, female).

However, at the same time, if the trust was lost, there would be no gaining it back from Japanese expatriates, as one of the participants stated:

> I feel like with the Japanese… once you lose trust, there's no gaining it back. So, I feel like the Japanese… I do feel like once they gain it because it takes so long to gain it, that if you do something that ruins that, you're not going to get anything back from that. I kind of think of it as when associates quit. Typically, it's almost like you are turning back on them personally, rather than hey, looking for a new opportunity, whereas the American

> side, if you leave it's hey, good for you, you're going, you're doing something new in your life, whereas the Japanese, it's kind of seems like more of a personal, like hey, we trusted you that we built you within this company, now you went ahead and left… (chief engineer, 10.5-year veteran)

Because of these differences in how relationships started, it took more time and effort for Americans to build trust in their Japanese counterparts. Although that trust in Japanese expatriates could be more meaningful and last longer, it could also be impossible to regain if lost.

Although most U.S. employees admitted that it took more time and effort to build and maintain trust in Japanese expatriates, some participants commented that it was rather opposite. In other words, some Americans thought it took more time to build trust in their American counterparts than in Japanese expatriates:

> Sometimes American colleagues... I will say this, if you're Japanese [expatriates] and you're leaving your country and you're coming over to America to work at a major corporation, you're very intelligent, you've worked your way up. And so, you have business and targets and goals that you're looking to achieve. For Americans, it's not always like that. They live here, they work here. You know what I mean? They don't have the same mentality, I guess. And it takes years to build more trust, in my opinion, with Americans than it does with Japanese. (assistant manager, 20-year veteran)

His comments indicate that Japanese expatriates had higher level of competence in general and more aware of the company's directions compared to American colleagues. As a result, he thought it would take less time to build trust in his Japanese coworkers than in his American counterparts.

Open, Honest, and Clear Communication. U.S. American host nationals described the differences in open, honest, and clear communication between Japanese and Americans that made it challenging for them to build and maintain trust in their Japanese counterparts. For example, they commented that Americans were more open, whereas the Japanese were more reserved, a difference that made it difficult for them to get to know Japanese expatriates in the process of trust building and maintenance. One female participant stated:

> Americans will overshare and it's a lot easier to know what's going on in their personal life, because there's the different rules of boundaries. And I think with Japanese that it's a little bit different and that they don't give you automatic permission to know everything about their lives, just because you ask… So, it's a little bit slower [to get to know them and] a lot of patience involved, I think… it just might take a Japanese person, in my opinion, a little bit longer to get a little bit past more of the small talk versus an American might say like, "What you do over the weekend?" And then they might end up telling you their blood type at the end of it, you never know (*laughter*). (assistant chief engineer, 8.5-year veteran)

Another participant also mentioned:

> I think with the American side… we're more similar as far as we talk about our weekends with the family and all that kind of thing, and just with the Japanese, it seems like they're here mainly just to work… the Japanese are more reserved and more focused on getting the job done. But it does seem like over time that they're here and interacting with the American culture, they become a little bit more open with, hey, it's not just work, work, work. It's let's talk about grabbing a beer after work and those types of things. (chief engineer, 10.5-year veteran)

Their comments indicate that it took longer for Japanese expatriates to open up and share information about themselves with Americans. As an information systems manager (10-year veteran, male) added, "[Japanese are] very reserved. I think that communication not being there just makes it hard to have a relationship. How do you build that trust if you're not communicating?". This difference in openness made it more challenging for U.S. host nationals to get to know Japanese expatriates in the process of trust building and maintenance.

In addition, some host nationals struggled with communication from the Japanese that was not fully honest, which became an obstacle in building and maintaining trust. One participant commented on how the Japanese sometimes lied or did not provide detailed information:

> Local side, we struggle with people that lie to us… We struggle with people that don't always tell us the whole story or leave out details, we struggle to trust people like that… sometimes I get that impression that at least on the Japanese side, that even them, they understand amongst themselves that they're either being lied to, or they're going to lie about it, they're not always getting the whole truth from somebody, or they're not always going to tell the whole truth [to] somebody. Again, just my opinion is, I think Japanese

> look at truth and facts in how that relates to trust very, very differently than how local side does. (plant manager, 14-year veteran)

His comments indicate that, sometimes, he perceived that Japanese expatriates lied or did not provide the whole story, which inhibited him from trusting them. Another host national explained a similar experience with expatriates:

> … Particularly with the expats… Not outright lying. I don't want that to say to come across in that way. But perhaps an embellishment of having a complete mastery of all the facts. And perhaps somebody asks you a question that you don't have the answer to. But in the instant [they'll say], "Oh yes. Of course, we did that." And when you see this recur, it does start to undermine your trust of somebody… (chief engineer, 4-year veteran)

As his comments show, some host nationals acknowledged that Japanese expatriates avoided saying "they don't know" or being incorrect; therefore, they sometimes "lied." However, another American participant stated that the Japanese were calculating what they were saying:

> Especially in engineering, we're very willing to be wrong, I think in public, while the Japanese aren't… I think culturally we're expected to be, I don't know, confident whether we're right or wrong. We're confident in what we're saying. While a Japanese person doesn't want to say something wrong… They don't want to say the wrong thing and offend someone if they don't know will get offended. They're just much more patient, they're more calculated in what they're going to say, I think. Americans will just blurt it out. (assistant chief engineer, 6.5-year veteran)

In his view, Japanese expatriates were not lying, but, instead, calculating what they said when compared to Americans. The "truth" that Japanese expatriates told others was calculated in a way that was more advantageous for themselves, which could be perceived as lying by U.S. host nationals and could inhibit their trust building and maintenance processes.

In regard to this view about Japanese expatriates' calculated truth, a Japanese expatriate, who had been in the U.S. for three years as a chief engineer, explained how Americans were too honest:

> [Americans] are too honest… Sometimes I just feel like they should not say too much… Japanese have this sense of *honne* (one's true intentions) and *tatemae* (socially-tuned, calculated intentions), right? [Americans] even say things that they shouldn't say to our

> customers, like things that can be [a] disadvantage for us… It could be a good thing about America… but they tell me Japanese are liar[s]. They laugh and tell me Japanese are liar[s] (*laughter*).

He described that Americans tended to tell their customers everything regarding any defects of their products or issues they were having, which could be disadvantageous for the company. The Japanese would not share everything but rather omitted details or adjusted how they explained things to their customers in a way that was advantageous for them, using *tatemae* (socially-tuned, calculated intentions), which is an important business practice in Japanese culture. However, Americans took this part of Japanese culture as "lying," which made it more challenging for them to build or maintain trust in their Japanese counterparts.

Further, one participant described "the back-alley" conversations among Japanese expatriates:

> …We call the back-alley deals, the back-alley conversations, or the napkin agreements. What happens at the dinner in Japan one time can be more important than three months of quoting… So, if you have some access to the behind the scenes of what's going on, here's what they said, but here's what they really mean, that kind of story, it really helps you understand why you're getting certain feedback or why we're having to do certain reports. Whereas if you just are told to do something and you don't know the why behind it, it's really frustrating as an associate. (department manager, 14-year veteran)

These conversations among the Japanese behind closed doors happened occasionally, and important decisions were made in such conversations to which, often times, Americans did not have access. When Americans did not know that backstory, it made it challenging for them to build relationships with Japanese expatriates, therefore inhibiting trust building and maintenance.

Moreover, the language barrier affected trust building and maintenance between Americans and Japanese expatriates, as one host national mentioned:

> Well, I think the biggest issue right off the bat's going to be the language barrier. It's hard to build trust with people if you can't have conversations with them and discussions, so the approach has to be different, I guess. If it's somebody that has a good English skill,

> it's a lot easier to start building that trust right off the bat, I think. (senior chief administrator, 25-year veteran, female)

As her comments show, not being able to communicate clearly in English with Japanese expatriates created a challenging environment in the process of trust building and maintenance. Thus, these differences in how Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals engaged in open, honest, and clear communication played a part in their establishment and maintenance of trust in one another.

Work-Based vs. Interpersonal-Based Trust. U.S. host nationals explained that trust was built and maintained based on work and results with Japanese expatriates and interpersonal interactions with U.S. host nationals. One participant commented:

> It definitely needs to be a little more work driven. You have to prove yourself more through your work, I think, with the expats than maybe with the locals. I mean you still do a little bit, but it could be more built on friendly relationship and things like that with the local side. As much as I like to have that with the Japanese side, they're still 90% work first, right? So, it's a lot more your results and how you can support them and through the work life than just where you're just, oh, buddy-buddy, chummy at the lunch table kind of situation. (department manager, 14-year veteran)

Other participants also acknowledged the importance of showing one's competence and producing results when building trust in Japanese expatriates, as one stated:

> I guess with… Japanese expats, I will try to let them see my work early on and so they understand where I am with projects, and maybe in a way that's trying to build trust with them… [U.S. Americans are] more likely to talk about hobbies or shows that we watch, what you do on the weekend, that kind of thing [in building trust] … I think probably for the Japanese colleagues, it's more important to show that you're really good at your work, that you technically you know what you're doing and producing good results. (assistant chief engineer, 7-year veteran, female)

Her comments indicate that it was more important to display one's work competence in building trust in Japanese expatriates, whereas finding common ground, such as favorite TV shows, could play a part in building trust in host nationals. Moreover, another U.S. employee commented:

> …with the American side… you can maybe say, “Sorry, it didn't work out. I will try next time” [when things do not work out] … You can do that [with the] Japanese side. I just don't think you're doing yourself any favors building trust. You said you were going to do something [so you have to do it]. (section manager, information systems section, 10-year veteran, male)

Thus, keeping one’s word and proving one’s ability to accomplish what had been said helped build trust in Japanese expatriates; with Americans, simply admitting that things did not work out could be acceptable in trust building.

