Management of a Cross Cultural Workforce

Case Study at Luleå Tekniska Universitet

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Acknowledgements

This thesis represents the last theoretical contribution to the European Double Degree of the Authors in International Management at the Luleå University of Technology in Sweden as well as at the Augsburg University of Applied Sciences in Germany. The study was conducted in the spring term in 2018 in Luleå, Sweden. By conducting this research the authors gained a deeper insight into the area of managing a cross cultural workforce. The chosen topic matches the interests of the authors which motivated them to stay focused even though they had some challenges to deal with. The whole process of writing the thesis, the valuable discussions connected with it and the theoretical inputs enriched the authors’ study related and personal progress.

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Abstract

Nowadays, organizations have to deal more and more with cultural diversity concerning their workforce due to globalization. The challenge for these organizations is to manage the cross cultural workforce in an effective way. Therefore, they have to have skills and the necessary knowledge in order to conduct cross cultural management. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to investigate how a cross cultural workforce could be managed effectively.

In order to get insights into what differences exist between employees of different cultures, what kind of problems can arise out of these differences and how these problems can be overcome through cross cultural management, a qualitative research approach in form of a case study was conducted. Hereby, interviews with three managers including two head of departments were conducted. These interviews have used the frame of reference as foundation including well-known theories like Hofstede, Inglehart, the eight value orientations, McGregor and some other theories. The statements of the interviews were evaluated and analyzed in order to find answers to the research questions stated in the thesis.

The findings of this study show that the management team at LTU is not necessarily focusing on cross cultural differences as the impact is less negative than expected. However, conflicts that still arise do not really seem to have bad consequences at LTU. Therefore, these conflicts can be fixed relatively easy by applying the most important variables connected to encountering cross cultural challenges in the frame of reference. These are: human skills, good communication, creating unity, respect, empathy, body language as well as harnessing differences. Especially the personal attitude as well as the human skills of managers and employees play an essential role.

Keywords: culture, diverse workforce, cultural diversity, Hofstede, Inglehart, McGregor, cultural dimensions, cross cultural management, management
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1. Introduction

The following chapter is going to present insight into the research areas connected to the topic of “Management of a Cross Cultural Workforce”. Hence, firstly a background to the topic will be provided which includes theories about culture, management and cross-cultural management. Secondly, this will be followed by a problem discussion, an overall purpose of the thesis and the research questions connected to that. Finally, an overview of the entire thesis will be illustrated.

1.1 Background

In today’s fast paced economic world, national boundaries lose more and more relevance as the interconnectedness of industries is rising steadily. Organizations, therefore, grow more and more diverse, especially in terms of their workforce. As working environments become more complex due to various culturally influenced attitudes and working styles, there is a rising need for cross cultural management (Greblikaitė & Daugeliene, 2010).

According to Hofstede, culture is defined as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” (Browaeys & Price, 2011, p. 10). Thereby, he was inspired by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck when developing his framework of the five cultural dimensions in a business context. Recently the framework has been upgraded to six dimensions (Hofstede-Insights, n.d.). These dimensions were created in order to compare how management is affected by differences in cultural groupings. The previous framework of five dimensions includes the following ones: Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individual vs. group orientation, masculine vs. feminine and short-term vs. long-term orientation (Browaeys & Price, 2011).
The sixth dimension is indulgence vs restraint (Hofstede-Insights, n.d.). Additionally, there is another important theory concerning cultural dimensions. This theory was developed by Inglehart. Hereby, he assumes that culture is temporarily dynamic and changes over time and his work has been dominant particularly in the field of political science and sociology. The theory he developed contains two broad measures of national-cultural values. These are: traditional vs. secular-rational values and survival vs. self-expression values (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017).

According to Browaeys and Price (2011), the cultural orientation plays an important role in the way managers perform their activities and cross cultural management is about the behavior of people within an organization and how to work with the diversity of people influenced by different cultures. This describes the behavior of organizations in different cultures. Moreover, it compares the behavior across cultures and countries in order to understand and improve the interaction of workers and managers all around the world. According to Søderberg and Holden (2002), the core task of cross cultural management is “to facilitate and direct synergistic interaction and learning at interfaces, where knowledge, values and experience are transferred into multicultural domains of implementation” (p.113). However, contrary to the potential conclusion of cross-cultural management being a fairly new field of research, it actually was established simultaneously rather than following the emerge of the research fields of management and organizational behavior (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016).

However, the question is, if countries actually can be compared to each other, as they are such distinguishable concerning their culture. Therefore, it is important to see the complex interplay between the culture of a nation and the management style as evolving and dynamic. The reason for that is that both are constantly evolving (Jacob, 2005). However, when it comes to the influence of culture on management, there should be more dimensions or characteristics considered than the ones mentioned above, which were developed by Hofstede. Therefore, the eight following cultural value orientations are also important: Time focus, space, structure, action, time orientation, power, communication and competition (ibid).
According to Beamer (1995), individuals rely on their pre-existing perceptions to understand and react when dealing with a (relatively) unfamiliar culture. Thereby, they essentially use a projection based on their generalized, stereotypical conceptualization of the other culture. Building onto that, they will then adopt previously learned ways and strategies to encode and transmit a message. However, these projections might vary significantly in complexity and accuracy. While the major influence certainly is the existing knowledge about the respective other culture, it is also widely influenced by the individuals own culture, as the one’s own culture influences what a person looks for and rates as important in another culture. Therefore, individuals essentially act upon their own, filtered perception of another culture rather than on the actual culture. The more information one gathers about another culture though, the closer his or her perception tends to be to the actual culture (Clausen, 2010).

While generalization and the use of stereotypes can be misleading and lack accuracy, as touched upon briefly above, it might be fundamental to the way human process information and make sense of it. Additionally, Varner (2000) argues, that without the usage of generalized knowledge and stereotypes, international communication, especially in business settings, would become even more difficult than it already is. The real issue is not necessarily the generalization when dealing with another culture, but rather the reluctance to change one’s view as new information appears or is gathered.

There are different management styles used by managers in order to manage their workforce. Two important well-known theories that explain controversial orientations among management styles are McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y. They play an important role in describing how managers see their workforce and behave towards them. Whereas Theory X has a more negative view of the workers including workers being lazy and not contributing intellectually to the work the other theory has a more positive view of the workers saying that they can direct themselves, enjoy the work and contribute intellectually to it (Lauter, Kopelman & Prottas, 2015). Management can be defined as the directing of a group or organization by using executive, administrative and supervisory measures (Katz, 1955). Thereby, it tends to be task-oriented and
focused on staff development and the resolvement of conflicts, while ensuring the maintaining of ethics and discipline. Essentially, it can be described as the process, which is utilized to achieve organizational goals (Algahtani, 2014). Management tasks are focused on the direction and control of people, resources, structures and systems (Kotter, 2001; Algahtani, 2014).

When it comes to a diverse workforce, managers have to find a way to effectively manage workers with different cultural backgrounds. Hence, according to Browaeys & Price (2011) it is important for managers to know how to conduct cross cultural management in order to improve the company’s performance. Moreover, they should be able to handle cultural challenges which come in line with understanding what works and does not work in different cultures (House, Javidan, Hanges & Dorfman, 2002).

1.2 Problem Discussion

In order to assure effectiveness, managers need to understand their subordinates’ cultures and have to be able to adapt themselves to the particular cultures. Hence, as mentioned previously, different cultures have different preferences on the management style. Hence, a manager has to carefully select the best way to lead his subordinates (Budin & Wafa, 2015).

Culture gives a group of individuals a sense of who they are, how they should act and what they should do. Hence, a community is given a sense of characteristics. These characteristics are particularly focused on the individual actions and values to be encouraged. This means, culture has an impact on the morale, the behavior and the productivity of the workforce which subsequently influences organizational thoughts and actions (Budin & Wafa, 2015). Therefore, organizational culture of a company has its roots in the culture of the individuals working in this company. Hereby, they are influenced by their families, social and national environment, and the professional, organizational or corporate culture of the company. Consequently, it is necessary for the
management to deal with the cultural differences and diversity of people within a company (Browaeys & Price, 2011).

While there is an ongoing globalization of workforces, the impact on of cultural diversity on performance is still controversial. The factors facilitating the effectiveness of multicultural workforces and teams, however, seem to be highly contextual and culturally sensitive. Consequently, knowledge as well as sensitivity of cultural values are of utmost importance for management practice and training with regards to cross-cultural workforces. (Dong & Liu, 2010).

However, there is a lack of ultimate consensus about the definition and meaning of culture. The predominant view is, that culture is a relatively stable, uniform and consistent bundle of values, norms and assumptions. This, in turn, implies that all members of a nation respectively all managers and employees of an organization share exactly equal cultural values. Consequently, social variations, diversity and differences in power relations within these respective cultures are neglected or even omitted (Søderberg & Holden, 2002).

In fact, culture is not bound to national borders. Cultural diversity can exist within a single country as well as across nations. Hence, countries have no pure culture instead they have a mix of different cultures and people tending to be hybrids (Jacob, 2005). A hybrid is defined as “composed of two diverse elements” or “having a mixed character” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). Consequently a hybrid can be seen as a person that simultaneously holds membership in different cultural groups. Therefore, it has to be considered that a hybridization of management styles or practices might become more widespread globally. Hereby, the culturally heterogeneous contest of different countries is reflected by hybrid management practices (Nina Jacob, 2005).

Due to the rising importance of international business and the growing number of cross cultural workforces, it is important to find ways to manage these diverse teams in an effective manner. Therefore, it offers an interesting area for research. While cross
cultural management has been a common subject in research, there is still need for additional evidence due to the rising complexity of the international business environment. As a result, the study investigates the challenges connected to managing employees from different cultural backgrounds. It aims at providing additional research in order to help managers to be more effective and efficient when dealing with a diverse workforce.

1.3 Overall Purpose

Based on the problem discussion above, the purpose of this study is to extend the literature on how to manage a cross cultural workforce and provide a better understanding of the issue. Therefore, the following research questions are stated:

− RQ1: What kind of differences exist between employees with different cultural backgrounds at LTU (Luleå Tekniska Universitet) in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

− RQ2: What are the difficulties in cross cultural management at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

− RQ3: How does the management encounter cross cultural challenges at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

This study is limited to the cultures represented by the workforce of LTU and might therefore not necessarily be applicable to every culture or cross cultural workforce. However, the diversity of cultures included allows the study to be valid and reliable when it comes to managing a cross cultural workforce.
1.4 Overview over Entire Thesis

This thesis is organized in six chapters which are shown in Figure 1 below. Thereby, the first chapter is an introduction including the background, the problem discussion, the overall purpose and an overview of the entire thesis. Its aim is to lead the reader into the topic area with the background. The problem discussion then provides more in depth information concerning the relevant theories in a narrower scope and leading to a „right“ to conduct research in the given area. Ultimately, an overall thesis purpose is stated including the research questions to guide the study. This will then be followed by the second chapter which is a literature review. It will provide a more in-depth discussion of the most important theories for answering the previously stated research questions, also helping create a frame of reference for this study.

Afterwards, in chapter 4 the methodology is illustrated which will include information about how the data was be collected, how the study was carried out and how the topic generally was approached. Subsequently, the collected empirical data will be illustrated using figures and discussed in chapter 5. Thereafter, the collected data will be analyzed in chapter 6 including a comparison with the theory used in the frame of reference. Hereby, the similarities and differences are going to be illustrated and discussed. Finally, chapter 7 presents the findings, implications for management and conclusions of the study.
Figure 1: Thesis Overview
2. Literature Review

In this section, a more in-depth analysis of the theory will be presented. Thereby, the studies illustrated are based on the research questions stated above. Firstly, theories regarding cultural differences existing in the workforce will be presented. Secondly, problems arising out of these cultural differences will be addressed. These include types of conflict and national equality. After that, theory concerned with cross cultural management is illustrated in order to overcome these problems. The chapter will be concluded by a frame of reference, which explains the relationship of the previously stated research questions. This framework will then be used when collecting data later.

2.1 Culture

Culture plays an important role in organizations as every person has a pattern of thinking, acting and feeling which has been learned during his or her lifetime (Hofstede, 1997). This influences how the workforce performs their job, the relationships between each other and their acceptance towards their managers. (Budin & Wafa, 2015).

At the workplace cultural differences can be expressed through the different cultural beliefs, the sense of time and the concept of work (Casares 1993). Understanding these cultural differences is important in order to be able to understand the different workers, their beliefs, attitudes and values in order to be able to manage a multicultural workforce or team. Therefore, differences in grooming, dressing habits, communication methods and the perception of odd behavior should not be neglected, instead, major importance should be assigned to them (Schreiber, 1996). Moreover, according to Jacob (2005) eight cultural value orientations exist as mentioned in the background. These are illustrated in Figure 2 below and briefly discussed under the figure.
These cultural value orientations could be used in order to find differences between the values of different cultures concerning these eight illustrated aspects. Therefore, the eight aspects are briefly discussed here.

*Space* can be divided into public and private space. Thereby, individuals have their own personality from a more public level to a more private level. There can be cultural differences related to people’s public levels or private levels. Moreover, differences can also be recognizable in the degree to which people of different cultures feel comfortable in sharing these parts of their personality (Browaeys & Price, 2011).

*Time focus* is related to the rhythm of the nature. Hereby, different cultures have different perceptions of time according to their environment, traditions, history and general practices. There are two essential time systems which are essential for management: monochronic and polychronic. Monochronic means that the time is used
and experienced in a linear way. Hence, people prefer to do one thing at a time and they dislike moving away from schedules. People with this time orientation focus more on information than on other people and their relationships. In contrast to that, polychronic means that the focus is on several tasks with less dependence on information. Hence, schedules are more approximate and changeable over time. The main importance here is allocated to people and relationships (ibid).

**Structure** concerns the relationship between an individual and a group. Hereby, individualism and collectivism are differentiated. Individualism is characterized by the I-focus and individual goals, initiatives and achievements are most important. Hence, individuals are encouraged to be independent and self-reliant. Here, less distinction is made between in- and out-groups. Moreover, preferred relationships are with family members. In contrast to that, collectivism indicates that group interest come before individual interests. Thereby, decisions are made in the group's best interest. Hence, clearer distinctions are made between in- and out-group members. Therefore, relationships are more constant within and outside the family (ibid).

Every method of human expression is resulting in an *action*. This subsequently shows a tendency towards a being or a doing orientation. The being orientation is defined as a spontaneous expression of what is conceived to be given in a human personality. This orientation is focused on working for the moment and living the experience instead of being achievement oriented. In contrast to that the doing orientation prefers activities that result in accomplishments that are measurable by standards which are external to the acting individual. The focus is on action and achieving personal goals (ibid).

When talking about *communication* the context plays an important role. It can be seen as the framework and background surrounding circumstances in which the communication takes place. Thereby, high-context and low-context communication are differentiated. In a high-context culture, most of the information is already in the person. Here, just a little is in the encoded and transmitted part of the message being communicated and the information is hidden in the text. In contrast to that, for a low-
context culture the opposite is true. Here, the most information is part of the encoded and transmitted message. Thereby the message is clear and explicit (ibid).