Furthermore, American participants also commented that they wanted to “be liked,” and someone being “nice” could lead to trust in that person, which was not the case for Japanese expatriates. One American mentioned:

> [Americans] want to show like, "Hey, I'm a good guy." Some people will tell jokes and they'll make lighthearted comments or something and that's in an effort to show their personality or to show [that they are trustworthy] ... That never happens with the Japanese. (assistant manager, 4.5-year veteran)

Another participant (section manager, 11.5-year veteran) added that, even if a person was not a good engineer, being “a good guy” could lead to trust in the person for Americans. Thus, host nationals thought it was more important for them to display their work competence in building and maintaining trust in Japanese expatriates than in their American coworkers.

In sum, regarding RQ5, U.S. host nationals identified one’s competence and skills and interpersonal interactions as important elements and facilitators of building and maintaining trust in both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals. Moreover, they commented that it generally took more time and effort to build and maintain trust in Japanese expatriates, and the differences between Japanese expatriates and host nationals in respect to their open, honest, and clear communication made it more challenging for them to build trust in their Japanese counterparts compared to their American colleagues. Lastly, Americans acknowledged that trust in the

Japanese was more work-driven, whereas trust could be built based on more interpersonal interactions in the case of their U.S. counterparts.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study examined characteristics that trust in the workplace has for Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals working at a Japanese manufacturing company in the U.S. (RQ1), the communication behaviors and messages they relied on to build and maintain trust (RQ2, RQ3), as well as similarities and differences in how host nationals and expatriates built and maintained trust (RQ4, RQ5). Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed below.

Theoretical Contributions

Perceptions of Trust and Cultural Effects

Even though Bird and Osland (2005) argue that individuals' cultural backgrounds affect how they define and build trust, both U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates identified the same factors – competence and skills, teamwork and collaborations, and open/honest communication – as important for trust in the workplace. In turn, even though differences between the U.S. culture and Japanese culture were considered significant (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2010), both host nationals and expatriates identified the same characteristics regarding trust in the workplace. Although located in various regions in the U.S., participants, nevertheless, worked for the same company. So, it could be that their organizational cultures outweighed their national cultures in respect to what characteristics trust in the workplace had for them. Organizational cultures involve "values and assumptions about social reality" (Alvesson, 2013, p. 4), and "the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by the groups within which they live" (Frost et al., 1985, p. 17). Thus, more than likely expatriates and host nationals held shared norms and values in the company that were gradually, over time, not only passed down to host nationals from the headquarters, through expatriates, but also

shaped and transformed by the employees themselves. Consequently, these shared organizational norms and values influenced what participants in this study thought were important characteristics of trust in the workplace. Perhaps competence and skills, teamwork and collaboration, and open/honest communication have been valued in the Japanese company to begin with; therefore, all employees, both expatriates and host nationals, were socialized into this organizational culture. As a result, the organizational culture might have contributed to how expatriates and host nationals identified important characteristics of trust through enactment and observations of these values in their daily operations.

Although there were some host nationals whose tenure in the company was as short as 20 months, the average tenure was 8.7 years for U.S. host nationals and 20.7 years for Japanese expatriates. As individuals work in a company for a long time, their beliefs and values might align with those of the company more and more, over time. Thus, participants' tenure may have contributed to their perceptions of trust as well. Both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals might have pointed out characteristics of trust in the workplace in the same way due to their shared organizational culture. However, evidence that national culture also influences understandings of trust comes from the Japanese participants, who provided additional culturally nuanced expressions of trust compared to U.S. host nationals.

Specifically, competence and skills seemed to be the most important elements of trust in the workplace for all participants. This finding is consistent with previous literature. Some scholars acknowledge that ability and competence are important aspects of trust (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2007; Schindler & Thomas, 1993). Ang and Tan (2016) also found that the work competence of host nationals and expatriates was the most important element in the early stages of their trust building process. In the workplace, where employees constantly work toward completing tasks,

competence and skills become essential for trust among colleagues, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Thus, this study confirms the importance of work competence in trust building and adds this unique context of the relationships between Japanese expatriates and U.S. American host nationals to the literature on trust, expatriates, and host nationals in multinational corporations.

In terms of teamwork and collaboration, whereas U.S. American host nationals had somewhat general ideas of how to support one another, Japanese expatriates provided a specific expression of what teamwork consisted of—that no work should be done alone in organizations. Hence, Japanese expatriates emphasized that collaboration was key in organizations and that colleagues should rely on each other and work collectively, instead of working individually. This unique finding can be explained by the collectivistic nature of Japanese culture (Hofstede et al., 2010). In a collectivistic culture, companies usually hire individuals who belong to an in-group (the organization) and who can meet the expectations of that in-group rather than their individual goals. This approach results in people in the workplace becoming one's primary in-group (Nakane, 1970). Work is also the center of Japanese people's lives (Schaufeli et al., 2009), and working long hours for the well-being of their company and for demonstrating their commitment (Dang & Rammal, 2020) strengthens the in-group consciousness.

In addition, the ability to get along with others is more valued than one's talent or experience in Japan. Lifelong loyalty is also expected in the workplace (Condon, 1984; Hofstede et al., 2010), for which having good relationships with one's colleagues and working collectively with them become necessary. Japanese expatriates in this study also valued relationships and harmony among their colleagues, which aligns with a characteristic of collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst, 1994; Matsumoto, 1990). Thus, although both U.S. host nationals and Japanese

expatriates acknowledged that teamwork and collaboration were important in trust, Japanese participants demonstrated more cultural influences in their definition of teamwork and collaboration. In turn, even though one's organizational culture may affect the salience of certain characteristics of trust in the workplace, in general, when they describe these characteristics of trust in detail, one's culture may play a part in how they enact or observe these behaviors in themselves and others. Therefore, this study contributes to the research on trust and culture findings that *both* organizational *and* national cultures affect trust in the workplace, offering a more complex view and understanding of trust and culture.

Further, U.S. participants explained open and honest communication as disagreeing with others and providing negative feedback when they thought about trust in the workplace. However, Japanese participants did not view such behaviors as important; instead, they mentioned behaviors such as talking about work or non-work-related subjects as an important aspect of trust in the workplace. Again, Japanese people value harmony and tend to avoid communication that could cause confrontation (Hofstede et al., 2010), such as disagreement or negative feedback. Additionally, talking about any subject allows them to learn more about each other, further developing their relationships and making in-group ties stronger. Meanwhile, Americans are more individualistic (Hofstede et al., 2010) and do not shy away from disagreements or criticism. They may also consider critical feedback necessary to improve their performance in the future. Such cultural differences might have influenced how open and honest communication was enacted between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals.

In addition, Americans are more straightforward in communication because they employ low-context communication, in which most of the information is explicitly expressed in a message (Hall, 1976). By contrast, Japanese people prefer high-context communication, where

much of information is not explicitly delivered but rather embedded in contextual cues. People also tend to avoid straightforward communication, especially when something negative has to be communicated (Hall, 1976). These differences in communication patterns may have contributed to Americans' tendency to provide negative feedback or express disagreements as part of their open and honest communication, which was not the case for the Japanese expatriates. Thus, although both groups of participants had the same ideas that open and honest communication was important for trust in the workplace, there seemed to exist nuanced differences in how such communication ought to be enacted, based on their cultural backgrounds. Hence, this study adds more knowledge to our understanding of trust and the influence of one's culture on trust in the workplace: that one's organizational culture may affect how employees identify important characteristics of trust in the workplace, in general; however, individuals' national culture also plays a role in how they describe those characteristics, in detail. Therefore, this study confirms previous research on the cultural effects on trust (e.g., Bird & Osland, 2005) and offers a new piece of knowledge by uncovering the effects of organizational culture on trust.

Overall, trust is necessary for working effectively with one another in organizations (e.g., Bateman & Organ, 1983). Especially in multinational corporations, where information exchange between expatriates and host nationals is critical, trust becomes key to accessing information and being successful in their roles and responsibilities (e.g., Shimoda, 2013), which seemed to be the case in this Japanese manufacturing company. For both Japanese expatriates and host nationals in this study, trust meant that they could count on others' abilities to complete tasks, to be a good team member, be collaborative, and communicate openly and honestly. These characteristics are similar to Mayer et al.'s (1995) three factors that affect one's perception of trustworthiness toward others – ability (i.e., competence and skills), benevolence (i.e., teamwork and

collaboration), and integrity (i.e., open and honest communication)—but more nuanced and specific to the organizational culture in this Japanese company. Further, openness (i.e., open communication) has been found previously to be important in trust among peers (Schindler & Thomas, 1993), an aspect also identified in this study. Perhaps, as previous studies have demonstrated, and also what this study contributes to the literature, the basic characteristics of trust may be similar across individuals, in general; however, these characteristics may vary, in detail, depending on individuals' organizational and national cultures. Thus, this study strengthens our traditional understanding of trust and offers new insights into what trust means to individuals in organizations.

Making Sense of Whom to Trust

Trust Building. In regard to communication behaviors and messages that Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals relied on to make sense of whom to trust, this study revealed that participants observed one's competence, skills, and dedication, support from expatriates/host nationals, personal communication within and outside of the workplace, and engaged in third party information seeking. Both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals relied on the others' competence and skills to make sense of whether to trust one another. As other scholars have demonstrated (e.g., Ang & Tan, 2016), displaying or observing one's ability and skills to complete tasks seems to play a significant role in trust building processes in the workplace. Host nationals, in particular, are likely to provide support for and work with expatriates when they perceive that expatriates are effective, efficient, and professional in the workplace (Sokro & Pillay, 2020). Host nationals also tend to have higher levels of trust in expatriates when they perceive that expatriates have valuable expertise (Fee & Michailova, 2021); thus, for expatriates,

demonstrating their competence increases their chances of establishing trust by completing tasks, offering their expertise, and displaying commitment for the company.

Dedication to the company was observed among Japanese expatriates by American host nationals in their trust building process, but not the other way around. Again, lifelong employment is common in the workplace in Japan, and people often work at the same company until they retire, which brings higher commitment to and identification with their company (Wolff, 2018). Because they work at the same company for a long time, people also work *for* the company by using their expertise to the fullest in accomplishing tasks and going above and beyond to demonstrate their loyalty to the company. Also, the Japanese tend to prioritize the well-being of their groups or organization (Dang & Rammal, 2020), which is why the expatriates' commitment to their organization might have been more visible in the company examined in this study. Thus, it makes sense that Japanese expatriates' dedication to their work and the company were noticeable to U.S. host nationals. Such behavior on the part of the Japanese led to perceived work competence and skills by U.S. host nationals. As discussed above, one's competence and skills are critical in trust in the workplace, and Japanese expatriates' dedication to the company and working behavior likely led Americans to think that their Japanese colleagues were trustworthy, helping them making sense of whom to trust. Therefore, in addition to competence and skills, this study adds knowledge that one's dedication to their organization can be another important characteristic of trust in certain contexts, such as the relationship between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals.

In terms of support from one another, U.S. host nationals interpreted that they could trust Japanese expatriates when they received support from their Japanese counterparts. In general, expatriates' main duties involve communicating information between the headquarters and the

subsidiary and training host nationals (Harzing, 2001; Kobrin, 1988; Riusala & Suutari, 2004). Thus, their goals and purposes may be aligned with directions from the headquarters, and, often times, they may side with the headquarters. However, as this study revealed, supporting host nationals and their activities that may not necessarily align with directions from the headquarters is an important behavior in trust building. Host nationals may be working on projects and may be proactively involved in making changes and improvements in the subsidiary. Sometimes, the headquarters may not agree with host nationals' actions or projects as the headquarters has their own directions, and most of the decisions are made at the headquarters (Bader et al., 2021); however, U.S. host nationals in this study commented that, when Japanese expatriates supported and stood up to defend them, they thought that they could trust the Japanese. Thus, Japanese expatriates' behavior of providing support for and protecting host nationals helped the latter make sense that they could trust the former.

In addition, support from host nationals played a part in Japanese expatriates' sensemaking of trust, in that host nationals' assistance in facilitating communication with other host nationals helped Japanese expatriates make sense that they could trust their U.S. counterparts. This study emphasizes the key role host nationals play in expatriates' socialization in the foreign subsidiary (Vance et al., 2009), helping expatriates adapt to the new environment, and getting used to communicating with the host nationals. When host nationals facilitate communication between expatriates and other host nationals, they may successfully exchange important information and knowledge with one another, which allows them to work on and complete tasks, displaying their work competence and skills. Eventually, such communication exchanges facilitated by host nationals and task completion helped expatriates made sense that they could trust these host nationals because the latter helped them make progress and

contributed to their success. Hence, in addition to one' competence and skills, the support that expatriates and host nationals receive from one another helps them make sense that they can trust each other, a finding that adds additional knowledge to the literature on trust between expatriates and host nationals.

Moreover, having emotional conversations and being open to personal and honest communication within and outside of the workplace became important cues for participants in this study in their trust building processes, which indicates that trust is not solely established based on work behaviors, such as competence and teamwork. Previous studies have shown that communication (e.g., Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005; Mislin et al., 2011), including genuine emotional displays (Gardner et al., 2009), plays a part in trust building, and sharing one's feelings can lead to better relationships, hence trust between expatriates and host nationals (Shimoda, 2013). This study demonstrates that one's sharing of emotions contributes to the sensemaking of trust between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals as some of the participants commented on how a specific individual's emotional display helped them build trust in each other. It is important to note, though, that these emotional conversations among participants did not include negative emotions such as anger (at least not toward each other). One expatriate expressed frustration in front of host nationals, but that emotion was directed at the Japanese management, not the host nationals. These emotional displays among expatriates and host nationals revealed and led them to understand their true feelings about their work or colleagues, which helped them understand who they really were, contributing to their sensemaking process.

Further, talk, including small talk, allows individuals to exchange information (Shimoda, 2013). In this study, having personal conversations (e.g., about family) helped Japanese

expatriates and host nationals get to know each other by exchanging information, which eventually helped them make sense of trust in one another. Noma (2013) found that personal characteristics, such as being open minded and honest (*sunao* in Japanese), were important factors in determining whom to trust between Japanese expatriates and local Australian employees. In this dissertation study, being open to sharing information about one's personal life and having honest conversations within and outside of the workplace helped Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals make sense of whom to trust because they were able to get to know each other on a personal level, which allowed them to find common ground and learn who they really were, in addition to the knowledge they gained through observing each other's work competence and skills. Thus, this study not only confirms previous findings from the literature but also adds the unique context of Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals to research on trust in multinational corporations.

Further, both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals relied on the conversations they had with their colleagues from the same culture to make sense of whom to trust. Such conversations included talking about who could do what tasks, who was reliable, and others' general work behaviors. Sometimes, they sought information about specific individuals. Information from third parties is considered an important source in building trust with others (Burt & Knez, 1995), and information that expatriates and host nationals heard from others accumulated over time (Wyant & M. Kramer, 2022), in addition to what they observed by themselves, became a cue in their sensemaking process. Thus, conversations with colleagues of the same cultural background played a part in making sense of whom to trust for both host nationals and expatriates. Thus, information from third parties in trust building is important, even among host nationals and expatriates in multinational corporations.

What was unique to U.S. host nationals in this study was that some of them tended to trust their Japanese counterparts from the beginning, upon expatriates' arrival in the subsidiary, mainly due to their expertise and mentoring role, which was not the case for Japanese expatriates. In other words, U.S. host nationals had trust in Japanese expatriates because of the position Japanese expatriates had in the foreign subsidiaries, similar to what R. Kramer (1999) discusses as role-based trust (i.e., trust based on the role a trustee has in the organization). U.S. host nationals knew that Japanese expatriates held specific positions to manage the subsidiary and mentor host nationals, and such positions became the reason to trust Japanese expatriates "automatically" upon their arrival in the subsidiary, even in their coworker relationships. In addition to this positional trust, some U.S. host nationals also exhibited *transferred* trust toward new expatriates in that they transferred their trust toward previous expatriates to new expatriates. These host nationals trusted previous expatriates they worked with, and, because the new expatriates were introduced through the previous ones, they made sense that they could also trust the new ones. This transferred trust would not have happened if host nationals did not have quality relationships and experiences with previous expatriates (Arman & Aycan, 2013). Host nationals' positional and transferred trust toward expatriates are important and contribute a new piece of knowledge to the research on the relationships between host nationals and expatriates.

In addition, generally speaking, people in individualistic cultures, such as the U.S., are more likely to trust others with whom they are unfamiliar (e.g., out-group members) than people in collectivistic cultures, such as Japan (Bird & Osland, 2005). Americans' circle of trust is also wider compared to the Japanese (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021). U.S. host nationals in this study demonstrated such characteristics as some of the participants specifically mentioned that they would trust people unless there was a reason not to. Meanwhile, although Japanese people may

see others as trustworthy, in general, based on Shintoism, the Japanese religion (Danylova, 2014; Young, 2013), they mainly see those in their in-group as trustworthy; the Japanese have lower trust in out-group members, so it takes longer for them to establish trust with out-group members (Bird & Osland, 2005; Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021). Japanese expatriates might perceive their U.S. counterparts as out-group members and not trust them in the beginning of their relationship, which demonstrates a characteristic of collectivistic cultures. Thus, one's culture may have played a role in whether U.S. host nationals trusted their Japanese counterparts to begin with, whereas the Japanese did not, providing another piece of evidence about cultural effects on trust in the workplace. In turn, U.S. host nationals' initial trust toward Japanese expatriates was based *both* on cultural factors (i.e., individualism vs. collectivism) *and* positional and experiential factors. Hence, this study further emphasizes that having quality relationships with expatriates is important for host nationals not only for the present relationships they have with expatriates but also for their future interactions with new/other expatriates.

As discussed above, although U.S. host nationals seemed to have a certain level of trust in Japanese expatriates to begin with, none of the Japanese participants mentioned that they trusted their American counterparts at the beginning of their relationships. In other words, there is a discrepancy in the level of trust Americans and Japanese start with, in the early stage of their relationships. Such a different level of trust in one another can create dissonance in how much effort they put into building trust in or earning trust from the other person and can also affect how they work with one another. Despite the fact that both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals commented that it took more time and effort to build and maintain trust with their colleagues of different cultural background (discussed later in this chapter), Americans may need to put more effort into earning the trust of their Japanese colleagues because the Japanese do not

start by trusting their coworkers. The Japanese, however, may not need to put in as much effort to earn the trust of their American colleagues because Americans "automatically" trust them in the beginning of their relationship. In addition, it is challenging to work together when one side has a certain level of trust, whereas the other side has lower, if any trust at all in their relationship; one may or may not be willing to collaborate with others if they do not trust them. Thus, this difference in the level of initial trust between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals could cause conflict, which can affect their trust building and maintenance processes, work relationships, and productivity and efficiency. This finding is a new insight that this dissertation adds to the literature on expatriate-host national relationships.