*Time Orientation* differentiates between past, present and future orientation. Cultures with a past orientation focus on traditions. Hence, changes and plans have to be in accordance with these traditions and the history. Present focused cultures are interested in quick results and short-term gain. In contrast to the past orientation, cultures focused on the future, are likely to give up short-term gains in order to achieve more substantial long-term benefits. Therefore, future plans or changes are in accordance with expected future benefits (ibid).

*Power* value orientation is defined as the extent to which people expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Hence, the level of power and authority are marked out in a strict way by cultures oriented to hierarchy. In contrast to that cultures orientated towards equality, have more informal structures based on expertise. However, hierarchical structures may still be there below the surface (ibid).

*Competition* is especially encouraged in a free market environment. Here, employees are motivated to take responsibility in order to stimulate innovation and development of markets. In case competitiveness is valued the focus is wealth, performing well and achieving ambitions. The profit plays an important role in this case. In contrast to that, when cooperation is preferred, where the focus lies in the quality of life, relationships and consensus. Here, working in a pleasant environment has more value than making profit and competition is not considered to be the main purpose of the business (ibid).

In order to illustrate how important the concept of a nation’s culture is, some important theories concerning culture mentioned earlier in the background and problem discussion will be looked at in more detail. Thereby, the theories we consider to be essential for this topic are Hofstede’s Framework and Inglehart’s Theory (ibid).
2.2 Cross Culture

In order to find answers to the first research question stated earlier in the thesis the cultural differences of the workforce have to be analyzed. Thereby, a more in depth discussion of Hofstede’s Framework and Inglehart’s Theory as they both deal with cultural dimensions will follow as well as how culture influences management behavior.

2.2.1 Hofstede’s Framework

Hofstede’s framework consists of the six cultural dimensions in a business context. These dimensions were created in order to compare how management is affected by differences in cultural groupings. The cultural dimensions are: Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individual vs. group orientation, masculine vs. feminine, short-term vs. long-term orientation (Browaeys & Price, 2011) and indulgence vs. restraint (Hofstede-Insights, n.d.). These cultural dimensions are illustrated in Figure 3 below and discussed in more detail in the following.

![Figure 3: Hofstede’s 6 Cultural Dimensions (Source: adapted from Hofstede-Insights (n.d.))](image-url)
His work has been dominant in particular in the field of management and marketing. Hofstede assumes that culture is highly stable over time. The theoretical foundation of his work is in micro-processes of socialization (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017).

*Power Distance* is defined as “the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” (ibid, p.873). Thereby, every member of a high power distance culture has his or her rightful place in the organizational hierarchy (ibid). The members see differences in power, status and wealth as legitimate and something that should not be contested. The contrary is true in low power distance countries. Here, egalitarian deals are promoted and the members are more likely to make judgements about the legitimacy of authoritarians’ actions. Moreover, they subordinate themselves less to partners and react more negatively when they are treated unfairly (Lund, Scheer & Kozlenkova, 2013).

*Uncertainty Avoidance* is defined as the manner in which people perceive opportunities and threats in their environment. Hereby, people with high uncertainty avoidance experience more anxiety when trying to cope with uncertain situations. Therefore, they try to reduce the risk through any reasonable measure that helps uncover the truth or eliminate the risk. Thereby, they focus on rules, norms and regulations. The opposite is true for people with low uncertainty avoidance (ibid).

*Individual vs Group Orientation* is concerned with individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Individualism is defined as “people looking after themselves and their immediate family only” (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017, p.873). Contrary, collectivism is defined as “people belonging to in-groups that look after them in exchange for loyalty” (ibid, p. 873). Hereby, an in-group refers to a social group, that a person is part of, such as a family or a religion.

Whereas in individualist cultures people tend to be more I-conscious, in collectivistic cultures people are more we-conscious with their identity connected to the social system they belong to. Moreover, an important point concerning the communication
between the members of the workforce is that individualist cultures are low-context communication cultures. This means they prefer explicit verbal communication. In contrast to that collectivistic cultures are high-context communication cultures where a more indirect style of communication is preferred (ibid).

*Masculine cultures* are characterized by the degree to which assertiveness, performance, success and competition prevail over values of *feminine cultures* like the quality of life, maintaining personal relationships, service, care of the weak and solidarity. Whereas, masculinity strives to maximize productivity, femininity strives to maximize welfare (Lund et al., 2013).

*Long-term Orientation* is defined as the focus on future oriented values like persistence and thrift. Moreover, emphasis is put on keeping relationship successful in the long period. In contrast to that, *short-term orientation* is defined as emphasize of the past and the stability of the current situation. Hereby, traditional roles are respected and social obligations are fulfilled (ibid).

*Indulgence* is defined by a society that allows relatively free gratification of natural and basic human drives. These are related to enjoying life and having fun. In contrast to that, *restraint* is defined by a society that suppresses these gratification of needs. There is even a regulation by means of strict social norms (Hofstede-insights, n.d.).

### 2.2.2 Inglehart’s Theory

Inglehart assumes that culture is temporarily dynamic and changes over time and his work has been dominant particularly in the field of political science and sociology. His theory is mainly based on macro-processes of modernization and industrialization. The theory he developed contains two broad measures of national-cultural values. These are: traditional vs. secular-rational values and survival vs. self-expression values (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017). Inglehart’s cultural dimensions are illustrated in Figure 4 below and discussed in more detail in the following.
Traditional societies are defined as societies with a high level of national pride, more respect of authority, they accept national authority passively and they prefer social conformity rather than individualist striving. Moreover, they prefer consensus rather than open political conflict and they support deference to authority. Contrary, secular-rational societies prefer the opposite on all of the above mentioned topics (ibid).

The survival/self-expression dimension refers to values like trust, tolerance, subjective well-being, political activism and self-expression that emerges in societies with high levels of security. Survival oriented societies have low-levels of subjective well-being, are low on interpersonal trust and relatively intolerant of out-groups. Moreover, they do not really support gender equality, emphasize materialist values, have high trust in technology, are low on environmental activism and favorable of authoritarian governments. In contrast to that, self-expressive societies prefer the opposite on all of these topics (ibid).

This theory is going to be used in the frame of reference in order to analyze cultural differences between employees with different cultural backgrounds. Hereby, the two cultural dimensions that have been briefly discussed above are going to be used in order to structure the employees of different cultures in categories. Hence, they can be divided into groups for cultures that are more traditional societies in contrast to cultures.
that are more secular-rational societies. The same is true for cultures that are more survival oriented and cultures that are more self-expression oriented. In the end this theory helps to identify the differences related to these two cultural dimensions.

2.2.3 The Influence of Culture on Management Behavior

As more and more companies turn into multinational corporations, understanding the impact of national culture on management behavior has turned into a key factor (Gulev, 2009). According to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), management shouldn’t be looked at any differently when talking about culture compared to other parts of society. Managers are a part of society just as the people they work with. Therefore, in order to understand their behavior, one has to understand their societies, as all aspects of culture influence a person’s behavior and subsequently also a managers style of working. Byrne and Bradley (2007) showed that management style is strongly influenced by his or her national culture. Adding to that, a country’s culture also plays a strong role in shaping attributes, influence and status connected to a managerial position (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, House, 2006). It has a strong, yet predictable influence on decision making, and the communication of problems and recommendations (Tse, Lee, Vertinsky & Wehrung, 1988).

An even stronger influence, though, comes from the respective organization’s corporate culture. Thereby, social, cultural and political environments influence the internal structure of an organization, which in turn will have an impact on the respective managers’ behavior (Berell, 1999). However, it has to be taken into consideration that organizational culture is largely influenced by national culture. An organization’s attitude towards management behavior, in turn, is vastly dependent upon its top management team’s respective culture (Rodriguez, 2005). Due to this close relationship between a country’s overall culture and the distance corporate culture of a company based in that respective country, these two are likely to be very closely related, or even largely identical (Rodriguez, 2005, Newman & Nollen, 1996, Parkhe, 1993).
2.3 Cross Cultural Workforce

Companies all over the world have to deal with a rising globalization of the economy, leading to increasingly diverse workforces (Greblikaitė & Daugeliene, 2010). Moreover, the 21st century is an age of migration contributing to the formation of increasingly diverse workforces (Brunow, Nijkamp, 2018). Additionally, many companies understood that diverse workforces do not only offer benefits, but might even be essential. Therefore, many corporations have formulated goals regarding diversity in their workforce (Joplin, Daus, 1997). Hereby, it is vital to define diversity in more detail. While diversity generally deals with any source of differentiation between two individuals such as gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical ability, tenure in the organization or nationality and ethnicity (Joplin, Daus, 1997), the following sections will deal exclusively with cultural diversity due to the underlying thesis’ focus on managing a cross-cultural workforce.

When examining the effects of a cross-cultural workforce, it is interesting to see, that while there seems to be no real benefit of a diverse workforce in low-skilled jobs, there are significant positive effects of cultural diversity on productivity and revenues for highly skilled jobs. This is mainly due to the different skills and experiences, problem solution methods and culturally-specific knowledge of individual from different cultural backgrounds, which provides companies with a competitive advantage (Brunow, Nijkamp, 2018). Thereby, it is important to note that culturally diverse workforce does not seem to lead to any negative effect as it has a positive for highly skilled workers and neutral one when looking at low skilled workers (ibid).

Generally, Brodock and Massam (2016) argue that there are many reasons to have a diverse workforce: it adds to the company’s bottom line mainly due to increased performance because of productivity gains, it is valued by job seekers as well as most current employees and diversity among employees helps to guard the company against groupthink and blindness for new ideas due to the individuals’ different experiences and cultural backgrounds.
While it seems obvious that diversity in a company’s workforce is a necessity in order to be successful nowadays, it is important to note, that it cannot be delegated from the top. Rather, it has to come from within the organization (Childs Jr, 2005).

2.3 Cross Cultural Challenges

The above mentioned and discussed cultural differences lead to challenges and arising problems for managers. The most important ones will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.3.1 Types of Conflict

The opening up and steady rising globalization of the world economy lead to a rising importance of understanding cross cultural values when managing cross cultural workforces in order to prevent conflicts and miscommunication (Sukanya, 2015). Thereby, most problems between people arise out of fear, distrust and exclusion. Moreover, power distribution and the valuing of differences contribute to arising problems. There are three possible types of conflict as which can arise between the members of the workforce of an organization: substantive, procedural and affective conflicts (Schreiber, 1996). These are illustrated in Figure 5 below and discussed in more detail in the following.
Substantive conflicts are disagreements about task issues which include the nature and the importance of task goals and key decisions. These are procedures for task accomplishment and the right choice for action. In contrast to that, affective conflicts are described as emotional. They arise out of interpersonal clashes which are characterized by anger, distrust, frustration and other forms of negative affect (Davis & Harveston, 2001).

Whereas, substantive conflicts can be beneficial, as different perspectives and arguments are being considered and stronger positions and solutions are yielded because of a clarification of opposing viewpoints, procedural and affective conflicts disrupt a team’s progress. There exist different factors which contribute to affective conflicts including poor communication, dominant or passive personality clashes, status or rank in the company, varying cultural customs. Moreover, time shortages, power struggles, excessive ego investments, different styles and an inequitable distribution of tasks additionally contribute to this kind of conflict (Schreiber, 1996).

Another source of conflict within a diverse workforce can be identity-based conflicts. Thereby, conflicts emerging outside of the workplace, due to value disputes of specific social groups, spill-over into the working environment due to the diverse background of the workforce. Other than with a simple interpersonal disagreement, in an identity
conflict, at least one side attributes the reason for the conflict to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnicity and positions itself due to its own race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnicity. The issue of identity conflicts is especially hard to solve as different social groups hold different levels of status and power in a respective society. Therefore, identity conflicts are concerned with intrinsic values making them highly emotional and bearing the danger of a quick escalation (Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott and Dalton, 2007).

Maybe the most obvious source of problems in a cross cultural workforce is the diversity of languages spoken by the different team members. Thereby, it is essential to be able to coordinate the often diverse skill sets of different employees to ensure performance. In order to do so, communication is a key element. Due to the different mother tongues, many members of an international workforce will be forced to communicate in a language they are not native in or potentially even have to rely on translators. Thereby, even among native speakers of the same language there can be differences in meanings or the general way of communicating due to regional, cultural or national differences (Chen, Geluykens and Chong, 2006).

When dealing with language barriers, there are three dimensions: the language diversity, the language penetration and the language sophistication. Language diversity is concerned with the total number of different languages within a workforce. Language penetration means the degree to which the workforce is involved in cross-lingual communication. Language sophistication stands for the complexity of foreign language skills required (Feely & Harzing, 2003).

According to Kikosoki (1993) a successful communication is based on the mutual and accurate understanding of a message by both parties, the sender and the receiver. If this is not the case communication problems arise. Feely and Harzing (2003) argued that the problems arising from communication problems go beyond simple cost issues, as they affect and damage relationships, trust and a company’s strategy. Due to the fact that communication is at the heart of nearly every aspect of business, language barriers
and the problems connected to them can have far reaching effects including the company’s relationship to its customers, its expansion strategies and overseas activities, potential joint ventures, the relationship between the headquarter and its subsidiaries and the company’s staffing policy (ibid).

2.3.2 National Equality

Another big issue facing business because of cultural differences are cultural stereotypes among the workforce. As mentioned earlier in the background, according to Clausen (2010), stereotypes can be described “a widely held, generalized and simplified conception or image of a specific group of people” (p.58). They can be divided into stereotypes of oneself and others (ibid). Furthermore, various research has shown that the process of stereotyping actually is a result of certain cognitive functions to categorize information due to the enormous amounts of data the human brain has to deal with (Chia & Jih, 1994; Allport 1954; Tajfel, 1969). Thereby, stereotypes influence the formation of impressions of people or situations, while the stereotype used to do so, in turn, is influenced by the respective individual’s cultural background (Chia & Jih, 1994). Stereotypes are also influenced by personal experience and strongly interconnected with emotions a certain individual might experience towards a member of a certain (social) group (ibid).

In many countries significant ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities exist. The problem hereby is, that a failure in understanding demographic and other differences between workers can lead to discrimination, poor working relations and underperformance of the workforce. Earlier studies state that many employees face discriminatory hiring assignments and practices and inadequate job-training from their managers as well as mobbing and opposition from co-workers (Ozgener, 2008). These above mentioned and discussed stereotypes and discriminations might lead to offenses against co-workers. Thereby, different cultures react differently to offenses at the workplace. Whereas some cultures tend to avoid such offenses some focus on revenge. These offenses are usually based on similarities and dissimilarities. However,
these do not necessarily have to be connected to in-groups and out-groups. In-groups can be described as communities of people that share the same interests, identity or other common attributes. An out-group, by contrast, is then referring to the people, that don’t belong to this group. In a collectivist culture, however, where in- and out-group distinctions are well defined, it might be instead possible, that the offender is dissimilar to the victim concerning certain characteristics but still in the in-group. Thereby, the victim is going to react differently to an offender belonging to the in-group compared to one who is part of the out-group (Kim, Shapiro, Aquino, Lim & Bennett, 2008).