In addition, Japanese expatriates tended to trust Americans who were used to working with the Japanese in certain sections of the company, which could be explained by Japanese expatriates' in-group categorization of their U.S. counterparts. Those host nationals who were used to working with Japanese expatriates were perhaps "atypical" – they may have acted, worked, and thought like the Japanese and were more likely to understand Japanese directions – due to their long tenure in the company, work with the Japanese, and/or their exposure to the Japanese culture, personally or through work. In the study of intercultural romantic partners, Gudykunst et al. (1991) argued that Japanese partners tended to be attracted to their atypical American partners who had adopted the Japanese way of communication. Such a tendency may occur in the workplace as well, not just in romantic relationships; Japanese expatriates may feel closer to atypical U.S. host nationals who work and communicate more like the Japanese, which allowed the former to recategorize their U.S. counterparts as in-group members (e.g., Gudykunst, 1994; Matsumoto, 1990). Verma et al. (2011) argue that host nationals' categorization of expatriates as in-group or out-group can affect their willingness to offer support and share

information. Similarly, in this study, expatriates' categorization of host nationals as in- and out-group affected their trust toward the latter. Thus, this study offers a new insight on trust and the relationships between expatriates and host nationals that suggests that how expatriates categorize host nationals in terms of their group membership can play a significant part in developing trust in one another.

Trust Maintenance. Reina and Reina (2015) argued that trust could be maintained when individuals consistently kept their word and did what they intended to do in organizations. Thus, consistency in one's behavior seems to be key to maintaining trust. This dissertation study revealed that, after trust was established, not only one's job competence (e.g., do what they say they do; Reina & Reina, 2015), but also frequent contact, conversations, and sharing of honest thoughts between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals led them to know each other on a personal level. Such repeated, consistent communication was an important cue in their sensemaking process of maintaining trust in one another. Previous workplace relational maintenance literature has shown that communication such as information exchange (Sias, 2005) and frequent conversations (e.g., Waldron, 1991) increased the amount and quality of interactions among colleagues, which allowed individuals to maintain relationships in the workplace. This study proved that these relational maintenance communication behaviors can also help colleagues maintain trust in one another, thus adding new insights into the work relationship and trust maintenance literature.

Along with the communication behaviors discussed above, this study found that consistent support and collaborative behavior from expatriates helped U.S. host nationals make sense that they could continue trusting their Japanese counterparts. Similarly, Japanese expatriates kept observing host nationals' competence and proactivity to make sense of whether

to continue trusting their American colleagues or not. In a previous study, Ang and Tan (2016) found that trust between expatriates and host nationals began with cognition-based trust (e.g., one's competence and reliability) and transformed to affect-based trust (e.g., reciprocal care, concerns for well-being) over time. Although this dissertation study also found evidence of affect-based trust, such as frequent communication and spending more time to know one another on a personal level, trust maintenance behaviors between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals still entailed one's competence, and supportive and collaborative behavior, which helped their cognition-based trust in each other. In other words, affect-based trust may be present as their relationships develop; however, cognition-based trust remains critical, at the core of their trust relationships.

Unlike Americans who trusted Japanese from the beginning of their relationship based on expatriates' expertise and role as mentors, Japanese expatriates seemed to be skeptical of their U.S. colleagues' competence and wanted to see host nationals' abilities to fulfil their responsibilities and work proactively on projects to make sense of whether they could trust host nationals or not. Many American employees in this study already knew Japanese expatriates were competent based on their experience with previous expatriates. So, once trust was established, they relied on Japanese expatriates' consistent support and collaboration as mentors in their daily work together. Again, cognition-based trust (Ang & Tan, 2016) was still at work in their trust maintenance process. Thus, this finding adds new knowledge to the literature on trust building and maintenance between expatriates and host nationals by highlighting the critical role that one's competence, skills, and reliability (i.e., cognition-based trust) have, even after trust is established.

Overall, trust building and maintenance between Japanese expatriates and host nationals were often based on the characteristics of trust they identified — competence and skills, teamwork and collaboration (e.g., support from one another), and open/honest communication (e.g., personal communication within and outside of the workplace, interpersonal communication). In other words, they tended to make sense that they could (continue) trust(ing) others when they observed these factors in others' behavior. This finding makes a significant contribution to the literature on trust in the workplace by revealing that what people perceive as important in trust plays key roles in their trust building and trust maintenance with their colleagues in the workplace.

Characteristics that people perceive to be important in trust may vary, which could create a challenging situation in building and maintaining trust with one another if individuals are not aware of those factors of trust. In this study, both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals identified several characteristics of trust in the workplace in similar ways, despite their cultural backgrounds. Consequently, understanding communication behaviors and messages Japanese expatriates or U.S. host nationals perceive to be critical in trust can help them build and maintain trust with each other. Hence, in this specific context, demonstrating one's competence and skills, teamwork and collaboration, and engaging in open/honest communication will allow them to build and maintain trust in each other. Even beyond the context of Japanese and Americans, it is important for employees to be aware of what trust in the workplace entails by having open communication about it, if possible, which will help them develop trusting relationships.

Sensemaking Theory

This dissertation study also contributes to the literature on sensemaking. Both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals engaged in sensemaking to build trust by observing others'

communication behaviors and messages and using them as cues to make sense of whom to trust, echoing that trust building is a sensemaking process (e.g., Caldwell & Hansen, 2010; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). In a multinational corporation, such as the Japanese manufacturing company examined in this study, in which expatriates are transferred in and out of the subsidiary every few years, both expatriates and host nationals must make sense of whom to trust frequently. Once they know whom to trust, that will help them act appropriately in the future (Weick et al., 2005). In turn, once they build trust, they can work more effectively with one another because they know whom to trust and how to act in their relationships. Such trust in their colleagues is the *product* of sensemaking: they built and maintain trust in one another as a result of their sensemaking. Thus, sensemaking is essential in trust building processes, and both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals put explicit effort into making sense of whom to trust by looking for and extracting cues from their colleagues' communication behavior and messages.

In addition, Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals in this study engaged in sensemaking for determining whether to maintain trust in one another, which is a new piece of knowledge in sensemaking research. Sensemaking is ongoing – people engage in sensemaking constantly, at a fast pace, usually beneath their consciousness; however, when something is different from what is expected, sensemaking becomes more visible, and people put more effort into making sense of the world around them (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). In this study, both expatriates and host nationals engaged in sensemaking by observing one another's behaviors. Although not as visible as the sensemaking in their trust building process, both groups of participants constantly engaged in sensemaking to maintain trust, by using cues such as the information they gained through personal and honest communication, to remind themselves that they could continue trusting one another. Hence, their sensemaking of trust maintenance was

generally less visible, in that they did not seem to put explicit effort in maintaining trust with each other, contrary to their sensemaking of trust building, which was more anxiety inducing. However, they extracted cues from ordinary conversations or the consistent behaviors of others to make sense and reassure themselves that they could continue trusting their colleagues, demonstrating that trust maintenance is also a sensemaking process.

Yet, there were also some events out of the ordinary that helped expatriates and host nationals make sense of whether to continue trusting one another. For example, when a host national, while crying, stopped an expatriate from quitting and returning to Japan, the Japanese expatriate used this event as a cue to make sense that he could continue trusting this host national. Or, when the American side challenged and accused an expatriate's intentions in a subsidiary, a host national realized how wrong the American side was about the expatriate, which helped him make sense that he could continue trusting the expatriate while his trust toward the American side might have decreased. Sensemaking of trust maintenance was ongoing and fast-paced in picking up and applying cues in participants' daily interactions; however, unusual events such as the ones exemplified above made their sensemaking more visible by inducing uncertainty and/or anxiety to some extent and were used as significant cues contributing to making sense of their trust in one another. Thus, this study offers new insights for the literature on sensemaking and trust suggesting that, although not as visible as sensemaking on trust building, sensemaking is an important process in trust maintenance as well. Individuals rely on ordinary conversations and consistent behaviors of others as well as events out of the ordinary to make sense of whether they can continue trusting one another or not.

Moreover, trust played a part in sensemaking as a process facilitator. For example, host nationals received information regarding new expatriates from previous expatriates whom they

trusted, and the trust in and information given by the previous expatriates influenced their sensemaking of trust toward the new expatriates. Also, both host nationals and Japanese expatriates gained information about their colleagues through conversations with others; they must have trusted the individuals who gave them the information and used it to make sense of whether to trust their colleagues or not. In addition, in a situation where host nationals accused and challenged a Japanese expatriate's intentions, a host national's trust toward the Japanese expatriate facilitated his sensemaking—it helped him make sense that the American side was wrong and that he could continue to trust the expatriate. In turn, his trust toward the Japanese expatriate influenced how he interpreted the whole situation, demonstrating that trust functions as a *process* of sensemaking as well. Thus, this study offers trust as *both* the product *and* process of sensemaking, in that trust can be a result of sensemaking and also facilitate sensemaking in organizations. These findings enhance knowledge about sensemaking, as applied in a new context, which is another contribution to the literature brought by the current dissertation.

Furthermore, sensemaking of trust building and maintenance between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals can also be explained by the key components of sensemaking (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Participants in this study engaged in sensemaking because whom they trusted affected who they were and how they worked with one another—addressing *issues of identity*, in that their identity affects how they define the world or vice versa. Therefore, participants *extracted cues retrospectively,* from communication behaviors and messages that they observed, so that their sensemaking would *prospectively* help them think how to act and work effectively with one another. Additionally, both expatriates and host nationals seemed to *enact* sensemaking in their interactions by assigning tasks, asking questions, or being involved with each other in projects (i.e., the *social* aspect of sensemaking) when making sense of trust

building and maintenance. Furthermore, conversations with third parties (*social* aspect as well) also became important cues in their sensemaking process in addition to observations of their colleagues' behaviors and own interactions with them. Thus, the social aspect of sensemaking was evident in making sense of trust between Japanese expatriates and host nationals. Moreover, their sensemaking was *ongoing* (i.e., the idea that sensemaking never stops), constantly trying to make sense whether they could continue trusting one another or not. When they made sense whether to (continue) trust(ing) their colleagues or not, their *plausible* decisions (i.e., sensemaking is not about accuracy) made them move forward and proceed with their daily job duties (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005).