2.4 Cross Cultural Management

As mentioned in the background, cross cultural management according to Browaeys & Price (2011) is about the behavior of people within an organization and how to work with the diversity of people influenced by different cultures. In order to assure effectiveness in the company’s processes, managers need to understand their subordinates’ cultures and have to be able to adapt themselves to the particular cultures. Hence, a manager has to carefully select the best way to lead his subordinates (Budin & Wafa, 2015). Being a successful manager is thereby dependent on three vital skill sets: technical skills, which refers to being proficient in a certain type of work; human skills, which means the ability to work with people; and conceptual skills which describes the ability to work with ideas (Katz, 1955; Algahtani, 2014). Moreover, managers should be good communicators and negotiators and be competent in organizational and delegation issues (Algahtani, 2014).

In order to be able to conduct cross cultural management as it is defined above in an effective way, different theories can be used. One important theory not just for cross cultural management but for managing diverse groups is the team management theory. Hereby, the managers aim on dismantling hierarchical structures in favor of participatory ones in order to dissolve barriers and create unity between the members of a workforce. This whole concept is based on working together in order to reach a common goal by actuating collective decision making as this is a more successful way of doing business.
of managing a team. Hence, by aiming for common goals the manager tries to diminish the struggle between dominant and subordinate groups and lessen the differences between these groups. Thereby, it is especially important to replace the organizational structures based on competitiveness through cooperative structures. The main objective is to create a system that allows all the people of different cultures to work together in order to fulfill the organizational objectives (Schreiber, 1996).

The previously mentioned problems and challenges can be overcome by improving the communication between the workforce and also between the managers and the workforce. Like discussed in the previous paragraph the focus should not lie on individual change, however, common goals and objectives should be set. In order to facilitate the working conditions and environment between the members of a multicultural workforce the organizations should consider to offer cultural awareness trainings for their managers as well as the workforce. Thereby, communication issues are addressed and the participants are provided with a better understanding of their colleagues’ perspectives (ibid).

It is especially important that the managers are able to understand themselves which indicates he or she is aware of his or her own biases, how he or she is formed and how he or she emerges in the workplace. If this is the case, managers are able to communicate more effectively in a verbal and non-verbal way with their workforce. Hereby, they should be respectful, empathetic and able to understand others’ cultures. This includes being aware of the sense of time, concept of work and basic beliefs of workers of different cultures (Casares, 1993).

Moreover, they should be able to understand what offensive to other cultures is concerning: grooming, dress, communication methods and the perception of odd behavior as well as the beliefs, attitudes and talents of workers with different cultural backgrounds and the aspirations of minority employees. (Schreiber, 1996). In order to overcome problems in the workplace because of culturally based offenses like discussed earlier, the manager’s task is to discover how to help the offended employees
or cultural groups. Hence, the manager should focus on talking with the victims about their problems and to reconcile rather than to make them avoid these offending situations or to seek revenge (Kim et al., 2008).

Concerning discrimination at the workplace managers should be able to conduct diversity management. According to Ozgener (2008) diversity management is defined “as a process of creating and maintaining an environment that naturally allows all individuals to reach their full potential in pursuit of organizational objectives” (p. 622). Hence, managers should acknowledge the importance of social disadvantage suffered by certain groups. The focus should lie on valuing people as individuals and to harness differences in order to create productive working environments where everyone’s talents are fully used to achieve organizational goals. A diverse workforce can have following benefits, if managed effectively: higher productivity, creativity, innovation and group synergy, better recruitment and retention of qualified personnel, effective conflict management, better decision making and better marketing to minority groups (Ozgener, 2008).

Language barriers have to be overcome as well, as they lead to misunderstandings and conflicts as mentioned and discussed earlier. The first crucial step is to focus on face-to-face communications (Kikosoki, 1993). Thereby, misunderstandings and miscommunication can be reduced as body language and mimics and gestures underline the communication and the messages that are transferred. According to Kikosoki (1993), the Ivey Model is a good method to assure an effective communication. The reason for that is that it takes into account the effective communication with an individual as well as the cultural background of this individual by which he or she was influenced.

In general, the behavior of the managers depends on their view of their workforce. Therefore, it is important to consider McGregor’s Theory. His idea about these two theories was first articulated in his article “The Human Side of Enterprise” in 1957 and subsequently expanded in his book with the same title in 1960 (Lauter, Kopelman &
Prottas, 2015). Thereby, Theory X has a more pessimistic assumption that people dislike work. Therefore, the manager is more task- and result-oriented than showing concerns about the workforce’s morale. In contrast to that, Theory Y has an optimistic approach with a more relationship-oriented manager who involves the workforce into problem solving and decision making. William G. Ouchi extended McGregor’s Theory by a Theory Z which combines elements of Theory Y with elements of modern Japanese management. This theory focuses more on the attitudes and responsibilities of the subordinates as they all share a collective responsibility for the performance of the company or organization (Ouchi & Price, 1978) Therefore, Theory Z companies are among the most successful and fast-growing businesses in the U.S. (Browaeys & Price, 2011).

McGregor’s Theory X/Y was chosen as it is the second, well-known theory in organizational behavior out of the 73 theories existing. However, the impact between X/Y attitudes and job performance have never been empirically proven (Lauter et al., 2015). These two controversial management orientations are going to be discussed in more detail in this section of the thesis. Theory X has a more pessimistic assumption that people dislike work. Therefore, the manager is more task- and result-oriented than showing concerns about the workforce’s morale. Contrary, Theory Y has an optimistic approach with a more relationship-oriented manager who involves the workforce into problem solving and decision making (Browaeys & Price, 2011).

The theory states that managerial work behaviors reflect the manager’s assumptions about people. According to Lauter et al. (2015) managers in Theory X have three assumptions which are listed in Table 1 below.
Table 1: Three Assumptions of McGregor’s Theory X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McGregor’s Theory X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People are lazy in their nature and try to avoid work if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are inherently irresponsible and it is necessary to monitor their work behavior closely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the workers have little to contribute intellectually to the operations of the company.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lauter et al. (2015)

According to Lauter et al. (2015), contrary to the above mentioned theory, Theory Y has three assumptions which include a more positive view about workers and their human nature. These three assumptions are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Three Assumptions of McGregor’s Theory Y

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McGregor’s Theory Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under suitable conditions, people are able to find work enjoyable and experience motivation and fulfillment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are capable of self-direction and self-control rather than being inherently irresponsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers are able to give important intellectual contributions to the work they perform.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lauter et al. (2015)
These views of the workforce managers have, influence their behavior with the workforce and how they manage the workforce. Later in the methodology chapter data will be collected and afterwards analyzed on how different nations’ cultures have a tendency to be more connected to Theory X or to Theory Y and if this theory applies to cultural differences or if it is influenced by other components than culture.

2.5 Summary of Literature Review

In this chapter the main theories of Hofstede, Inglehart, the 8 Cultural Value Orientations, the impacts of culture on the workforce as well as reasons for cultural conflicts and how to overcome them through cross cultural management have been introduced and explained in detail. Therefore, the references which are important for the Frame of Reference in the next chapter have been used. The aforementioned theories can be organized in three important areas: a) cross cultural differences, b) cross cultural challenges and c) cross cultural management which play an important role throughout the whole thesis. How these theories are going to be used in order to gather data, analyze the data and compare it to the theory is going to be explained in the following chapters.
3. Frame of Reference

The frame of reference combines the most important theories used in the literature review. It will then be applied to guide the collection and analysis of the data. This study examines the relationship of culture and management and the resulting problems and challenges. Table 3 below re-states the research purpose and research questions. In order to provide a basis the frame of reference will be built upon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Purpose</th>
<th>The Study aims at extending the literature on how to manage a cross-cultural workforce in order to provide a better understanding of the issue.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question I</td>
<td>What kind of differences exist between employees with different cultural backgrounds at LTU (Luleå Tekniska Universitet) in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question II</td>
<td>What are the difficulties in cross cultural management at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question III</td>
<td>How does the management encounter cross cultural challenges at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 illustrates the three main areas of research this study will focus on: cross-cultural differences, cross-cultural problems and challenges and cross-cultural management. In the previous section, the current literature on these areas was
reviewed, including important theories and models. The knowledge gained from the existing literature will now form the frame of reference, which in turn will be used to answer the research questions and guide the collection and analysis of empirical data.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the frame of references builds on the theories used in the literature review and the data gathered in the case study, in this case the face-to-face interviews. The foundation is an idea of the authors and a gap in the existing theory. This is why the framework tries to fill this gap. Hereby, research questions, sampling methods and simple data gathering advices are used. All the important theories used in the literature review will be grouped together according to similarities in their variables and same topics. This groups will be represented by different tables. The most important variables have to be chosen and the relationships between them have to be understood. This is why the frame of reference explains either through a graph or through narrative forms the key variables, theories and relationships that have to be studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In Figure 6 below, it is illustrated how the research purpose, the research questions and the theories used in the frame of reference, in order to answer every research question with help of the interviews, lead to the findings and the conclusion in the end of the thesis. The research purpose and the three research questions have been presented earlier in this chapter in Table 3, therefore, they just shown as research purpose, Research Question 1, Research Question 2 and Research Question 3 in the figure. All the theories mentioned in this figure are going to be discussed in more detail later in the chapter including a presentation of the important variables for each theory.
Figure 6: Research Framework
3.1 RQ1: What kind of differences exist between employees with different cultural backgrounds at LTU (Luleå Tekniska Universitet) in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

The analysis of the cultural differences among the workforce of LTU will be based on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, as it is well established and widely accepted. However, it will be supplemented and supported by Inglehart’s cultural theory, as it offers a more dynamic assumption of the concept of culture. Furthermore, the 8 cultural value orientations will be used in order to support the two previously mentioned theories. Guided by these theories, the cultural differences among the workforce will be assessed. This will then be the basis for examining the challenges and problems arising from these differences. How and to which extent these theories are going to be used and which of the variables are important for this study is illustrated by Table 4 below.

Table 4: Cultural Differences in the Workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross Cultural Differences</td>
<td>High/Low Power Distance</td>
<td>Hofstede out of Hofstede Insights, nd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High/Low Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual vs. Group Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masculine vs. Feminine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short/Long-Term Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indulgence vs. Restraint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional/Recular-Rational Values</td>
<td>Survival/Self-Expression Values</td>
<td>Inglehart out of Pargelova &amp; Angulo-Reiz, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Time Focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Browaeys &amp; Price, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data collection related to finding the cultural differences in the workforce will be mainly based on the two theories of Hofstede and Inglehart as these are two really important and well known theories in order to analyze cultural differences. This is why the authors use all the variables of both of the previously mentioned theories for this study. However, there are some variables explained in the theory of the eight cultural value orientations that have not been brought up neither in Hofstede’s theory nor in Inglehart’s theory. These are the five variables mentioned above in the table. The other three variables which are structure, time orientation and power are already included in Hofstede’s Theory and therefore it is not necessary to analyze these variables twice.

3.2 RQ2: What are the difficulties in cross cultural management at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

For answering the second research question, the focus will be on examining the categories of identity-based conflicts (Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott, Dalton, 2007), language based conflicts (Chen, Geluykens, Chong, 2006; Feely & Harzing, 2003), stereotypes (Clausen, 2010; Chia & Jih, 1994) and discrimination (Ozgener, 2008). Thereby, it will be examined, whether the types of conflicts suggested by the literature are actually relevant and how they arise. The variables used for this study area are illustrated in Table 5 below.
Table 5: Cross Cultural Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross Cultural Challenges</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Schreiber, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distrust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Types of Conflicts: substantive, procedural and affective</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Shortages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power Struggles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Excessive Ego Investment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Different Styles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inequitable Task Distribution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity-Based Conflicts</td>
<td>Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott and Dalton, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value Disputes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity of Languages</td>
<td>Chen, Geluykens and Chong, 2006</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Different Skill Sets</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language Penetration</td>
<td>Feely &amp; Harzing, 2003</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Language Sophistication</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication Problems</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For the area of cross cultural challenges four different theories are used. These are illustrated in the table above. Thereby, the most importance is allocated to the nine variables of Schreiber, 1996. The reason for that lies in the fact that most variables used for this are out of his theory. However, the other three studies used support Schreiber’s study with additional variables which are used in this study in order to gather information about the challenges managers face in a cross cultural workforce.
3.3 RQ3: How does the management encounter cross cultural challenges at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

The last research question focuses on overcoming the problems identified before by using cross cultural management. McGregor’s Theory X and Y will thereby be used as well as guide for the analysis of the input gained from the interviews with managers at LTU. The theories used in order to analyze the area of encountering cross cultural challenges are illustrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Encountering Cross Cultural Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encountering Cross Cultural</td>
<td>Adaptation to Cultures</td>
<td>Budin &amp; Wafa, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Understanding Cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Skills</td>
<td>Katz, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Communication</td>
<td>Algahtani, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Management Theory:</td>
<td>Schreiber, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissolve Barriers</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Create Unity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Common Goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collective Decision Making</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lessen Differences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cooperative Structures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Avoiding Offenses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Casares, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managers Understand Themselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity Management:</td>
<td>Ozgener, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valuing People as Individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harnessing Differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body language (Mimics, Gestures)</td>
<td>Kikosoki, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ivey Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory X</td>
<td>McGregor out of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory Y</td>
<td>Lauter, Kopelman &amp; Prottas, 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to analyze how to encounter the cross cultural challenges that have been discussed earlier in this chapter variables out of eight different studies are used. Thereby, importance is allocated to overcoming all the possible challenges discussed earlier. Like in the second area of cross cultural challenges, the study of Schreiber, 1996 is most important in this area as well. Moreover, another essential theory is McGregor’s Theory X and Y as this is a well-known and common theory in order to explain what managers think about their workforce and how they behave related to their view.

### 3.4 Summary of the Frame of Reference

In this chapter the important theories which will be used for the planned interviews are summarized and organized in tables according to the three main topic areas: a) cross cultural differences, b) cross cultural challenges and c) cross cultural management. The interview guide and the questions are based on the theories used. However, the authors and interviewers want to keep open to change the order or add/leave questions spontaneously according to the flow of the interviews and to be able to adapt to the interviewees and their answers.
4. Methodology

In this chapter the research strategy and the methods used for this study are discussed and reviewed. Different methodological perspectives are presented and discussed in order to increase the reliability and validity of this study. All methodical choices are geared towards collecting data effectively and subsequently gain a deeper insight in the area of interest and be able to answer the previously stated research questions after analyzing the data.

Figure 7 below illustrates the methodology used for the underlying study. The six elements will be explained in detail in the following sections. Thereby, ensuring the reliability and validity of the research was a vital issue.

![Figure 7: Methodology Structure](image-url)
As illustrated in the figure above, this chapter consists of seven steps. Firstly, a research purpose explaining the research type will be provided. This will be followed by the research approach which discusses whether the data will be qualitative or quantitative. The third step concerns the research strategy which is then followed by the data collection in order to get the data that is necessary for this study. After that, the sample selection will be presented which is about choosing the people to participate in this study. In the sixth step, the way to analyze the empirical data will be discussed. The final step will contain quality standards, like validity and reliability, in order to ensure that the information is collected in a right way. Validity and reliability need to be ensured during the data collection, the sample selection and the data analysis. The explanation of both will be found later in chapter 4 including definitions.

4.1 Research Purpose

Thinking about the research purpose is one of the first steps when starting to conduct a research study. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), meaningful research is characterized by three attributes: a systematical collection of data, a systematical interpretation of the data and a clear purpose. Thereby, the research purpose is determined by the way the research questions have been formulated previously. These questions result in answers that can be classified as descriptive, descriptive and explanatory or explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009). Generally, there are three different types of research purposes: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (ibid). An exploratory purpose is aimed towards seeking new insight on a topic and addressing an issue from a different perspective. Descriptive research, however, is focused on describing and illustrating an issue in the most detailed way possible. Finally, explanatory research tries to explain causalities and connections between variables by analyzing a specific problem (ibid).

However, a research project might have more than one purpose (ibid). This is also the case for the underlying thesis. It has been of a descriptive as well as an explanatory nature, as the aim was to establish an explanation for the causal relationships between...
the variables of management and culture. According to Saunders et al. (2009), descriptive research is most commonly used in combination with an explanatory research purpose, as it can be thought of as a sort of assistance or supplement (Saunders et al., 2009). It thereby helps to explain the causal relationship between two variables by providing a clear image of the respective phenomenon one wishes to investigate. To do so, challenges and problems connected to the management of a cross-cultural workforce have been studied and analyzed.

The descriptive part of the study focused on describing the collected data based on the frame of reference. The aim here was to have a clear picture of the situation. The explanatory part then build onto that and focused on explaining the causal relationship between the variables of culture - respectively a cultural diverse workforce - and management. The understanding of this relationship was then applied to formulate guidelines for a more effective way of managing a culturally diverse workforce.

The overall purpose of this study is to extend the literature on how to manage a cross cultural workforce and provide a better understanding of the issue. Therefore, the following three research questions were stated earlier in chapter 1 of the thesis. The first research question was: What kind of differences exist between employees with different cultural backgrounds at LTU (Luleå Tekniska Universitet) in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences? In connection to that the second research question was: What are the difficulties in cross cultural management at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences? Finally, the last research question was: How does the management encounter cross cultural challenges at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

The three research questions presented above will hereby aim at describing and explaining the relationship between cultural differences between employees with different backgrounds and how these are connected to difficulties in the management of
this workforce. Furthermore, the study will focus on describing and exploring how these difficulties could be encountered by the management.

4.2 Research Approach

Finding the research purpose is followed by the second step which is considering the research approach. When conducting research, it’s important to choose between the two different approaches: deductive and inductive research. Thereby, the research approach is used in order to complete the research purpose. However, it should be in line with the data collection. Furthermore, it is important to decide, whether primary or secondary data is going to be used (Saunders et al., 2009). The following two subsections describe and explain the different methods and possibilities and provide reasons for the choices made for this study.

4.2.1 Deductive and Inductive Research

Generally, there are two distinct approaches for a research project, which are deductive and inductive. Thereby, the chosen approach depends largely upon the extent of knowledge the researcher(s) have about the theory connected to the area of research at the beginning of the project. An inductive research starts with the data collection and thereafter a theory is developed based on the results. In contrast to that, a deductive study starts with using theory and developing a hypothesis or research questions which are then going to be answered through data collection. Therefore, inductive research essentially aims at exploring a phenomenon and formulating theory based on that, while deductive research aims at verifying previously existing theory, making deductive research the most common approach in scientific research (Saunders et al., 2009).

For the underlying study a deductive research method has been used. Thereby, existing literature was analyzed in order to formulate the research questions. The frame of reference was then build upon an in-depth analysis of existing theories and models with the aim to guide the collection and analysis of data. Furthermore, the interview guides
were also based on the frame of reference and geared towards providing answers for the research questions. The overall aim of the research was to extend the literature on how to manage a cross cultural workforce in order to guide managers and companies in their efforts. This was done by examining the causal relationship between culture and management.

4.2.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Another important decision is the research design. It is concerned with the general way of collecting data. Thereby, it can be distinguished between a qualitative and a quantitative research design. Qualitative data can be described as non-numeric, while quantitative data is of numeric nature (Saunders et al., 2009). For this study, qualitative data has been used in form of face-to-face interviews.

A qualitative research design is mainly based on the interpretation of subjective data. The aim is to get an in-depth knowledge about a certain topic. The data collection process itself is mostly non-standardized in order to allow for modifications and adaptations during the collection process, making it more interactive (Saunders et al., 2009). The data obtained is used to get an insight into issues such as perceptions or feelings and generally a deeper understanding of the research problem (Shiu, Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2009). To obtain qualitative data for this study, individual interviews have been used, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges managers are facing when dealing with diverse employees. The interviews allowed for a more in-depth picture of the situation from the managers’ point of view.

4.3 Research Strategy

In the third step it is essential to select the right research strategy in order to be able to answer the research questions in an appropriate way. Thereby it is important to note, that no strategy is generally superior or inferior to any other, it rather has to fit the respective research question(s) (Saunders et al., 2009). The chosen strategy is
dependent on aspects such as research questions, objectives and extent of existing knowledge, time and resources available. Generally, each strategy can be used for exploratory, explanatory and descriptive research and they should not be viewed as mutually exclusives, since it is possible to combine or mix them (ibid). Table 7 below illustrates the most common research strategies and their links to the research design. For the underlying study, a case study was chosen, which will be explained in more detail in the following subsection.

Table 7: Research Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Analysis</td>
<td>Quantitative / Qualitative / Mixed Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Quantitative / Qualitative / Mixed Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Research</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Inquiry</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Saunders et al., 2009

For this study the chosen research strategy is a case study. According to Saunders et al. (2009), a case study is based on the investigation of a research problem or phenomenon in its natural environment. Thereby, multiple sources of evidence are used. Yin (2009) argues, that therefore a lot of importance is placed on the context, as it has a strong influence on the study that cannot clearly be distinguished. It is well suited for gaining a deep understanding of a particular research problem or area. Thereby, a
case study can be used to investigate a phenomenon and identify why it is happening. Therefore it is often used in explanatory and exploratory research (Saunders et al., 2009).

In order to do so, it usually includes different data collection techniques used in combination. A vital issue hereby is triangulation, which refers to the employment of different data collection methods in order to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the data are accurate and sound (Saunders et al., 2009). However, this study focused on face-to-face interviews as its only way of data collection due to the restricted time for conducting the study. However, as the study is aimed towards adding to the existing literature and providing a deeper understanding of how to manage a cross cultural workforce, the authors felt that in-depth interviews would provide an appropriate and sufficient source of data to answer the research questions. Therefore, interviews were chosen over quantitative data collection measures such as a questionnaire.

When designing a case study, many issues have to be taken into consideration, such as the use of a single case study or multiple ones (ibid). A single case study is often used to investigate a specific phenomenon, while multiple cases provide the possibility of checking for replication of a phenomenon (ibid). As this study is focused on investigating the issue of managing a cross cultural workforce, which calls for a fairly deep understanding of the problem, a single case has been selected. Another reason for this decision can be found in the restricted time available for the conduction of the study.

Besides the decision of choosing a single or several case studies, the question of whether it is holistic or embedded is important to consider. Thereby, if the study examines only one unit of analysis it is considered holistic. Conversely, if it looks at more than one unit of analysis, it is referred to as embedded (Saunders et al., 2009). As this study looks just at the issue of managing a cross cultural workforce from the perspective of the managers, it can be considered a holistic study.
4.4 Data Collection

After choosing the research strategy, the next step was to collect empirical data. There are two different ways of collecting data: primary and secondary data (Saunders, et al., 2007). Thereby, primary data describes data that is collected specifically for the purpose of the study, while secondary data refers to already existing data that has been gathered for another purpose. Which one is more beneficial to use is largely dependent on the research strategy chosen. Validity of the findings can be increased by using more than one method of data collection (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

This study used secondary data from academic journals and books. The secondary data was mostly used to establish a frame of reference for answering the research questions and guiding the process of data collection and analysis. Additionally, primary data was collected to answer the research questions and gain a deeper understanding of the research problem and the models and theories used. The primary data was obtained through interviews with managers at Luleå Tekniska Universitet (LTU). Thereby, the interviews were aimed at gaining a deeper insight into the research problem of managing a cross-cultural workforce and identifying potential challenges. Furthermore, the issue of how to potentially overcome these challenges was addressed.

According to Saunders et al. (2009), an interview is a source of valid and reliable data. Thereby, there are several types of interviews. The chosen type should be in line with the stated research questions, the research purpose and the chosen strategy. The different types of interviews range from highly structured and standardized ones to completely unstructured conversations, with different positions in between (ibid). In the structured variation, the researcher(s) use a standardized list of questions aiming at collecting data that is quantifiable and free of bias as much as possible (Yin, 2009). Semi-Structured interviews include a list of topics or questions that the researcher(s) want to cover during the interview, while still leaving a lot of room for adaptation and personalization. The order of questions might be altered and additional questions might be included for the purpose of clarification. In-depth or unstructured interviews, by
contrast, are completely informal. They don't follow a set guideline and are used to explore a certain area of research in-depth (Saunders et al., 2009).

For the underlying study, a semi-structured approach was used. Thereby, the interviewers prepared certain questions and topics that had to be included in the interview. The order of these questions and topics was adapted to the respective interview and there was room for additional questions to clarify the interviewees’ answers and opinions. Due to the importance of the circumstances of the data collection for qualitative data, notes were taken during the interviews. Factors such as observations and the researchers’ thoughts and perceptions were noted down in order to add another layer of data, which would later support the process of making sense of the data obtained. Furthermore, it contributed to a deeper understanding of the problem. The interview guide used can be found in the Appendix.

### 4.5 Sample Selection

Regarding the sample selection, the most important issue is to make sure that the findings are actually suitable for answering the research questions and addressing the overall research purpose. Thereby, this should be addressed before beginning to conduct the respective data collection process in order to avoid wasting time and resources (Yin, 2009). Thereby, there are two types of sampling techniques, the probability or representative sampling and the non-probability or judgmental sampling.

Probability sampling is commonly used for research that is aimed at statistical estimates of the characteristics of the population based on the sample. Non-probability sampling, by contrast, is not necessarily focused on generalizability, but rather on gaining in-depth insight into a research problem (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, non-probability sampling was used for this study. Within the category of non-probability sampling, there are further options to choose from. For this study, purposive or judgmental sampling was applied. Thereby, the selection of cases is based on the researchers’ judgement on
which cases will be best suited to answer the respective research questions. It is a commonly used method within a case study strategy (ibid).

Luleå Tekniska Universitet, more specifically just the campus of the University in Luleå, was selected due to a variety of reasons. First of all, it offers a very culturally diverse workforce, as it employs researchers, professors and employees from all over the world which therefore provides a representative sample to analyze the research purpose. Furthermore, it offered a very high accessibility, meaning that it was much more likely to obtain the data needed for the underlying study than it would have been in a local company. Connected to that, there was also a low possibility of reluctance of giving out data or any other non-disclosure issues due to business-related reasons which would assure easy accessible and usable data. This, in turn, can be a problem, that might occur with many companies.

In order to conduct this study three interviews have been conducted due to the restricted time for this study. Therefore, a list of the managers of the department of Business Administration, Technology and Social Sciences was created including all the managers and head of departments of the division Business Administration and Industrial Engineering. This department in general and the division in particular was chosen due to its high level of internationality among its employees. Therefore, it would ensure, that the managers would actually be experience in dealing with a culturally diverse workforce. This, in turn, is necessary to be able to obtain data that can actually be used to answer the stated research questions.

The list included two head of departments, three senior lecturers, one administrative manager, one PhD student and one professor. Moreover, there were two departmental administrators included. The aim was to contact and interview at least the two heads of departments as well as one other manager which was available in the time period of the data collection. However, concerning the other manager there were no priorities set. The selected sample is illustrated in Table 8 below.
Table 8: Overview of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Duration of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Åsa Wallström</td>
<td>Head of Department, Dean</td>
<td>08.05. 2018</td>
<td>16 min 28 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Larsson</td>
<td>PhD Student</td>
<td>09.05.2018</td>
<td>19 min 57 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rickard Garvare</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>14.05.2018</td>
<td>30 min 37 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 8 shows, the first interviewee was Åsa Wallström, who is the chair professor of industrial marketing as well as the dean of the College of Business, which is one of the six departments of the university. She has been at LTU since 1994 and is therefore very familiar with the organization and has a lot of knowledge about it. Additionally, she manages a large amount of employees in one of the most internationally staffed subjects, the subject of marketing.

The second interviewee was Lisa Larsson, who has been working as a PhD student in the area of product innovation for three years. Furthermore, she is the PhD representative of the PhD Association in the ETS Management Team. Therefore, she knows both perspectives - subordinate as well as manager - very well. Due to the fact, that the PhD students are a very multicultural workforce, she also has a lot of experience in dealing with different cultures.

The last interviewee was Rickard Garvare, who is the head of the division. Next to this management position, he is still active in teaching, research and supervision PhD students. He was first employed at LTU as a professor in 2004 and became head of the division in 2016. Therefore, he has experienced both the employee’s as well as the manager’s point of view.

~ 47 ~
4.6 Data Analysis

After collecting the data the data had to be analyzed. Thereby, the data analysis is a complex process that is already impacted by the collection of the data. Therefore it is vital to keep the analysis of the data in mind, when planning its collection. This is especially true when dealing with qualitative data, as the circumstances under which the data was obtained have a strong influence on it (Saunders et al., 2009).

The collected, qualitative data was analyzed manually. Before being able to analyze the obtained data, though, it first has to be prepared. Thereby, the audio recordings of the interviews had to be transcribed digitally. However, additional notes were taken during the interviewees as it is not just important what the interviewee said but also how it was said. Hereby, attention is given to verbal, as well as non-verbal statements of the interviewee. In this study, data sampling was used, which refers to the process of only transcribing the sections relevant to the research questions. However, when writing the transcript it is essential to clarify which parts were said by the interviewer and which parts were said by the interviewee.

Moreover, it should be differentiated between different interviewers and interviewees. This is possible by using capital letters, different fonts or different colors in the transcript. When analyzing the complex data was put into categories that belong together in order to simplify the process (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore, summaries of the transcripts were created to enable an easier way of analyzing the data and a link between the transcript and the notes taken during the interview.

According to Yin (2009), the data analysis is consisting of four elements: examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence in order to address the initial propositions of a study. For the analysis two strategies could be used: relying on theoretical propositions and developing a case description. Hence, this study will use the strategy relying on the theoretical propositions as according to Yin (2009) it is the preferred strategy. This is why the objectives in this study are based on the research questions and the literature review. Additionally, this strategy helps to identify which
data is relevant for answering the research questions and fulfilling the research purpose. Thereby, theoretical propositions help answering “How” and “Why” questions. Moreover, as pattern matching will be used in order to analyze the data. Hence, patterns are found in the data, including similarities and dissimilarities, will be compared to theoretically expected ones as this mode is one of the most appropriate for case studies (Yin, 2009).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there also exist three steps of analyzing qualitative data. These steps are illustrated in Figure 8 below and discussed briefly under the figure.