Overall, this study expands sensemaking theory. Sensemaking theory is often utilized in monocultural contexts (e.g., Kelley & Bisel, 2014), and this study adds a unique cultural context of Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals working in a multinational corporation to research on trust and sensemaking, demonstrating that sensemaking theory is applicable in intercultural contexts as well. Moreover, in addition to offering more evidence that trust building is a sensemaking process as scholars have argued before (e.g., Caldwell & Hansen, 2010; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012), this study adds that trust *maintenance* is also a sensemaking process, which is a new piece of knowledge in the literature on sensemaking and trust. Further, this study demonstrates that trust can be a product and a process of sensemaking—trust as a result of individuals' sensemaking process and as a process of making sense of trust in others, conclusions that expand previous research by offering insights into the complexity of sensemaking and trust in organizations.

Similarities/Facilitators and Differences/Hindrances on Trust Building and Maintenance

The current study revealed some similarities (facilitators) and differences (hindrances) in how Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals built and maintained trust in one another. In terms of similarities, no matter where their colleagues were from, Japanese expatriates and U.S. employees perceived that one's competence and skills, and one's interpersonal interactions (e.g., open and honest communication, human interactions) were important factors in trust building and maintenance. Japanese expatriates also mentioned teamwork and collaboration as common factors in building and maintaining trust with both parties. In turn, the characteristics of trust that they identified affected what they looked for in others when they tried to build and maintain trust; therefore, they sought to observe similar behaviors, regardless of whether such behaviors were enacted by fellow Japanese expatriates or U.S. host nationals. These similarities facilitated trust building and maintenance between expatriates and host nationals. Hence, again, contrary to previous literature (e.g., Bird & Osland, 2005), one's national culture did not seem to affect initial behaviors – how Japanese expatriates and host nationals attempted to observe behaviors of others in building and maintain trust, in general. However, as they started observing others' behaviors, some significant cultural differences emerged that made it more challenging for both parties to establish and maintain their trust relationships, hindering their trust in one another.

Both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals acknowledged that it took more time and effort to build and maintain trust with their colleagues of different cultural backgrounds than with those of the same cultural background, which can be explained by traditional cultural dissimilarities between Japan and the U.S. It generally takes longer to establish trust with out-group members for individuals from collectivistic cultures (Bird & Osland, 2005). Japanese people, as members of a collectivistic culture, might have perceived their U.S. colleagues as out-group members and their Japanese colleagues as in-group members because of their same

cultural backgrounds and shared experiences in the foreign subsidiary. Hence, for Japanese expatriates who categorized their American coworkers as out-group members, it took more time and effort to observe U.S. host nationals' behavior, get to know them, and make sense of whether to trust them. Thus, this finding aligns with previous understandings of how out-group members are treated in collectivistic cultures (e.g., Gudykunst, 1994; Matsumoto, 1990).

By contrast, people in individualistic cultures, such as the U.S., are more likely to trust others, even individuals with whom they are not familiar – one's out-group members (Bird & Osland, 2005), as some of the participants in this study mentioned. U.S. host nationals might have categorized Japanese expatriates as their out-group members; however, they were more trusting of their Japanese colleagues from the beginning because they did not have any reason not to trust them. Also, generally speaking, Americans' circle of trusted people is wider than the Japanese; the former usually include both in- and out-group members in this circle, whereas the latter are concerned with their in-group members (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021). Thus, Americans' categorization of Japanese expatriates as their out-group members did not have much of an effect on their trust building and maintenance processes. Perhaps, it took more time and effort for Americans to build and maintain trust with Japanese expatriates because of the latter's labeling of Americans as out-group members and their relatively small radius of trust (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021). In other words, Americans had to put more time and effort into breaking that boundary of out-group member status ascribed to them by their Japanese colleagues. Thus, while these findings align with previous understandings of in- and out-group member status in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, this study offers an important insight that in- and out-group categorizations among expatriates and host nationals are essential in their trust building and maintenance processes in multinational corporations.

Japanese expatriates' in- and out-group categorization was potentially influenced by several differences that they might have observed between U.S. host nationals and other Japanese expatriates, which affected their trust building and maintenance. Although one's competence and skills were important for establishing and maintaining trust for both parties, Japanese expatriates commented on the different levels of ability and skills between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals. Expatriates were perceived to be highly skilled at their jobs both by host nationals and other expatriates, in general, because they had been selected by their headquarters to go to the foreign subsidiary. Thus, Japanese expatriates were already aware of, or at least they assumed, each other's higher levels of competence and skills for completing their jobs. Meanwhile, Japanese expatriates were somewhat skeptical and unsure of host nationals' levels of competence and skills and perceived that host nationals had lower competence and skills compared to Japanese expatriates. Such different perceptions regarding their colleagues' levels of competence and skills might have influenced how Japanese expatriates categorized their U.S. counterparts as out-group members. As a result, it took more time and effort for them to evaluate their U.S. colleagues' actual ability and skills in building and maintaining trust.

Moreover, Japanese expatriates thought that Americans' dedication to the company was lower compared to that of Japanese expatriates, who often worked for one company until they retired (Wolff, 2018). Such perceived lower dedication of U.S. host nationals made it difficult for expatriates to work toward the same, bigger/global goals. Expatriates were generally aware of and took into consideration the company's future directions and global business goals when fulfilling their duties. However, some of the Japanese expatriates commented that their American counterparts were not on the same page – Americans were focused more on completing day-to-day tasks and getting paid for what they did at that moment instead of looking at the company's

future directions. Further, Americans' unwillingness to take on tasks that were not their responsibility or did not benefit them was another difference that Japanese expatriates observed, which could be explained by Americans' individualistic characteristics (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2010) of prioritizing their individual needs and goals. These differences between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals may have contributed to Japanese expatriates' in- and out-group categorization of their colleagues because of the host nationals' non-conformity to the mutually favorable behavior (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021). This made the Japanese put more time and effort in building and maintaining trust with their American coworkers.

Dissimilarities in work ethic and work-life balance between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals were also prominent for Japanese expatriates. The Japanese tend to prioritize their work over their own family, and working overtime is a common practice (Dang & Rammal, 2020). For instance, the Japanese expatriates in this study reported working overtime regularly not only to complete their tasks but also to display their commitment to the company or their in-groups (Dang & Rammal, 2020). However, as some of the Japanese expatriates mentioned, Americans went home after their work hours were over or went on vacation without hesitation even if their tasks were not completed. This difference in priorities and work ethic, in general, might have affected how Japanese expatriates categorized their American colleagues as their out-group. In-group trust can be built based on mutually favorable behaviors (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021); the Japanese perceived that U.S. host nationals were not following the same kind of behavior as the Japanese did, which potentially affected the time and effort invested by both parties in building and maintaining trust.

Additionally, differences in clear and straightforward communication were significant for Japanese expatriates who observed that other Japanese were able to "read between the lines,"

could proceed without needing positive feedback or comments, and accepted harsh words from coworkers or supervisors at work. Americans, though, needed detailed explanations and positive feedback; therefore, Japanese expatriates were not certain about how harsh they could be, verbally, with them. Japanese culture is categorized as a high-context culture (Hall, 1976), which favors indirect communication. People are generally skilled at "reading between the lines" and not many things are explicitly spelled out. Thus, people can usually understand what is not said, including directions/instructions and even positive feedback or compliments from their supervisors or coworkers. Additionally, verbal aggressiveness (e.g., raising one's voice or verbally insulting others) is negatively related to trust (Yang et al., 2020). Some of the Japanese participants mentioned that they learned not to utter harsh words in the workplace in the U.S. during their pre-departure cultural trainings. Even though verbal aggressiveness may be more acceptable in Japan, it is not the case in the U.S., especially in the workplace, which made Japanese expatriates think about how to communicate with their American colleagues, and also affected their trust relationships.

By contrast, the U.S. culture is a low context culture (Hall, 1976), in which people are expected to utter things explicitly and directly. Thus, it is not unusual for Japanese expatriates to have observed they needed to explain things in detail to American employees and to have felt that they had to provide compliments and positive feedback more often than to their Japanese colleagues. Further, Japanese expatriates' language skills made it challenging to communicate with their American colleagues as the latter also identified the language barrier as a challenge in building and maintaining trust in Japanese expatriates. Hence these differences that Japanese expatriates observed between themselves and U.S. host nationals may have contributed to how they categorized colleagues as in- and out-group members. The non-conformity of Americans'

behaviors compared to other Japanese expatriates who displayed shared, expected behaviors among their in-groups, challenged Japanese expatriates' trust building and maintenance processes.

Although most Japanese expatriates in this study expressed that it was more challenging for them to build and maintain trust with their U.S. colleagues because of the differences discussed, the negative case analysis revealed that, for some Japanese expatriates, it was easier to build and maintain trust with their U.S. counterparts given the latter's friendliness and honesty. Some Japanese expatriates perceived that Americans were more friendly, in general, and they felt more comfortable talking to and having conversations with their American counterparts than with other Japanese. Also, Americans' honesty in telling them what they could or could not do and their direct, straightforward expressions, like a simple "yes" or "no," made it easier for some Japanese expatriates to understand their U.S. counterparts better than their Japanese colleagues, who used more vague, indirect expressions.

Unlike the majority of Japanese expatriates in this study, some Japanese expatriates might have evaluated cultural differences more positively and perceived Americans' characteristics more favorably than those of other Japanese expatriates. Such a tendency may be due to personal characteristics, in that these Japanese expatriates might have been more competent in intercultural communication (i.e., one's capability to be effective in diverse environments) or had higher cross-cultural motivations (one's interest in other cultures; Firth et al., 2014). Or it could be that the Japanese expatriates saw novelty in U.S. host nationals' characteristics or behaviors that were different from those of their Japanese colleagues, which resulted in them perceiving Americans' friendly and honest characteristics more positively,

leading these Japanese expatriates to believe that trust building and maintenance processes were easier with U.S. host nationals.