![Figure 8: Three Steps of Analyzing Qualitative Data](image)

Thereby, *data reduction* can be seen as a part of the data analysis itself as it helps to identify which data is important and relevant. It already starts with the formulation of the research questions and creation of the frame of reference. Moreover, it is seen as the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data which appears in transcripts (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

*Data display* helps understanding and showing collected data in a summarized form and therefore leads to finding conclusions. Thereby, it is important to give a short or compressed version of the data by just using a minimal amount of text. The reason for that lies in the fact that human beings have struggle with processing huge amounts of data (ibid).
In the end, conclusion drawing is used in order to find out what things mean. Thereby, pattern finding could be used as a tool. Additionally, conclusions are verified as the analysis proceeds. These three steps that are briefly discussed above, however, cannot be clearly separated. Hence, it might happen that all the steps occur throughout the whole process of the data analysis (ibid).

A deductive approach was used in order to shape theory in order to approach data analysis. In contrast to that, an inductive approach was used in order to build the theory up that is grounded in the data. In this case, a literature review and a frame of reference have been used for the research purpose and the research questions, therefore, it is suitable to use a deductive approach for the data analysis (Saunders et al., 2009).

Within this study the authors collected data with a case study including face-to-face interviews. Hence, the answers in the interviews were prepared for the data analysis process. Moreover, all the answers were audio-recorded as mentioned above and presented in the report. Thereby, the whole case study was guided by theoretical propositions. Furthermore, pattern matching was used in order to draw conclusions from the presented answers.

Additionally, the data was analyzed within the scenarios and compared to the frame of reference. The three steps of Miles and Huberman discussed earlier in this chapter were used during the data analysis process. Additionally, the three interviews were compared with regards to the different interviewees’ answers to each question. By doing so, the data could be compared more in-depth, which in turn increased the transparency of the analysis. Furthermore, it enables to identify overall patterns across the different interviews.

Hence, data reduction was applied first through the research questions and the frame of reference. Thereby, the focus was the most valuable data within the case analysis. In the end the conclusion drawing and the verification were applied. The whole study is based on already existing theories and a deductive approach was used for the data analysis.
analysis. The questions for the interviews were drawn from the literature review and in particular from the frame of reference. Hence, the answers will be analyzed on the basis of the frame of reference.

4.7 Reliability and Validity

When assessing the credibility and therefore also the quality of the research, there are two essential measures, which are reliability and validity (Saunders et al., 2009). Thereby, both are strongly interconnected, as a measure is reliable if it proves to be valid. The same is true for a measure being invalid, as it’s then also unreliable (Malhorta, 2007). So in order to reduce the likelihood of obtaining wrong answers, both have to be taken into account when designing the research (Saunders et al., 2009).

4.7.1 Reliability

According to Saunders et al. (2009), the concept of reliability describes the consistency of findings of data collection or analysis methods. Thereby, Easterly-Smith et al. argue that the following three questions are essential for assessing the reliability of a measure: Will the measure(s) used lead to the same outcome(s) when used on a different occasion? Will other observers reach similar findings? (Cited in Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156) Is it transparent how raw data was processed to reach conclusions? (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Robson (2002), there are four main threats to reliability: subject or participant error, subject or participant bias, observer error and observer bias.

When dealing with interviews, there is always a concern about reliability due to the lack of standardization and the strong influence of the circumstances in which the interview takes place (Saunders et al., 2009). Due to that fact, it is very unlikely that the answers obtained could be replicated. However, it might not be intended to be replicable, as the circumstances are complex and dynamic. Therefore, the lack of standardization is actually the strength of this type of research, as it offers the flexibility needed to investigate these kinds of research problems (ibid). Contributing to the
credibility of the underlying interviews also is the sample selection. All interviewees were employees of Luleå Tekniska Universitet (LTU) and held a management position. Furthermore, the interview guide, which can be found in the Appendix, can be used to conduct further interviews. However, it has to be taken into consideration that many factors influences the outcomes of the interviews including both the interviewers as well as the interviewees.

4.7.2 Validity

According to Saunders et al. (2009), validity describes whether the findings and conclusions drawn from the data obtained are really about what they appear to be about and the question whether there really exists a causal relationship between the different variables. It essentially measures to which extent what is intended to be measured is really measured.

As the interviews were conducted in English, which was not the interviewees’ mother tongue, it also affected the validity of the data collection. The interviewees had to deal with the issue of expressing their thoughts in a non-native language, which might have influenced their answers respectively their way of answering. Additionally, due to the fact that neither of the study’s authors is a native speaker in English it might have also influenced their perception of the interviewees’ answers and ultimately also the analyzing and interpretation process of the data. However, there was no translation process involved which, in turn, would have also influenced the data, especially if an outside person would have been included in that process.

Due to the fact that the underlying study focused on obtaining a deeper knowledge about the challenges of managing a cross-cultural workforce rather than to be as generalizable as possible, the external validity can be generally considered low.
### 4.8 Summary of Methodology

Table 9 below provides an overview over the chosen options in terms of the methodology for this thesis. Moreover, there is a brief summary of the methodology chapter provided below the figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Research Purpose</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
<th>Explanatory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Approach</strong></td>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single case study</td>
<td></td>
<td>Holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection</strong></td>
<td>Primary Data</td>
<td>Secondary Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Selection</strong></td>
<td>Judgemental Sampling</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luleå Tekniska Universitet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transcription</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data Sampling</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison to literature &amp; variables of Frame of Reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison of Interviews</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
As illustrated in Table 9, the underlying thesis had both a descriptive and explanatory research purpose. Thereby, it followed a deductive research approach focused on qualitative data. In terms of the research strategy, a case study was chosen. Furthermore, interviews were conducted to collect primary data, while secondary data from existing literature was used to set up the frame of reference guiding both the collection as well as the analysis of the data obtained. For the sample selection judgmental sampling was used and all interviewees were employed at Luleå Tekniska Universitet and held management positions. The collected data was then analyzed based on the frame of reference using data sampling. Throughout the study, measures were taken to provide high levels of reliability and validity.
5. Empirical Data

After setting up the frame of reference in chapter 3 as well as the methodology in chapter 4, data was collected in form of a case study at LTU. Thereby, face-to-face interviews have been conducted. The collected data will be presented in this chapter with the objective to answer the previously stated research questions in chapter 1. Hereby, the data will be presented following the guideline given by the frame of reference. Hence, questions and answers aiming at discovering the existing differences between employees with different cultural backgrounds, for the first research question will be presented first. This will be followed by a presentation of the questions and answers concerning the second research question. Finally, the questions and answers of the third research question will be displayed. For each part the most relevant answers will be given grouped according to the different theories and models used in the literature review and the frame of reference. The answers given by the participants in the interviews will not be presented in the same order here, as this chapter follows the structure of the frame of reference.

The case study, including the interviews, was conducted between the 8th of May and the 14th of May, 2018. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and the date was set according to the managers’ preferences and schedules. All interviews were conducted in English. Hence, statements and answers did not have to be translated. As mentioned earlier, the participants of the interviews were people in management positions within the department of Business Administration, Technology & Social Sciences in the division of Business Administration & Industrial Engineering at LTU. The interview guide used by the authors of this study in order to conduct the interviews can be found in the appendix of the thesis.

During the first contact phase of the case study, when the authors reached out to the different managers within the department, the potential participants of the interviews were informed about the reasons behind the data collection and that this research was done for a bachelor thesis. Furthermore, in an introductory phase before starting the
interviews, the authors of the thesis reminded the participants that the answers are going to be analyzed and presented in the thesis in order to answer the research questions with regards to the management of a cross-cultural workforce.

Moreover, the interviewees were informed that the interviews will be audio-recorded in order to transcript them later on. The duration was estimated between 20 and 30 min, with all interviews actually ranging around 20 mins. As soon as the participants agreed on the recording, the audio-recorders were switched on and the interviews started. Hereby, some short introductory questions were asked in order to give the interviewees the opportunity to introduce themselves and provide a useful foundation and additional information for the following questions. The introduction contained information about the interviewee’s position at LTU, their time on the job and their cultural background. Thereby, the authors realized that all three interviewers had a Swedish background which was a coincidence. However, this has no impact on the results of the study as the workforce itself is culturally diverse, which was also strongly emphasized by each participant.

The questions of the interviews were divided into three topic areas: cross cultural differences, cross cultural challenges and cross cultural management. These are derived from the three research questions stated earlier in the thesis and provide the ground for answering them. The following sections will present the answers to the questions of each of the three areas. As the two head of departments are both working at LTU for many years now, they know the organization, its structures and especially their department pretty well. Therefore, they could easily answer to the questions asked in the interviews and think about many answers related to their experience over the years. The PhD student, however, hasn’t been at LTU for such a long time but can therefore show two different point of views. On the one hand from the management perspective and from the other hand from the PhD students’ perspective.
5.1 Cross Cultural Differences

The first topic of the interview was aimed at answering the first research question stated in the first chapter of the thesis, which is: What kind of differences exist between employees with different cultural backgrounds at LTU (Luleå Tekniska Universitet) in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences? Therefore, it is concerned with the cross cultural differences between the employees at LTU. Hence, as an opening question the authors asked the interviewees how cultural differences influence their daily work. Thereby, follow-up questions have been asked in order to differentiate negative and positive influences as well as to find out which part of the daily work was influenced most. In the following the answers of all three interviewers will be grouped together and the most important answers are going to be discussed.

According to the interviewees, which all work in the same management team of the department of Business Administration, Technology & Social Sciences in the division Business Administration & Industrial Engineering at LTU, their department has always been consisted of people from different cultures. This has led to a constant mixture of different cultural backgrounds, perspectives and points of view. The different cultures become also apparent in terms of how you approach problems. Hence, the international and cultural diverse working climate became part of the managers’ as well as the employees’ daily life. On this account, having a multicultural workforce is not something the managers here at LTU think about actively while making decisions or having discussions and meetings. However, there always is an awareness of this multicultural environment. It is part of their daily work. Concerning the follow-up questions differentiating positive and negative influences the managers came up with various points illustrated in Table 10 below. Moreover, they are discussed in more detail below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Aspects</th>
<th>Negative Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New points of view</td>
<td>Language barrier =&gt; Misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You get challenged</td>
<td>Different behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm and vibrant environment</td>
<td>Different expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingua Franca is English</td>
<td>Different level of demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchies are valued differently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in table 10 above, there are negative as well as positive aspects that influence the workplace of the managers. However, according to the interviewees, the positive aspects are way more apparent and outweigh the negative ones in their importance, which were described as possible to be dealt with. Nevertheless, all managers mentioned different negative consequences. First of all, working in a multicultural environment can lead to misunderstandings among the employees respectively between the workforce and the managers. Furthermore, the employees are not forced to learn Swedish which leads to a language barrier as Swedish still is the most important language in many fundamental processes at LTU. Moreover, if a person is not that fluent in English it is difficult for them to talk and to find the right expressions for what they want to say in English. However, it has to be noted, that there was a various degree of importance placed on the issue of Swedish fluency among managers.

Moreover, the employees can have different expectations and levels of demand related to their cultural background. However, this does not necessarily have to be related to the nationality it can also depend on the organizational culture or educational respectively academic background. Contributing to this is, that the department is so spread-out that distinct (organizational) cultures evolve within different subjects, areas and teams. Furthermore, how hierarchical structures in companies and organizations are valued differs between different cultures. This also affects the relationships between people, especially when dealing with different levels within the organization.
Connected to that, there are differences concerning the importance of titles and management positions. Furthermore, the duration of processes and the patience connected to that seems to differ among cultures. Hence, the managers have to set an common understanding for all the employees that the managers in Sweden can be more seen like friends who can be asked anything, which might seem as an extreme seen in an international perspective. All these negative aspects, however, are mostly not seen as problems by the managers but rather as challenges for them to even out these differences between employees of different cultural backgrounds out and handle them. Thereby, they use English as a lingua franca for meetings and discussions to enable smooth communication.

However, there are some essential positive aspects. Firstly, working in a multicultural team or workforce gives the employees the opportunity to get to know and understand new points of view of employees from different cultures than their own. This helps looking at things differently, broadening your horizon and getting new input. Moreover, it helps questioning own attitudes as they are not necessarily self-explaining. Secondly, these effects might challenge the individuals and lead to increases in their efficiency and productivity. Finally, the workplace is warmer and more vibrant due to a multicultural surrounding and it is fun for employees as well as managers to get to know people from different cultures. Looking at the last follow-up question, that asked which of these differences impact the work the most, the interviewees named the language barrier as well as the differences in hierarchies. This is illustrated in Table 11 below and discussed in more detail under the figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors having the most impact on work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Barriers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the most influential factors on the work is the language barrier like illustrated in Table 11 above. English is used as lingua franca which facilitates many meetings and discussions, however, some work requires Swedish language proficiency and therefore has to be done by Swedish employees, simply because most employees with different backgrounds lack the required language skills. This impacts the division of tasks and its flexibility and slows down respectively alters processes. Moreover, the second important factor are hierarchies. These impact the work itself and the cooperation among employees as the relationships and how employees relate to coworkers, subordinates, supervisors or any other person in another position. Hierarchical structures differ in some cases significantly among cultures. The managers have therefore to deal with employees fighting for positions or courses in different ways depending on their cultures. In some cultures you have to fight for your share whereas in some cultures it is the opposite. Therefore, they have to find a common culture and treat people differently related to their heritage.

The second question asked was, what the main differences between employees of different cultures related to teamwork, behavior and any other work-related aspect are. Hereby, follow-up questions have been asked related to how these differences become apparent and which the most common ones are. According to the interviewees, it is difficult to determine which specific differences are special due to the international environment with employees of many different cultures, which in itself is a very interrelated construct. Moreover, the participants pointed towards the fact that people are individuals and differ in terms of their personality. This does not necessarily have to be related to culture. However, there are differences related to the employees’ cultural backgrounds.

Firstly, different cultures value titles and management positions in a different way. Whereas titles do not play an important role in Sweden they do in other cultures. Similarly, hierarchies within organizations are different among cultures. In Sweden the hierarchies are flatter compared to many other cultures. Hence, the boss is treated like a friend or a colleague at LTU. Hereby, it is difficult for managers as some employees
need guidance and structure whereas some do not want to have any meetings at all and are really self-propelled. Hence, it is a challenge to try to give them all the opportunity to have the freedom they want without having an anarchy or leaving the workforce without any structure. This is partly really tough and a conflict in itself. Finally, the process durations vary across cultures. In Sweden-based companies, including LTU, they tend to be longer, which might lead to problems due to varying perceptions, expectations and patience connected to this issue. Moreover, people from different cultures develop different needs and also different attitudes.

5.2 Cross Cultural Challenges

The cross cultural differences are followed by the second topic of the interview which was aimed at answering the second research question stated in the first chapter of the thesis, which is: *What are the difficulties in cross cultural management at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?* Therefore, the second topic area of the interviews was concerned with cross cultural challenges due to the cultural differences discussed in the previous section. Therefore, the first question asked was what kind of difficulties the managers have to deal with due to these cultural differences. According to the interviewees, none of them has experienced any conflicts in their department based on cultural differences.

All of them pointed towards the fact that they usually work together very well. The conflicts they had were not based on cultural differences but merely on different points of views or personality traits. All managers stressed that individuals from the same culture might as well have arguments without any cultural forces or differences behind it. Additionally, some people think that others are not doing their share and therefore, jealousy can come up and cause conflicts.

However, all of them stated that they had heard about other managers having some kind of culture-based conflict in their teams or workforce. These conflicts were based mostly on the different perceptions of hierarchical systems that prevail among different
cultures. Yet, the interviewees noted, that these conflicts do not necessarily have to be based exclusively on cultural differences.

This question was followed by asking for the most common reasons for conflicts based on cultural differences. Here, the interviewees were of the point of view that conflicts with regards to different opinions or views happening within the department are usually not based on culture. There are no acute problems related to cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the differences in hierarchies mentioned previously remain the main driver for culturally based conflicts. However, the fact that none of the interviewees was actually involved in a real culture-based conflict has to be taken into consideration when assessing the answers to this question. Moreover, it is hard for employees coming from abroad to start working here, as they feel isolated in the polar arctic.

Next up, the managers were asked if they think that cultural differences could provide a ground for conflicts in general. Here, the interviewees stated, that conflicts could be related to the different expectations and perspectives of employees from different cultures. Hence, it impairs effective communication among each other and can lead to misunderstandings. This, in turn, can be a source conflicts. However, the managers noted, that it does not necessarily have to end in a conflict. They stated that if there is an understanding for different cultures, how they behave, that they have different views, experiences and histories, there should not be any ground for a culture-based conflict.

The follow-up questions related to this question were concerned with stereotypes, bullying, discrimination and misunderstandings due to the use of a lingua franca. The structure of these follow up questions is illustrated in Figure 10 below and the answers are discussed in more detail below the figure.
Furthermore, the aspects of different behaviors involved were asked for, as well as how these might influence the managers' work. Thereby, the interviewees acknowledged that stereotypes are present as it can be taken as basic human behavior to put people into boxes. Even the managers have stereotypes, however, they are not aware of them. However, they noted that they are less common or at least apparent at LTU due to the historically international working environment at the university. Furthermore, the materials, books, conferences as well as teaching is in English and therefore contributing to the international environment. Bullying, however, has not occurred in any form in this department.

Adding to that, at least in the department of marketing, much of the teaching and research managers and employees are in contact with is actually containing cross-cultural or international aspects. Bullying was declared as not present at LTU. Concerning discrimination, however, the interviewees stated that there is no active discrimination which means hindering people in their ability to conduct their work or living according to their personality. The main reason for that was seen in the fact that everyone is quite used to being part of an international workforce. Nevertheless, there are different views of people and groups with different cultural backgrounds, which,
according to the managers, might be perceived as a sort of indirect or hidden discrimination.

Moreover, these stereotypes mentioned earlier can have a negative effect on the working environment and lead to discrimination as managers might fail to see potential or upcoming obstacles. These differences, however, were said to have no negative impacts or effects on the working climate. Neither did the managers perceive them as a cause of any problems as y the different cultural backgrounds of the employees are generally highly valued at LTU.

The last point, potential misunderstandings due to the use of English as a lingua franca by non-natives was seen as depending on the topics and circumstance of discussions and chatters. Furthermore, there are differences among employees in terms of accents and levels of vocabulary using their lingua franca, in this case English. There can be different ways to interpret what was said, as employees have struggles finding the right words, as well as the body language used. This is why individuals should be especially careful when talking about sensitive topics, practical things and Swedish regulations or laws. Therefore, it was recommended they should use easy and short sentence structures when explaining or discussing something in English. However, the interviewees stated that this issue does not play a huge role or has a large impact on work itself, but rather on how things are valued or viewed by different cultures, especially relationships with other workers. These, indeed, were perceived to play a huge role.

5.3 Cross Cultural Management

The last topic area of the interviews was aimed at answering the third research question stated in the first chapter of the thesis, which is: How does the management encounter cross cultural challenges at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences? Hence, this topic is concerned with encountering the challenges discussed above by using cross cultural management. Therefore, the first question asked was, how the interviewees deal with these conflicts. Follow-up questions
have been asked related to how the managers decide when to get involved in conflicts and if it is out of their own initiative or rather due to an employee's request. According to the interviewees, in most of the cases, the people involved in disagreements or problems are usually able to solve it by themselves. In case this is not possible, the managers stressed, that they can and do turn to others (i.e. colleagues) for help.

In any other case they can turn to the managers which try to figure out the origin of the conflict and the key problem in order to find a way to sort it out. There are two lines of managers the second line is the head of division which can talk to the managers in such situations in order to try to figure out what is going on. Here, the managers are more on the employer side and therefore a confidential discussion about employees with all regards is assured. If it is necessary, the HR department can be involved as well to have input from experts.

Furthermore, LTU's healthcare provider offers external experts like psychologists if needed. However, if the problem is serious in any way, for instance when people feel left out or not treated in a good way (i.e. in a personal way), the managers noted that there is a special team system within LTU that is being used in such cases. Thereby, this system is mostly concerned with providing the grounds for a good cooperation and working environment and avoiding personality-based conflicts. It is important for all the managers, that everybody feels good.

They stated that in most cases, conflicts, can be sorted out through communication and listening to each other. The interviewees pointed out that the parties involved should just talk about it, as disagreements usually happen due to misunderstandings. Still, the managers can help by listening to individual problems that occur. This makes them aware and understand the current situation of their employees. In general, there are measures in place at LTU that is applied in order to reduce problems and to create a balanced work environment, including an introductory course, which is meant to give (new) employees to get to know each other. There are also group development
programs applied in case that employees are on different sides or they work with individuals depending on the situation.

The managers deal with these problems and conflicts because they are asked to help as well as on their own initiative. As there is a flat hierarchy in the department, employees are not afraid to ask managers for help in conflict situations. However, when the managers hear about such conflicts and problems, they are proactive and take an initiative. Hence, they call for formal meetings and involve the head of department or the head of the subject depending on the situation in order to set up a process to find a solution.

Next up, the second question was related to how the managers maintain a productive working climate within their cross cultural workforce. Here, the managers stressed that communication is an important key factor. It is essential to actually talk to each other and try to understand the other person’s point of view and circumstances. Moreover, the interviewees pointed out, that it also is of vital importance to have fun outside of work and get to know each other better. Thereby, the employees here at LTU spend coffee breaks (fika) together or meet for lunch and just talk with each other. By communicating it is possible to prevent and solve a lot of potential conflicts. Moreover, as mentioned in the first question, there is a system which is applied in order to create a balanced working climate and work environment and to reduce problems. Furthermore, an important aspect is, that the employees appreciate to work with people from different cultures and have fun working in this multicultural environment. This was stated to be the case at LTU.

The third question asked was concerned with how the managers manage potential cross cultural conflicts between their employees. Here, they pointed towards the flatter hierarchical structures as this provides that the employees are at the same level resulting in more open and communicative relationships between each other. This, in turn, helps to prevent many conflicts respectively makes it easier to deal with existing ones. Moreover, communication plays an essential role as it is important to understand
the other side, which was already addressed above. It might be harder for employees of one culture to place themselves into an employee of another culture because of cultural differences. However, it is the key to understand each other. Thereby, understanding where people come from, why they behave in the way they do or whatever the reason of the conflict might be is seen to be essential according to the interviewees.

Following, the next question was related to if LTU has any cross cultural seminars or trainings they apply. Here, the follow-up questions were concerned with how these are applied and in which way they help to deal with cross cultural conflicts. According to the interviewees, LTU offers courses for supervisors in order to prepare them for their work including how to deal with cross cultural differences. Thereby, the employees get to know different opinions on how to work with problems and conflicts. However, they are not mandatory, which leads to the fact that not all supervisors take part in them.

Moreover, there is a program called “meet and greet” which was launched last year. Here, employees coming from other cultures and nations are supported in getting into the Swedish society as it is a challenge to get to know people and to become a part of social life outside of LTU. The reason for that is, that Swedish people are rather introvert compared to people from many other cultures. However, the degree on how difficult it is to become part of the social life here in Sweden and to connect to people depends on the age and the family situation of the person. Therefore, the event is geared towards helping to create networks and meet new friends, which, in turn, will affect the working environment in a positive way. Finally, the managers also had own trainings in languages, rhetoric and body language which helps them solve problems and identify problems.

The final question asked was concerned with what the managers would like to improve or apply for the future. In connection to that, a follow-up question was asked related to why they would like to improve or apply this. Thereby, the managers pointed out, that Swedish is an issue as it is difficult to be completely replaced by English even though the English language is getting more and more important in today's business. The
reason behind that is, however, that some processes and tasks can only be done if the respective individual has a certain level of Swedish language skills as mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, the interviewees pointed out, that it is more difficult to explain or discuss some issues in a second language due to the complexity, country-specific aspects or knowledge and very special vocabulary required. So even though it might seem pointless to some to learn a language that is spoken by only 9 million people around the world, it is important to learn it, especially if the respective individual plans on staying in Sweden for a longer time and potentially becoming a part of society.

Finally, the interviewees stated, that it would help them to avoid potential conflicts or sort them out in a better, more effective way if they would introduce training programs for the management team in order to have a better understanding of other cultures and their communication styles. Here they noted, that some managers are lacking these kind of skills respectively would need to some additional training. In addition to that, it would also improve the working environment and the working climate if the managers would take part in trainings in order to improve their empathy skills and the ability to place themselves in another person’s position. While this ability somewhat depends also on personality traits, the interviewees pointed out, that it can and therefore should be improved using training programs and courses. In relation to that, the managers themselves admitted that they want to challenge themselves into being more sensitive so recognize potential areas of conflicts and see what is going on earlier.

5.4 Summary of the Empirical Data

This chapter presents the data collected related to the questions asked based on the interview guide. Therefore, the questions asked have been illustrated followed by the answers given by all three interviewers. However, there was no separation between the answers of the different interviewees, this will follow later in the thesis when comparing the different answers of the three interviewees. In this part of the thesis just an overview
is presented of all the answers given to each question. The next chapter will focus on comparing the theories to the answers in order to support the findings of the study.
6. Data Analysis

In this chapter the collected data will be analyzed. Thereby, the analysis will follow the established guideline of the previously presented frame of reference in chapter 3. For each research question an analysis of similarities, differences and additional findings of the collected data and the theories used in the frame of reference will be presented. Hence, this analysis will form the foundation for drawing final conclusions in the following and last chapter of the thesis called “Findings and Conclusion”.

In order to be able to analyze the data the research purpose and the research questions have to be considered. Hence, the purpose of this study is to extend the literature on how to manage a cross cultural workforce and provide a better understanding of the issue. Therefore, three research questions have been created earlier in the thesis. These are presented in the following:

- **RQ1**: What kind of differences exist between employees with different cultural backgrounds at LTU (Luleå Tekniska Universitet) in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

- **RQ2**: What are the difficulties in cross cultural management at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

- **RQ3**: How does the management encounter cross cultural challenges at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences?

The data analysis will follow the chronological order of the interviews, which is also in line with the order of topics in the frame of reference and the research questions. Therefore, the first topic analyzed will be cross cultural differences followed by cross cultural difficulties and challenges. Finally, the way management encounters these cross cultural challenges will be addressed.

~ 70 ~
6.1 Cross Cultural Differences

Culturally diverse employees have been a stable within LTU’s workforce for a long time. However, there are partly severe differences among these employees with different backgrounds. In order to analyze these differences, two main theories will be used: Hofstede and Inglehart. These differences can be analyzed in different ways using the theories discussed earlier in the literature review and the frame of reference. Hereby, this section is going to analyze whether the presented theories are actually applying to the workforce of the department of Business Administration, Technology and Social Sciences at LTU by presenting similarities, differences and additional findings between them and the collected data in the interviews.

Hofstede utilizes six dimensions in order to compare cultures to each other (Hofstede-Insights, n.d.). However, not all of them seem to be relevant. There was a strong indication that power distance plays a role, as all interviewees mentioned the differences in attitudes towards hierarchies as a main difference among the workforce. Hofstede defined power distance as the extent of acceptance for unequal power distribution (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017). Thereby, Sweden seems to be a relatively extreme example, as organizational hierarchies were described as very flat, which leads to a relatively small difference between employees and managers.

Therefore, Swedish managers see themselves more coequal to their employees and practice a very open and mutual way of supervision and management. Connected to that is also the fact, that relatively low importance is placed upon titles and ranks in Sweden. This becomes especially apparent in the communication between employees and their superiors. However, both of these aspect were identified to differ drastically among nations, with many cultures placing a lot more importance on the actual rank or title, as well as having a completely different attitude towards the relationship between subordinates and managers.

Surprisingly though, the other dimensions seem to not really matter that much, as no differences were mentioned that could be related to these categories. The only other
dimension that seems somewhat applicable is masculinity vs femininity, which can be defined as maximization of performance and success vs the maximization of welfare and work-life-balance (Lund et al., 2013). Here, the fact that titles and management positions are not of utmost importance in Sweden, can be seen as a sign for a lack of focus on maximizing (material) success. This, in turn, clearly is a trait of a feminine society. Many other cultures, by contrast, were described to strive a lot more towards these achievements, leading to the assumption of more masculine value orientations. This ultimately leads to a strong difference in terms of attitudes towards management positions in general.

The second theory used to guide the analysis of the collected data is Inglehart’s Theory. He uses two cultural dimensions in order to compare different cultures. These are traditional vs. secular-rational values and survival vs. self-expression values (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017). The differences in attitudes towards superiors and individual striving towards success are in-line with the difference between a traditional and secular-rational value orientation. The level of national pride and acceptance of state authority, however, did not seem to be apparent according to the gathered data. The second dimension, survival/ self-expression, is present at LTU as survival values stand for being intolerant against out-groups and a low level of trust (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017). This is indirectly connected with the manager’s answers that stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice are present issues at their department at LTU.

In order to be able to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the underlying data, additional variables will be derived from the eight cultural value orientations, as stated in the frame of reference. These are: space, time, action, communication and competition (Browaeys & Price, 2011). While there seemed to be no real importance of the variable of space, the perception and attitude towards time was seen as an area of difference. Hereby, the duration of business processes was described as fairly lengthy in Sweden, while many other countries tend to show a quicker pace here. A fairly large difference exists in the attitude towards this issue, resulting in very different levels of patience among different cultures that managers have to deal with. The variable action is concerned with the
contrast between an orientation towards being or doing (Browaeys & Price, 2011). While this category was not found to be of utmost importance, the relatively low focus on personal achievements in the Swedish value system could be seen as an indicator here.