Further, U.S. host nationals observed several differences between themselves and Japanese expatriates that hindered their trust building and maintenance processes with one another. One significant difference that they observed was open, honest, and clear communication. Specifically, Americans perceived that the Japanese were more reserved, and it took a while for them to open up, which made it difficult for Americans to get to know them. Again, people in collectivistic cultures are mainly concerned with their in-group members, and Japanese people generally interact with fewer partners instead of seeking new connections (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021); therefore, more time and effort are needed for the Japanese to start opening up to host nationals and for host nationals to get to know Japanese expatriates. Although talking about personal lives, including one's family and hobbies, was common practice for Americans in establishing trust relationships, Japanese people may need to establish closer relationships with others first, before being comfortable sharing personal information about themselves. Such a behavior from the Japanese may make it more challenging for host nationals to find common ground with the former, costing the latter more time and effort in building and maintaining trust with their Japanese counterparts. Thus, this study demonstrates that trust building and maintenance processes with those of different cultural backgrounds are often time consuming, and extra effort is usually needed to overcome significant cultural differences.

Additionally, some of the Americans in this study brought up that the Japanese lied often, which made it more challenging for the former to trust the latter. What appeared as lying to Americans, though, was actually *honne* and *tatemae*, a way of expressing emotions and a common practice in Japanese culture. *Honne* is defined as "one's deep motive or intention," and

tatemae is defined as "motives or intentions that are socially-tuned, those that are shaped, encouraged, or suppressed by majority norms" (Honna & Hoffer, 1986, p. 94). In Japan, one is generally encouraged "not to directly express one's real feelings and intentions" (Davies & Ikeno, 2002, p. 116). Individuals tend to use *tatemae* to avoid straightforward displays of emotions or intentions in order not to hurt others and to maintain positive relationships with others. Generally, *tatemae* is mostly used in business settings, whereas *honne* is used in close relationships such as between married individuals.

In the workplace, *tatemae* may be used among colleagues or with customers when expressing true intentions (speaking with *honne*) could be disadvantageous to maintaining positive relationships. This was exemplified by one of the Japanese expatriates who mentioned that U.S. Americans should not have revealed what was happening in the plant to customers when a defect was identified, and the company was working to correct it. However, some Americans, especially those who were not familiar with the Japanese *honne* and *tatemae* cultural traditions, interpreted such behaviors the Japanese engaged in as "lying," which made it more challenging for them to trust Japanese expatriates. Thus, U.S. host nationals observed this unique way of expressing one's emotions and intentions that was not a part of the U.S. culture and evaluated it negatively, which affected their trust building and maintenance processes with Japanese expatriates.

Moreover, some of the U.S. host nationals identified that "back-alley conversations" among Japanese people prevented the former from understanding the reasons behind decisions or directions, which affected their trust building and maintenance processes. This type of conversation or agreement outside of official meetings is called *nemawashi* in Japanese, which can be defined as "groundwork laid unobtrusively in advance" (Davies & Ikeno, 2002, p. 159); it

is a significant aspect of Japanese workplace culture. Generally speaking, in Japanese organizations, individuals may try to seek their colleagues' agreement before going into a meeting to make a decision. Due to this groundwork done beforehand, important decisions are often made in advance, and meetings are the place where the decisions are shared. In most Western cultures, however, meetings are the place where ideas are discussed and decisions are made (Davies & Ikeno, 2002).

This Japanese *nemawashi* culture was observed by some U.S. host nationals who commented about decisions being made outside of official meetings. They commented that, even after making a decision and agreeing with a direction in a meeting among Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals, the next day, that direction was changed because the Japanese discussed things by themselves, after the meeting was over. The groundwork behind the meeting or "back-alley conversations" among Japanese expatriates prevented U.S. host nationals from being involved in the decision-making processes and fully knowing the reasons behind decisions reached, which made it more challenging for them to understand the whole situation and to build and maintain trust in Japanese expatriates. Therefore, this study adds to knowledge that traditional cultural aspects and specific cultural business practices that are appropriate in some cultures may become obstacles to trust relationships between expatriates and host nationals in intercultural business or workplace settings, when others are not aware of or do not understand the cultural influences behind business decisions or behaviors.

In addition, U.S. host nationals observed differences in work-based trust and interpersonal-based trust, in that they established and maintained trust with their Japanese colleagues based on work and results, whereas trust in their U.S. American colleagues was based primarily on interpersonal interactions and connections. Although they tended to build and

maintain trust by observing and making sense of each other's behaviors based on the essential characteristics of trust in the workplace, this finding demonstrates that, depending on who the other individuals are or where they are from, one specific behavior or characteristic may become more important than others in trust building and maintenance processes between expatriates and host nationals.

Consistently throughout this study, one's work competence was one of the important characteristics of trust. U.S. host nationals thought that it was even more important in establishing and maintaining trust in their Japanese colleagues than in their U.S. American colleagues. Again, based on in- and out-group categorization (e.g., Bird & Osland, 2005), it may be easier for U.S. host nationals to interact and connect with their U.S. colleagues because of their similar cultural backgrounds and experiences, whereas with Japanese expatriates, it may be more challenging to do so. Moreover, U.S. host nationals knew that their Japanese colleagues were also observing and evaluating Americans' competence in trust building and maintenance with one another. Thus, U.S. host nationals may have felt the need to build and maintain trust with Japanese expatriates based on work competence and results. Thus, this study suggests that, when individuals have different cultural backgrounds, they may attempt to observe and focus on specific behaviors or characteristics in establishing and maintaining trust in one another.

Despite these differences and challenges, U.S. host nationals acknowledged that, once trust was built with Japanese expatriates, it was more meaningful and long lasting. The trust evolved into more personal obligation and commitment, in that there was more support from Japanese expatriates. Japanese expatriates also relied heavily on host nationals, such as involving host nationals they trusted in more projects compared to other host nationals who had not established trust relationships with the expatriates. In addition, established trust between

expatriates and host nationals may not be lost that easily because of their commitment to each other in their trust relationships. People in collectivistic cultures tend to develop long-lasting trust (Bird & Osland, 2005) and have long-term committed relationships (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021) in their in-groups. Although Japanese expatriates might have categorized U.S. host nationals as their out-groups in the beginning of their relationships, as they built trust with each other, that distinction between in- and out-group status might have faded away. Or, even though host nationals' out-group status did not change, as their relationships with Japanese expatriates developed over time, the mutually beneficial, reciprocal exchanges between them might have allowed both parties, especially Japanese expatriates, to trust one another (e.g., Kiyonari et al., 2007; Kuwabara et al., 2007). Individuals in mutually beneficial relationships may have a strong relational commitment to each other, which has a significant effect on trust (Kuwabara et al., 2007). In addition, as previously mentioned, people in collectivistic cultures develop long-term committed, trust relationships. Consequently, Americans thought that the trust they built with their Japanese colleagues lasted longer than trust built with American counterparts.

However, host nationals perceived that there was no gaining Japanese expatriates' trust back if they lost it. This may be due to the relatively small circle of trust among the Japanese, and that they tend to interact with fewer people they trust than Americans (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021). Perhaps Japanese expatriates put more time and effort in building trust with Americans and expanded their own circle of trust. However, once trust was lost, Japanese expatriates might have felt that it was a waste of time and effort and did not want to go through the trust building or recovering process again. Thus, although Americans perceived that trust in

and from Japanese expatriates was more meaningful and long-lasting, they also thought that the trust could not be recovered once it was lost.

In addition, in Japan, becoming an in-group member requires one to maintain harmony and fulfill obligations towards other group members. A majority of people work for one company until they retire, too (Wolff, 2018). Consequently, as one of the participants mentioned, when a trusted American quits, Japanese expatriates may take it more personally, in that they may feel as if they were betrayed. A Japanese expatriate also commented that he tried not to be involved personally with Americans like he usually is with others in Japan because, when trusted Americans had quit, it was disappointing for him to lose someone after trusting them for quite some time. Hence, trust in and from Japanese expatriates may be meaningful and long lasting; however, more personal involvement and obligations may also be required. As a result, losing that trust may have significant consequences for both Americans and Japanese expatriates.

Lastly, this study also emphasizes the importance of examining both expatriates and host nationals' perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between them. Having the perspectives of both parties allows researchers to offer a piece of advice for not only expatriates, whom scholars have been traditionally focused on in the context of multinational corporations, but also for host nationals, which can enhance the overall work experience of both parties. In this study, Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals had similar experiences in terms of trust building and maintenance in the workplace, but challenges due to cultural differences were also identified, which could not have been known by examining only one or the other group. Additionally, the finding that U.S. host nationals had certain level of trust toward Japanese expatriates to begin with whereas Japanese expatriates did not was only gained because *both* U.S. host nationals and Japanese expatriates were interviewed. As scholars have

called for (e.g., van Bakel, 2019), it is essential to examine host nationals' perspectives in understanding the dynamics of their relationships with expatriates. Thus, this study adds more knowledge about host nationals' perspectives regarding trust building and maintenance to scholarship on the relationships between expatriates and host nationals in multinational corporations.

Overall, this study offers additional understandings of trust between expatriates and host nationals, especially in terms of what trust means to them, how that affects their trust building and maintenance processes, as well as some of the challenges they encounter because of their cultural differences. Generally, the organizational culture in this Japanese company seemed to be affecting what trust meant to Japanese expatriates and host nationals; however, as they attempted to build and maintain trust with one another, participants also encountered national cultural differences, making trust building and maintenance more challenging. As a result, more time and effort were necessary to establish and maintain trust with those of different national cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this study strengthens existing knowledge and adds new insights to our understanding of trust in the workplace.

Practical Implications

This study has practical implications for expatriates and host nationals in multinational corporations. First, the findings suggest that knowledge about what trust in the workplace means to both host nationals and expatriates will allow them to observe and demonstrate important behaviors and characteristics, which can help them build and maintain trust with one another. In socializing and training their employees, organizations may provide opportunities for expatriates and host nationals to discuss what trust means to them or ask them about trust in surveys or interviews and share the data with them. Such an organizational effort in helping employees

develop relationships provides knowledge for employees, which will help them establish and maintain trust in each other. Consistent, repetitive support from one's organization may create an environment in which employees can consciously put effort into developing trusting relationships with their colleagues to increase their job performance.