As mentioned previously, managers have to cope with very different attitudes towards this focus on personal achievement as it varies significantly across cultures. Closely connected to that is the variable of competition, which can been seen as an important difference among employees with different cultural backgrounds. The reason here is very much in-line with the variable of action, as the focus on personal achievement is very different across cultures and it was described as an important area of difference. The last variable is communication, which is concerned with the difference between high- and low-context cultures (Browaeys & Price, 2011). Here, strong differences were found in the way employees interpret and process messages and orders. Based on their cultural background, some might act upon orders and directions word for word, even though it was not meant in this way. Thereby, this topic is strongly interconnected with the attitude towards superiors and the relationship to them.

Generally, the chosen theories could be applied only partly. After an in-depth analysis of the collected data and comparing it to the literature by using the variables of the frame of reference, the important ones are illustrated in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Important Variables for Assessing Cross Cultural Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>relationships, hierarchies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity vs Femininity</td>
<td>importance of titles, rank and individual achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival vs Self-Expression</td>
<td>stereotypes, discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>business processes, patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>importance of titles, ranks and individual achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>high vs low context, interpretation of orders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, there have been additional findings that go beyond the scope of these theories. First of all, many of the interviewees stressed the influence on organizational culture. Thereby, two individuals from the exact same cultural background may develop very distinct habits or values based on their daily working environment. While a more in-depth analysis of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this study, this might certainly be an aspect of interest when dealing with the management of a cross-cultural workforce.

Connected to that is, that often the differences in behavior and attitudes is more likely to be based on aspects other than culture such as age or educational background. Another finding worth mentioning is, that while it became obvious, that cultural differences among the workforce do influence the managers’ daily work, it seems like it is not one of their top priorities they are focusing on. While this could partly be explained by the long tradition of internationality in general and this department in particular, it should definitely be kept in mind.

6.2 Cross Cultural Challenges

According to the theories discussed earlier in chapter 2 “Literature Review” and in chapter 3 “Frame of Reference” the cultural differences between employees of a workforce lead to challenges, problems and even conflicts in some situations. In order to analyze if this is true for the LTU as company employing people with different cultural backgrounds, the data collected for the topic area of cross cultural challenges in the interviews which were presented in chapter 5 “Empirical Data” are going to be analyzed in this part of the thesis. Hereby, similarities and differences between the theories and the collected data as well as additional findings are going to be presented. The focus will be on differentiating the categories of identity-based conflicts (Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott, Dalton, 2007), language based conflicts (Chen, Geluykens, Chong, 2006; Feely & Harzing, 2003), stereotypes (Clausen, 2010; Chia & Jih, 1994) and discrimination (Ozgener, 2008).
In the frame of reference different theories have been used in order to describe cross cultural challenges based on cross cultural differences. Each of these theories had different variables which represent reasons for challenges, conflicts or problems. The most important theory used was Schreiber’s theory. According to Schreiber (1996), problems, conflicts or challenges due to cross cultural differences could arise as a result of: fear, distrust, exclusion, time shortages, power struggles, excessive ego investments, different styles and inequitable task distribution. Moreover, there can be three different types of conflicts: substantive, procedural and affective conflicts (Schreiber, 1996).

However, according to the data collected in the interviews for this study, not all of these variables seem to be relevant or present in the workforce of the department of Business Administration, Technology & Social Sciences in the division of Business Administration & Industrial Engineering at LTU. First, the important variables out of Schreiber’s theory are: power struggles and different styles. Power distribution is a source for problems according to Schreiber (1996) and this is also underlined by the managers interviewed while conducting this study.

They recognize problems arising out of power struggles due to different hierarchies in the different cultures. Hence, conflicts have taken place mostly based on the different perceptions of hierarchical systems that prevail among different cultures. Therefore, hierarchical structures are the driver for cross cultural conflicts. The different valuation of hierarchical structures also affects the relationships between people, especially when dealing with different levels within the organization. Connected to that, there are differences concerning the importance of titles and management positions which can lead to problems and conflicts.

Moreover, different styles contribute to arising problems according to the theory of Schreiber (1996) as well as the interviewees. Thereby, the employees of different cultures have different ways of approaching problems as well as supervision. These different styles become also apparent in the behavior of employees of different cultures.
Additionally, employees of a cross cultural workforce differ in their levels of demand, the expectations they have and the opinions they have.

Furthermore, like mentioned earlier, there are three types of conflicts: substantive, procedural and affective conflicts. Substantive conflicts are disagreements about task issues which include the nature and the importance of task goals and key decisions. These are procedures for task accomplishment and the right choice for action. In contrast to that, affective conflicts are described as emotionally. They arise out of interpersonal clashes which are characterized by anger, distrust, frustration and other forms of negative affect (Davis & Harveston, 2001). Whereas, substantive conflicts can be beneficial, as different perspectives and arguments are being considered and stronger positions and solutions are yielded because of a clarification of opposing viewpoints, procedural and affective conflicts disrupt a team’s progress. There exist different factors which contribute to affective conflicts including power struggles and different styles (Schreiber, 1996).

According to the interviewees, substantive conflicts take place as there are different points of view and different opinions between the employees with different cultural backgrounds. Hereby, the different views and opinions open up new perspectives and are therefore beneficial and more positive than negative in their nature. However, there is also a possibility of affective conflicts based on stereotypes related to social groups and nationalities as well as discrimination based on these stereotypes. These prejudices due to stereotypes can lead to unused potential and can have a negative impact on the working climate and the work environment and therefore be negative for the company.

Procedural conflicts, however, have not been mentioned by the interviewees. Hence, stereotypes which are widely held conceptions or images of a specific group of people are a reason for cross cultural conflicts according to Clausen (2010) as well as the interviewees. Moreover, failure in understanding demographic and other differences between workers can lead to discrimination, poor working relations and
underperformance of the workforce (Ozgener, 2008). This was also underlined by the interviewees that stereotypes can lead to discriminations which have a negative impact on the work itself and the climate between the employees. According to the theory, stereotypes and discrimination can also lead to bullying, however, the interviewees said that this is not the case at the LTU.

The above discussed variables out of Schreiber’s theory are important for the LTU according to the interviewees, however, the other variables like fear, distrust, exclusion, time shortages, excessive ego investments and inequitable task distribution, were not mentioned during the interviews. Therefore, they do not seem to be essential when analyzing the reasons for cross cultural challenges, problems or conflicts.

The next theory discussed in the frame of reference was the theory of Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott and Dalton (2007) which counts the following as important variables leading to cross cultural challenges, problems or conflicts: identity-based conflicts, value disputes, nationality, race and social groups. Here, the interviewees mentioned identity-based conflicts, value disputes, nationality and race as reasons. However, social groups were not mentioned as a reason for conflicts. Identity based conflicts were mentioned as conflicts happening because of the personality, as people are different from each other regardless of nationality, race or other factors. Additionally, value disputes were mentioned in the form of different cultures valuing things differently. One point is valuing of hierarchical structures, titles and positions in different ways. Finally, nationality and race as variables have been mentioned in the interviews indirectly while talking about stereotypes and discrimination based on culture and nationalities.

Another essential theory from Chen, Geluykens and Chong (2006) names diversity of languages and different skill sets as important variables to identify cross cultural challenges, problems and conflicts. These two variables have been mentioned in a combined way during the interviews. The employees at LTU are using a lingua franca in this case English which is spoke by all of them during meetings, conferences and
discussions. However, the employees with different cultural backgrounds have different skills in the language which can hamper the communication especially when it comes to sensitive topics. Hence, misunderstandings can happen easily due to different accents as well as different levels of vocabulary. Moreover, a lack of fluency in the Swedish language in the workforce can be a problem due to the importance of Swedish in many processes at the LTU.

Finally, the last theory discussed in the frame of reference was from Feely & Harzing (2003) who named language penetration, language sophistication and communication problems as essential variables when analyzing cross cultural conflicts, problems or challenges. According to Kikosoki (1993) a successful communication is based on the mutual and accurate understanding of a message by both parties, the sender and the receiver. However, a successful communication is not always guaranteed according to the interviewees because of the above mentioned differences in language skills, accents and vocabulary in the English language which is used between the employees of different cultures. Therefore, communication problems seem to be a variable that is present in the analyzed department at LTU.

Moreover, language penetration means the degree to which the workforce is involved in cross-lingual communication. Language sophistication stands for the complexity of foreign language skills required (Feely & Harzing, 2003). Hereby, the employees of the analyzed department at LTU are involved in cross-lingual communication as they have to speak English most of their time during work although it is for most of the employees not their native language. Therefore, language penetration plays an essential role here. Furthermore, Language sophistication is of same importance as especially for sensitive topics the foreign language skills required can be very complex. Moreover, the managers at LTU would like their employees to speak Swedish as well for the future as the language spoken most at the LTU in terms of work is Swedish.

Above similarities and differences between the theories discussed in the literature review as well as the frame of reference and the data collected in the interviews are
presented. However, there are also additional findings that have not been covered by the theories mentioned above. In general the occurrence of cross cultural conflicts is very low. The effects of cultural differences seem to be more positive than negative and therefore do not often lead to conflicts, problems or challenges. Moreover, Swedish seems to play an important role next to English when working at the LTU and is therefore going to be demanded by the employees in the future. It is not just the national culture that has an impact on the working environment but also the organizational culture plays an essential role.

6.3 Cross Cultural Management

The theories presented earlier in chapter 2 "Literature Review" and in chapter 3 "Frame of Reference" discussed how cultural differences between employees of a workforce lead to challenges, problems and even conflicts in some situations. These then have to be dealt with, sorted out or prevented by managers. This is why cross cultural management is applied by the management team in order to encounter these cross cultural challenges. Hence, this section of the thesis focuses on analyzing if the theories presented earlier in the literature review and the frame of reference which are related to cross cultural management and the variables identified are actually part of the managers’ daily life at work at LTU in the department of Business Administration, Technology and Social Sciences. Thereby, the similarities and differences between the theory and the collected data are going to be pointed out as well as additional findings.

Therefore, the different theories used in the frame of reference related to cross cultural management are going to be discussed and compared to the data collected in the interviews step by step. Hence, the first theory mentioned in the frame of reference is the theory of Budin & Wafa (2015), which names adaptation to cultures and understanding cultures as important variables when encountering cross cultural challenges. Both of these variables have been mentioned or named in the interviews as well. Whereas understanding cultures was directly listed as a key factor to guarantee a positive and harmonious working climate and work environment, the other variable
which is adaptation to cultures was just indirectly named. Here, the managers pointed out that a common culture should be established between the employees of different cultures which indicates that employees have to adapt to some degree to other cultures. Understanding cultures involves putting yourself into other people as well as being aware of different cultures which involves understanding different behavior, opinions, perspectives and expectations.

The second theory used in the frame of reference is from Katz (1995) who lists human skills as an essential variable for encountering cross cultural challenges. Hereby, especially empathy plays an important role. However, also language skills, rhetorical skills, body language, awareness of other cultures and sensitivity to cultural differences and potential problems connected to that are important key skills managers should have in order to be able to effectively manage a cross cultural workforce.

This is followed by the theory of Algahtani (2014) whose theory relies on good communication being a key indicator for successfully encountering cross cultural challenges. This variable was also mentioned by all of the interviewees as being essential for solving, preventing and sorting out problems and conflicts. Hereby, on the communication between the employees of the workforce as well as between the employees and the managers should be emphasized. They claimed that talking to each other is the key. This does also involve listening to each other. The reason for that is that disagreements usually happen due to misunderstandings.

Following, Schreiber’s Theory was the most essential one for this topic area and therefore the most variables used in the third part of the frame of reference were out of his theory. According to Schreiber (1996), the management theory is the most important one which is connected to seven variables supporting to encounter cross cultural challenges. These variables are: dissolve barriers, create unity, common goals, collective decision making, lessen differences, cooperative structures and avoiding offenses. First, dissolving barriers is applied at the LTU as they have the meet and greet program which helps employees from different cultures to get to know each other.
privately and help them build up social networks. Moreover, having lunch, coffee breaks together and spending time outside the university helps dissolving potential barriers as the employees can talk to each other about other issues than work related ones.

Furthermore, creating unity, common goals and lessen differences come together when relying on the interviews as the interviewees said that they try to create a common culture in the department they work in and therefore, the employees get a more similar organizational culture. Hence, they work together as a united in form of a team in order to achieve common goals. The variables collective decision making and cooperative structures are given at the department in the LTU as the hierarchical structures are really flat, like is common in Sweden, and therefore the employees work on the same level together as a team which opens the possibilities for collective decision making. Hence, the structures advocate cooperative structures preferred to competitive structures. Finally, avoiding offenses was not directly mentioned by the managers, however, it was indirectly mentioned, as they strive for working well together. Every employee should feel good and nobody should be frozen out or treated in a bad way.

The next theory that was presented in the frame of reference is from Casares. According to Casares (1993), the three main variables are respect, empathy and managers understanding themselves. Respect comes together with treating each other in a good way like mentioned in the previous paragraph. Moreover, empathy was mentioned by the managers in form of understanding each other’s cultures. This does also include being aware of, accepting and understanding different opinions, behaviors, expectations and perspectives. However, the last variables did not come up during the three interviews. It was just pointed out, that being more sensitive and aware respective of stereotypes managers have on their own which they are not aware of would be an aim for the future.

Ozgener’s theory is concerned with diversity management including two important variables in order to encounter cross cultural challenges. These are: valuing people as individuals and harnessing differences (Ozgener, 2008). Hereby, the first variable was
mentioned indirectly as everybody should be treated well and therefore it means people are valued in the department at the LTU. In contrast to that, the second variable was presented as positive effects of these cultural differences which the department benefits from. These include opening up new perspectives, new points of view and rethinking own attitudes. Hence, new opportunities and potentials are identified.

According to Kikosoki (1993), the main variables are body language including mimics and gestures and the ivey model. Hereby, an effective communication is assured as it takes into account the effective communication with an individual as well as the cultural background of this individual by which he or she was influenced (Kikosoki, 1993). Therefore, the model plays an essential role also according to the interviewees, as communication is an important factor like mentioned earlier in this chapter. Moreover, the awareness of different cultural backgrounds of the employees is apparent at the department at LTU.

Finally, the last theory used in the frame of reference was McGregor's theory X and Y. These are two important variables in analyzing management styles according to Lauter, Kopelman & Prottas (2015). As theory X has a more negative view of the workforce compared to theory X, for the managers of LTU theory X is not applied at all. However, theory Y seems to be present as the managers have a positive view of their employees and think they contribute to the work intellectually as well as enjoy the work as they work well together in a team. Furthermore, the different cultural backgrounds provide new and different inputs and challenge existing beliefs, which was found to contribute in a positive way.

6.4 Comparison of Manager's Views

In this section, the answers of each interviewee will be summarized and compared. This will allow for an analysis focusing on overall patterns and enable a more in-depth understanding of the data. Furthermore, it will make the underlying analysis more
transparent and potentially easier to follow. The respective answers will be organized with regards to the three main topics: cross cultural differences, cross cultural challenges and cross cultural management. Additionally each question will be presented in a distinct table. The follow-up questions connected to each question will be presented in the same table. Hereby, some answers of many smaller follow-up questions were summed up in one, broader question in order to standardize the format.