Second, participants in this study seemed to perceive one's job competence and skills as important factors in trust building and maintenance in the workplace. Organizations may educate their employees about the importance of displaying their competence, for example, by accomplishing tasks, claiming responsibilities, and meeting deadlines. As long as they were displaying these behaviors, it seemed that both expatriates and host nationals were able to trust each other; however, a previous study demonstrated that, when expatriates' duties were not clear to host nationals, and when there was inconsistency between host nationals' expectations and what expatriates were actually doing, host nationals had negative reactions toward expatriates, potentially damaging their work relationships and trust in expatriates (Wyant & M. Kramer, 2022). Thus, it is important for organizations to make clear the duties of expatriates and host nationals so that both parties can observe whether others are fulfilling their responsibilities, which can lead to trust in each other. Even after establishing trust, both expatriates and host nationals should consistently demonstrate their competence to maintain their trust in one another.

Third, although displaying one' job competence and skills may be essential in trust building and maintenance, trust in the workplace is not all dependent on work. This dissertation study revealed that personal and emotional conversations between expatriates and host nationals can also lead to trust. Thus, both expatriates and host nationals should also make an effort to have more personal conversations within and outside the workplace. Also, organizations may provide opportunities for employees to interact with one another outside the workplace by

hosting company social events or retreats where expatriates and host nationals can interact and talk about non-work-related matters, thus helping them build and maintain trust in each other.

Fourth, specifically in the context of the relationships between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals, it can be effective for organizations to let Japanese expatriates know that their U.S. colleagues may have some level of trust in them to begin with. In other words, Americans may trust Japanese expatriates from the beginning of their relationships unless there is a reason not to. Such information may provide Japanese expatriates confidence in starting their jobs in a new environment. However, when host nationals find a reason not to trust expatriates, that trust will decline. Thus, to increase or maintain trust from host nationals, it is essential that expatriates be responsible with their duties, display their competence and skills, and provide support for host nationals; otherwise, expatriates will lose that trust from host nationals. Further, Japanese expatriates should also proactively attempt to expand their circle of trust by identifying trustworthy host nationals in order to be successful in their international assignments in individualistic cultures, such as the U.S. (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021).

Japanese expatriates do not appear to trust American employees from the start of their working relationship. Instead, this trust needs to be earned. Organizations may educate Americans that they need to earn trust from Japanese expatriates by demonstrating their competence, providing support, and being a good team member. Such information will help Americans know what to expect in developing their trust relationships with Japanese expatriates. Moreover, findings from this dissertation revealed that Japanese expatriates tended to build trust more easily with U.S. host nationals who were used to working with the Japanese and understood directions from the headquarters in Japan well. Hence, it may be helpful for host nationals to show their interest in Japanese culture or enthusiasm in working in a Japanese

company. Additionally, it is important for host nationals to increase their intercultural competence by learning about the Japanese culture and cultural values of their Japanese colleagues that are relevant in the workplace.

Fifth, many multinational corporations offer cultural trainings for both expatriates and host nationals that can help them understand cultural differences; however, organizations should consider providing trainings that offer more specific applications of cultural differences in various situations relevant to the workplace. Some Japanese expatriates in this study commented that the pre-departure cultural training they had received was too general and did not prepare them for working with their U.S. counterparts in the specific plant. It is important to learn about cultural differences, in general, for anyone working in multinational corporations. For example, if Americans do not understand the concepts of *honne* and *tatemae* in Japanese culture, they could simply think that the Japanese are liars. In fact, some host nationals thought that way. However, it would be more practical if these concepts were applied to specific situations, such as what it means to tell the whole truth vs. socially tuned, adjusted truth (Honna & Hoffer, 1986) to customers when they had certain product defects, which was pointed out by some participants. Understanding general concepts from the Japanese workplace cultures and how they may be applied to specific situations in their plant helps host nationals work more effectively with their Japanese counterparts.

In terms of trust building and maintenance, cultural trainings can provide employees an opportunity to think about what it means to be a part of one's in-group in the workplace, how one's in- and out-group status can affect their trust building processes, and how such a status affects people' reactions when a trusted colleague quits. This type of application-based cultural training should provide more practical knowledge that expatriates, and host nationals can utilize

in their relationships and trust building and maintenance processes. Although both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals in this study observed similar behaviors in each other when building and maintaining trust with one another, they also identified many dissimilarities that challenged their trust building and maintenance processes due to cultural differences. Thus, understanding and being mindful about cultural differences is one important practice; but being able to apply cultural differences to specific situations will also help both host nationals and expatriates establish and maintain their relationships and trust in one another. Multinational corporations may structure their cultural trainings in a way that is practical for both host nationals and expatriates.

Sixth, this study echoes and adds that both expatriates and host nationals engage in sensemaking to build and maintain trust. It is wise for multinational corporations to check in with both sides, via interviews or surveys, to understand their relationships with one another, especially their trust relationships. Sensemaking does not always lead to positive outcomes; when sensemaking does not go well, it can lead to negative consequences, such as host nationals having negative perceptions of expatriates (e.g., Wyant & M. Kramer, 2022). Therefore, it is important for organizational leaders to mentor their employees by communicating frequently with them. If necessary, *sensegiving* or *sensebreaking* may be helpful in navigating their sensemaking by providing sufficient and helpful information and attempting to "break" any negative perceptions host nationals and expatriates may have toward each other in the process of developing relationships and trust. Organizational leaders may acknowledge the power of sensegiving and sensebreaking through training in an attempt to help employees' sensemaking processes in establishing and maintaining trust and quality relationships with one another.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study is not without limitations. First, participants in this study were recruited from one Japanese multinational manufacturing company, albeit from various regions within the U.S. This study was a case study, and the company was selected because Japanese expatriates were transferred in and out of the subsidiaries regularly and worked with U.S. host nationals closely. However, choosing only one company over many other Japanese companies located in the U.S. and examining the expatriates and host nationals in this specific company can be a limitation. Hence, expatriates and host nationals in other multinational corporations, Japanese or non-Japanese companies, other industries, and/or in other countries, may have different experiences than participants in this study.

For example, individuals may identify different characteristics of trust in other industries and based on their national cultures. All participants in this study were working at a Japanese manufacturing company that required a high level of skill and expertise, teamwork and collaboration, and honest and open communication. Such a working environment influenced their meanings of trust and behaviors they observed in one another to build and maintain trust. People working in different industries may require other considerations such as having a creative mind/vision or being independent, which may affect how they see trust in the workplace. Therefore, how they build and maintain trust in the workplace may vary.

Further, cultural contexts or situations individuals are in may affect their experiences. For instance, U.S. host nationals in this study were trusting of Japanese expatriates to begin with; however, whether Japanese host nationals would trust American expatriates assigned to a subsidiary of a U.S. company located in Japan in the beginning of their relationships is unknown. It is also uncertain if U.S. host nationals would start off trusting German expatriates, for instance, working at a German based company located in the U.S. Additionally, even if the German

company is a manufacturing company, their organizational culture may be different from that of the Japanese company in this study, which may affect what trust means to the employees as well as their trust building and maintenance processes. Thus, future research may examine expatriates and host nationals' experiences in other companies, industries, and cultural contexts to extend our understanding of the essential characteristics of trust and how individuals build and maintain trust with one another.

Second, this study relied on participants' retrospective accounts of their experiences and perspectives as described by themselves during the interviews. Participants mainly talked about certain significant moments that contributed to trust building and maintenance; however, whether they remembered or described their experiences accurately remains unknown. Moreover, sensemaking is a social process (e.g., Weick, 1995); therefore, observing actual communication between expatriates and host nationals may provide a better understanding of how trust is built and maintained among them because researchers can witness the communication involved in their relationship building and maintenance. Therefore, field studies, including observations of communication among expatriates and host nationals as well as both formal (e.g., semi-structured) and informal (e.g., brief conversations) interviews, should be conducted as future research. Especially for the first several months after new expatriates arrive in a foreign subsidiary, both expatriates and host nationals will experience a lot of uncertainty and anxiety, which induces sensemaking (Weick, 1995) in developing their relationships with and trust in one another. Observing their communication and challenges during this time would contribute further to our understanding of the dynamics of their relationships in different stages of their trust building and maintenance processes, based on multiple types of evidence.

Third, more studies, both qualitative and quantitative, are necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of trust building and maintenance processes among expatriates and host nationals. This study employed a qualitative research method involving individual interviews to understand, in detail, participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Tracy, 2020), described in their own words. Detailed descriptions of the findings from this study may achieve the goal of qualitative research – transferability – in applying the findings to other contexts; however, future research may include quantitative research involving many more participants around the world who are working in multinational corporations as expatriates or host nationals to understand variations of their experiences. Such quantitative research will eventually offer generalizable findings and applications. Moreover, combining findings from both qualitative and quantitative studies, will offer researchers the ability to develop practical applications and training modules for more expatriates and host nationals who encounter challenges around the world. Thus, more studies, both qualitative and quantitative, in trust building and maintenance of expatriates and host nationals are necessary in the future.

Fourth, the interviews with Japanese expatriates were conducted in Japanese since there was a possibility that these participants might have not been able to describe their experience clearly and in detail due to their English skills; therefore, their answers were translated into English by the author, which can be another limitation. Although the author's first language is Japanese and she is highly competent in English, Japanese expatriates' translated answers may not reflect exactly what they intended to describe. For future research, it may be more efficient and credible for a study to engage more than one researcher who is competent in the language in which data collection is conducted, so that they can check the accuracy of translations and/or interpretations.

Fifth, the author worked previously at a Japanese manufacturing company, and her position in the industry entailed working with both host nationals and expatriates, which may have shaped her interpretations of the findings, although peer review and member checking (Creswell, 2007) were employed to reduce any such potential biases. It is not an issue to resonate with experiences of those under study, and such a position is necessary to understand the emotionality of the actual scene under study (Tracy, 2020); however, it is important for researchers to understand their own biases first (Tracy, 2020). Having other researchers who do not resonate with participants' experience involved throughout each stage of the research will help minimize any potential biases by offering multiple insights (Tracy, 2020), in addition to employing some of the validation strategies that Creswell (2007) recommends.

Sixth, participants' gender and race may have limited the understanding of trust building and maintenance in this study. The vast majority of the participants – both Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals – were men, with only three female host nationals in this study; therefore, the findings are based primarily on males' perspectives, which is a limitation of this study. The manufacturing industry to which this company belonged is a male dominated field, as are expatriates, in general. Researchers have pointed out the underrepresentation of women in international assignments (e.g., Bastida, 2018), and expatriates from Japanese companies are predominantly male (Shortland, 2014). To the author's knowledge, all the Japanese expatriates who had been sent from the headquarters in Japan in this specific company had always been male. Thus, the study is representative of this specific company, but it is reflective primarily of male experiences of trust in the workplace.

Although the perspectives of the three female host nationals were incorporated in the findings, including more female participants may offer more nuanced perspectives as gender

may affect how people establish and maintain trust. Females are perceived to be more truthful (Boltz et al., 2010) and trustworthy than males, and both male and females tend to lie more to females than males (Schniter & Shields, 2020). Such gender differences or stereotypes may play a part in how trust is built and maintained; for example, if females are perceived to be more trustworthy, host nationals may establish trust more easily with female expatriates or vice versa. In addition, individualism in the U.S. represents the value of mainstream American men (e.g., self-assertion, autonomy, competence); women are often socialized into differing values, such as selflessness and empathic concerns (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2021), which could affect relationship development in the workplace, in general. Thus, if possible, researchers may recruit more female expatriates and host nationals when studying trust development and maintenance processes to expand our understanding of their relationships and how gender plays a role (if it does) in these processes.

Further, almost all the U.S. host nationals were White, although not all participants could be categorized as such, given, they did not have their video on during the Zoom interview. Hence, the findings of host nationals' experiences are based primarily on White Americans. One's race and ethnicity may play a part in trust development. For example, Blacks have been found to perceive that most people are untrustworthy compared to Whites, therefore, they are less likely to trust others compared to non-Blacks (Smith, 2010). Blacks also reported that managers had lower behavioral integrity (e.g., perceived alignment in one's words and actions), which led to lower trust in those managers (Simons et al., 2007). Hence, White Americans and Black Americans may have different experiences in trust building and maintenance with Japanese expatriates due to their own racial/ethnic cultural experiences. Therefore, future research may include other races and ethnic groups when studying trust between host nationals

and expatriates for a better and more comprehensive understanding of relationship and trust development.

Lastly, this study focused on trust building and maintenance processes of Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals in a Japanese manufacturing company. However, there were other types of employees in this company: locally hired Japanese – not corporate expatriates – or locally hired employees of other nationalities than Japanese and Americans, such as engineers from India. Typically, these individuals received a degree and graduated from a college in the U.S. or had an American spouse and had been living in the U.S. for a long time. The locally hired Japanese individuals, because of their exposure to the U.S. culture and competence in intercultural communication and English language, may play a key role in mediating communication between Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals. They may help Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals communicate as a translator and may assist new expatriates socialize in the subsidiary by offering information. Thus, future research may examine these individuals' experiences and how they affect relationship development between expatriates and host nationals or their own challenges of working with expatriates and host nationals. Such a study would provide more diverse perspectives on the often-complicated dynamics of working and developing relationships in multinational corporations.

Conclusion

This case study examined essential characteristics of trust in the workplace for Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals in a Japanese manufacturing company located in the U.S. as well as how they built and maintained trust with one another, and similarities and differences in such processes among them using sensemaking theory. The findings revealed that Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals identified similar characteristics – competence and skills,

teamwork and collaboration, and open/honest communication – as important in trust in the workplace regardless of their national cultural backgrounds. Considering that they were working in the same company, the organizational culture that they were socialized into might have affected how they identified characteristics of trust. However, Japanese expatriates provided culturally nuanced expressions in explaining these characteristics of trust in the workplace in detail. In identifying important characteristics of trust, this study concludes that one's organizational culture may affect what trust in the workplace entails for individuals; however, what each characteristic of trust means to them may be affected by their national cultural backgrounds.

In building trust with one another, Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals relied on each other's competence, skills, and dedication, support from one another, personal conversations within and outside of the workplace, and conversations with other colleagues in making sense of whom to trust. In addition, Americans tended to trust Japanese expatriates from the beginning of their relationships, while Japanese expatriates felt it was easier to build trust with "atypical" American colleagues.

In maintaining trust, Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals relied on consistent, repeated interactions and contact with one another. Additionally, Americans perceived that consistent support and collaboration from their Japanese colleagues helped them make sense of whether to continue trusting the Japanese expatriates. Japanese expatriates also acknowledged that Americans' competence and proactivity were important cues in their sensemaking process of trust maintenance.

In terms of similarities and differences in how Japanese expatriates built and maintained trust with Americans and other Japanese expatriates, Japanese expatriates expressed that

competence and skills, interpersonal interactions, and teamwork and collaboration were essential factors in and facilitated building and maintaining trust with both parties. However, they acknowledged that it took more time and effort to build and maintain trust with U.S. host nationals than Japanese colleagues because of the differences in their levels of competence, dedication, and responsibility at work, as well as significant cultural differences, such as work ethic and work-life balance, and clear, straightforward communication between Japanese and Americans that played as hindrances to trust in U.S. host nationals.

For Americans, competence and skills, and interpersonal communication were important aspects in building and maintaining trust in both Japanese expatriates and other American colleagues. However, along with Japanese expatriates, they also mentioned that they had to invest more time and effort in building and maintaining trust with Japanese colleagues than with American colleagues. They also acknowledged differences in open and honest communication as well as work-based and interpersonal-based trust that affected their trust building and maintenance processes related to Japanese expatriates.

Overall, Japanese expatriates and U.S. host nationals tended to seek out behaviors of others based on the essential characteristics of trust in the workplace that they identified in attempting to make sense of whom to (continue) trust(ing). Characteristics of trust seemed to be influenced by their organizational culture, in general. However, in the process of building and maintaining trust in one another, they encountered significant national cultural differences, which made the processes more challenging, costing them more time and effort in establishing and maintaining trust.

Trust is important in organizations, and it is also crucial in the relationship between expatriates and host nationals in order for them to work effectively and successfully with one

another. Regardless of the challenges they encounter in their sensemaking process of building and maintaining trust in each other, both expatriates and host nationals need to put forth explicit effort and invest more time in developing relationships with one another, perhaps with some help from their organizations, through trainings and frequent interpersonal interactions that create learning opportunities for both parties. As the globalization of businesses continues to grow, it is important to expand our understanding of intercultural relationship development in the workplace. This study offers valuable insights regarding trust relationships between expatriates and host nationals in multinational corporations.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

The purpose of this study is to investigate important characteristics of trust in the workplace for expatriates and host nationals, as well as how they build and maintain trust with each other in a multinational corporation.
During the interview, I will ask questions regarding your job duties, relationships with expatriates/local employees, and trust in them. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you don't have to answer questions that you feel uncomfortable. You can also stop participating at any time without penalty.

1. Can you describe your job duties?
2. (For expatriates only) Can you tell me why you were sent to this plant as an expatriate?
3. Can you describe your daily interactions with expatriates/local employees?
    a. How often do you interact with them?
        i. What is the purpose of the interactions?
    b. How often do you work on a project together?
    c. How often do you have formal/informal meetings with expatriates/local employees?
4. Please think about the time you were trying to build trust with expatriates. Can you describe a time when you thought you could trust expatriates/local employees?
    a. If not answered well:
        i. What are some specific conversations or behaviors that made you think you can trust them?
            1. Can you explain in detail for me?
    b. Have you had any conversations with others (third party) about expatriates/local employees that made you think you can trust them?
    c. Can you describe a time when you thought you could not trust expatriates/local employees?

i. Can you explain in detail for me?

5. Please think about expatriates/local employees that you trust. Can you describe the time when you thought you could continue to trust them?
    a. If not answered well:
        i. What are some specific conversations or behaviors that made you think you can continue to trust them?
            1. Can you explain in detail for me?
    b. Have you had any conversations with others (third party) about expatriates/local employees that made you think you can continue to trust them?
    c. Can you describe a time when you thought you could not continue to trust expatriates/local employees anymore?
        i. Can you explain in detail?
6. Overall, how important is it for you to build and maintain trust with expatriates/local employees?
7. How does the organization help you build and maintain trust with expatriates/local employees?
    a. Can you explain in detail?
    b. Is there anything the organization does or does not do that prevents you from building and maintaining trust with expatriates/local employees?
8. What are some differences in how you build and maintain trust with expatriates/local employees and other expatriates/other local employees?
    a. Can you explain in detail?
    b. What are some similarities?

9. Can you describe what trust in the workplace means to you?
    a. If not answered well:
        i. What are some of the important things to you when you think about trust in the workplace?
        ii. What does trust involve?
    b. How did you come to think about this meaning?
    c. How do people in your culture think about trust?
        i. What do they do to show they trust you?
        ii. How do they behave to show they are trustworthy?

Appendix B

Demographic Information Questionnaire

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age:
3. Position/Job title:
4. Length of working in this plant:
5. Length of working for this company:
6. Length of working with Japanese (for local employees only):
7. Length of stay in the U.S. (from arrival up to the time of interview; for expatriates only):