6.4.1 Cross Cultural Differences

Hereby, the first question of topic one is going to be presented first in Table 13 below. Afterwards, the answers are going to be discussed under the table. Following, by a presentation and discussion of the other questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| How does culture/ do cultural differences influence your daily work? | - nothing to think about on a daily basis  
- due to the long tradition of working in an international workforce | - influence to some extent, as the PhD students are a very multicultural workforce  
- differences in the relationship towards your supervisor  
- not something you think about actively in every decision you make | - students from many different cultures and generations  
- differences in how you approach problems  
- have to treat them differently. |
| What are negative influences? | - not really any negative influences  
- however, language a barrier  
- mostly very positive | - there can be misunderstandings due to differences in expectations  
- but it might also be due to organizational culture | - being not as fluent in English  
- especially when having really difficult talks with people and neither one is a native speaker  
- how you view heirarchy and if it’s possible to ask your boss a certain question  
- have to set some common understanding as Swedish employers are kind of extreme in an international perspective  
- orders might be meant to be interpreted not to follow word by word |
| What are positive influences? | - always get new points of view  
- you’re constantly challenged  
- but from the management’s point of view it might create more challenges than possibilities | - a million things  
- having to force yourself to question your own attitudes  
- when you write something in English than you realize this is maybe more complex than you first thought  
- really fun getting to know people from anywhere  
- think it’s a really good thing. |
Table 13 illustrates the answers to the first question and the two follow up questions. Here, the interviewees have slightly different opinions. While all acknowledge that there is some sort of influence, both interviewee one and two point towards the fact, that it is nothing that they are actively thinking about. In terms of negative influences, while the answers differ quite a bit, both language skills and the relationships towards superiors can be identified as an overall trend. Interestingly though, interviewee one had a far more optimistic point of view compared to the other two managers. With regards to positive aspects of a cross cultural workforce, an overall trend can be seen in being constantly challenged in terms of your views and attitudes and getting new challenges. However, interviewee two had a far more negative view on the issue from the management’s point of view.

Table 14: Differences Due to Cultural Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the main differences between employees with different cultural backgrounds?</td>
<td>- differences in how you look at management</td>
<td>- definitely hierarchies in Sweden and treat our boss as a friend and colleague</td>
<td>- some really want and need guidance and structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- how important titles and management positions are t</td>
<td>- very flat organizations in Sweden</td>
<td>- others don’t want any meetings at all and are really self-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- time perspective can be different as well in terms of the duration of business processes</td>
<td>treat our boss as a friend and colleague</td>
<td>prepped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- we don’t use the titles</td>
<td>- trying to give freedom and all opportunities without having</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- all this can be very different in many other cultures</td>
<td>anarchy or leaving people without the desired structure is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do these differences become apparent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>really though</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- think it’s partly a conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 above shows the answers to the second question and the respective follow-up question. Here, all three interviewees identified the attitudes towards management behavior and hierarchies in general as a main difference among culturally diverse
employees. Another trend mentioned by interviewee one and two can be seen in the
different perceptions and attitudes towards titles. When including the follow-up question,
both interviewee one and three found differences in the perception of time as another
main issue. Interestingly, the managers mentioned nearly identical aspects making the
answers a lot more similar to each other compared to the first question.

Table 15: Differences with the Most Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which cultural differences have the most impact on your work?</td>
<td>- not that much influence whatsoever</td>
<td>- relationships and how you relate to other people that are in another position in the hierarchy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Swedish skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>influence the work as some things have to be done in Swedish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3, which is illustrated in Table 15 above, was concerned with the impact of the
identified cultural differences on the managers’ work. Here, there is a clear discrepancy
between the interviewee’s opinions. While interviewee one doubted a real influence in
general, interviewee two identified the different perceptions of relationships with regards
to hierarchy as the main issue. A potential explanation for this could be, that interviewee
one (the dean of the college of business) is dealing with a lot of organizational and
planning-intense issues, while interviewee two (the head of PhD students in the
management team) is dealing with more person-based issues. Due to his extensive
answers to question 2 we did not ask this question in the third interview.

6.4.2 Cross Cultural Challenges

In the fourth question, the focus was the conflicts arising from previously identified
cultural differences. The respective answers are presented in Table 16 below.
Interestingly, all three managers stated, that they did not really encounter any culture-
based conflicts themselves. However, interviewee two pointed towards colleagues in an
identical position within the university that had to deal with conflicts caused by different
attitudes towards hierarchies. Interviewee three hinted towards this cause as well, even though in a more subtle way. Interviewee one, by contrast, stated, that it is often not clear whether a conflict is culture-based or simply due to personal differences or opinions.

Table 16: Conflicts Due to Cultural Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 4</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which kind of conflicts do you usually have to deal with due to these cultural differences?</td>
<td>- no conflicts related to culture in the marketing department</td>
<td>- didn’t encounter any myself</td>
<td>- have people from many backgrounds and many nations but don’t see any real conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- often not clear whether conflicts are caused by culture</td>
<td>- but colleagues in the same position had to deal with some due to different attitudes towards hierarchies</td>
<td>- different perspectives but we’re all partly aware of potential misunderstandings, so really try to figure out each others’ positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- but as a manager you could think it’s really an open environment and you could say anything, but employees might have another view</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next question was only asked in the first interview, since the interviewee was very unclear about causes for conflicts among employees. Her answers, which are illustrated in Table 17 below, suggested that there are very few conflicts in general, but cultural differences play a very subordinate role in particular. This again, could be connected to the manager’s unique position as dean of the college of business.

Table 17: Reasons for Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 5</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the most common reasons for conflicts within the workforce?</td>
<td>- very few conflicts between people in general</td>
<td>- but the ones we have probably not due to cultural differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18 below presents question six, including four follow up questions, which were again concerned with the culture-based causes for conflicts among employees. Again the answers showed quite some variety, with interviewee one denying the fact that cultural differences could potentially lead to conflicts. However, she did acknowledge that a general understanding for differences in behavior and attitudes due to cultural diversity has to be in place in order to prevent them. Interviewee three, by contrast, strongly suggested that cultural differences can lead to conflicts. Furthermore, interviewees two and three confirmed that stereotypes and maybe even a subtle form of discrimination exist. They also pointed towards the potential negative consequences. Interviewee one's answers, again, provided a strong contrast, as she denied the existence of stereotypes at LTU. However, all three managers confirmed, that misinterpretations due to the use of a lingua franca, respectively a foreign language in general, can lead to problems and conflicts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 6</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Do cultural differences provide the ground for conflicts among the workforce? | - not really  
- as long as there is understanding for differences behavior, attitudes and views due to different backgrounds | - definitely  
- if you have a different views of what you’re supposed to do and the role and what it involves |                                                                                  |
| Stereotypes?                                  | - less at the university due to the international setting                      | - for sure  
- basic human behavior to put people into boxes  
- but don’t think they have negative effect, since we value all the different backgrounds | - of course  
- can have negative influences in terms of failing to see potential and failing to see obstacles |
| Discrimination?                               |                                                                                  | - maybe not so much active discrimination  
- but the view you have of different people and groups  
- no active discrimination, since we’re so used to this mix | - I think so  
- part of my job to find out and try to get rid of those kind of things  
- but have my stereotypes of course  
- really not aware of those, so there’s a potential discrimination  
- but maybe not an open one |
| Bullying?                                      |                                                                                  |                                                                                  | - could be irritations between people and there could be conflict  
- as far as I know, don’t have real bullying, but have conflicts |
| Misinterpretation due to foreign language use?  | - can be the case  
- therefore always have to be more careful                                          | - different accents and different skill levels  
- but don’t think the language plays a huge role                                      | - Yeah  
- interpret words differently, use a different body language  
- doing this interview right now, I’m struggling to find the right words  
- and of course it’s a similar problems with employees |
6.4.3 Cross Cultural Management

The seventh question, which is illustrated in Table 19 below, then showed some very clear patterns again. When asked for their way of dealing with culture-based conflicts, all three managers stressed the importance of communication and understanding the other party and their respective circumstances. Interviewee three added, that the input of outside experts can be helpful in order to set up a plan of how to deal with an issue.

Table 19: Dealing with Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 7</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you deal with these conflicts?</td>
<td>- people involved usually able to solve conflicts themselves</td>
<td>- like in most conflicts, must try to understand the other side</td>
<td>- would talk to managers in the subject and try to figure out what's going on, because with them I could be on the employer side and we could in confidentiality discuss employees in all regards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- but there is a system that applies when someone feels left out</td>
<td>- when it comes to a cultural based issue, maybe might be even harder to understand the other person, because I have my perspective and frame of reference and I might have to place myself really in the other person</td>
<td>- if necessary would involve the HR department and have them as an expert input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- important that everyone feels welcome and treated well</td>
<td>- so needs more work I think</td>
<td>- could have another experts at my disposal and could figure out what's the best way to proceed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- in most cases the issue can be solved by talking to each other as in most cases the root cause is a misunderstanding</td>
<td>- key is to understand where that person comes from and what causes this behavior or whatever it is conflict is about</td>
<td>- sometimes it could be to have some sort of group development program if you have people on the different sides or it could be to work with individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- communication is vital</td>
<td>- really depends on the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- key to ask a lot of questions and finding out, if there could be a third way around</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20 shows the answers to two specific questions used in interview one and two. Hereby, interviewee one added to the aspects mentioned in the previous section that making the employees feel welcome and spending time outside of work together can contribute to solving and even avoiding potential conflicts. Due to time limitations, this questions was not used in the interviews two and three. To clarify interviewee three’s answer to the way he solves conflicts, the second question was used. Thereby, he stated, that there are both proactive and reactive ways of dealing with conflicts among employees.

Table 20: Maintaining a Productive Working Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 8</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you maintain a productive working climate within your workforce of culturally diverse employees?</td>
<td>- important to talk to each other and have fun outside of work like having lunch together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you get involved due to your own initiative or based on your employees’ request?</td>
<td></td>
<td>- helps solving or avoiding many conflicts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- both ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- when see there is a problem and hear about it from different sources, try to be proactive and take the initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- might call to formal meetings and might involve the head of the subject and set up a process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ninth question presented in Table 21 below asked for cross-cultural training. Here, it became obvious that there is no specific cross-cultural training offered at LTU. Furthermore, the managers themselves stated, that they do not really have any formal culture-oriented training, while interviewee three pointed out, that he has some sort of education in closely related subjects. This education was thereby seen as helpful in dealing with culture-based issues and dealing with cross-culture in general.

Table 21: Cross Cultural Management Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 9</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you have any cross cultural management training?</strong></td>
<td>&quot;there is a course called meet and greet that helps to integrate people into the working environment and make friends&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;No&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;have a lot of training in languages&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;have some introductory course for newly employed people, but that’s general for everybody so nothing special for when you come from another culture&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I’ve been studying a little of rhetorics and body language and teaching and learning is related to this so a lot of closely related areas, where I have formal training or education&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did/does it help you in dealing with cross-cultural conflicts?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The last question illustrated in Table 22 below, showed very different answers among the three managers. While interviewee one saw Swedish fluency as a main issue to work on, interviewee two pointed towards missing culture-related training for managers and supervisors. This again could be explained by the different tasks and focus areas of the two managers. Interviewee three’s answer was focused on the skills he personally wanted to improve in order to be able to better deal with a cross-cultural workforce. The fact that he is relatively new in his management position could be an influence here.
Table 22: How to Improve Cross Cultural Management in the Future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 10</th>
<th>Interviewee #1</th>
<th>Interviewee #2</th>
<th>Interviewee #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Is there anything you would like to improve/apply for the future? | - Swedish is an issue  
- seems unnecessary to some to learn a language that is spoken by just 9 million people | - for the management team to have some sort of training for understanding in the communication  
- probably helps no matter what conflict you have  
- sort of a personal trait if you’re good or not at empathy and placing yourself in another person’s position, but you can also train it and you should | - myself, i want to be able to more challenge myself and train the sharpness in my vision to learn where the potential problem areas are  
- be much more sensitive |

6.5 Summary of the Data Analysis

This chapter illustrates in different tables the answers of the different interviewees to each question in order to compare them to each other. Moreover, the answers in general have been compared to the theories used earlier in the Frame of Reference. This is why this chapter is was structured according to the Frame of Reference.
7. Conclusion

The data collection and analysis according to the frame of reference is now going to be followed by a presentation of findings and conclusions in this final chapter of the thesis. Hereby, the research questions are going to be answered as well as the research purpose. Additionally, implications for managers, theory and future research are going to be provided. Finally, the limitations of the study will be presented in the end.

7.1 Conclusions for the Research Purpose

This section will provide answers for the three research questions, followed by conclusions with regards to the overall purpose of the study. These will be the base on which further implications will be built upon. Therefore, the three research questions will be answered separately below. Hence, the research questions are presented first, before discussing the findings.

7.1.1 Cross Cultural Differences

This first part focuses on answering the first research question by using the findings of the collected data. The first research question is: What kind of differences exist between employees with different cultural backgrounds at LTU (Luleå Tekniska Universitet) in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences? The findings are going to be presented and discussed in the following. Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (Hofstede Insight nd.) and Inglehart’s Theory (Pergelova & Angulo-Reiz, 2017) acted as the main variables in assessing cultural values that guided the collection and analysis of data. They were complemented by the eight cultural value orientations (Browaeys & Price, 2011).

The analysis of the previously collected data confirmed these variables in assessing cultural differences at LTU, however not all of them were considered equally important. The data suggests that differing attitudes towards hierarchies and relationships in general might be the most prominent factor when looking at a cross cultural workforce.
This, in turn, is largely influenced by an organization’s structure. In case of LTU, the hierarchy is very flat, this is typically found throughout Sweden. Therefore, the cultural dimension of power distance (Hofstede Insight nd.) was found to be of vital importance. Closely connected to the perception of relationships is also the attitude towards formal titles, ranks and the striving for personal achievement in general, which the second cultural dimension is presented by Hofstede that was confirmed in its importance for assessing cross cultural differences at LTU. In connection to that the communication between employees and supervisors or managers differs between different cultures depending on their power distance. While Sweden is largely feminine-oriented making titles and ranks rather unimportant, the data suggested vast differences across cultures in that regard.

Concerning Inglehart’s theory, just the second dimension seems to play a role at the analyzed department at LTU which is survival values vs. self-expression values. Hereby, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination which can be found at the LTU according to the interviewees are an indirect indicator for low trust levels and intolerance to out-groups which are in this case people or employees from different cultures. The analysis of the data collected in the interviews also showed that just three out of the five variables of the cultural value orientations presented in the frame of reference are essential.

First, time focus plays an important role as the duration of business processes differs between countries of different cultures and therefore, the patience of employees is different depending on their cultural backgrounds. Another important variable is competition. Here, the focus on personal achievement is different between employees with different cultural backgrounds. Finally, the communication differs between different cultures as there are high- and low-context cultures which influences the way employees interpret or process messages or order from their managers or colleges. This variable is also connected to Hofstede’s power distance dimension.
In addition to the theories analyzed in this study, the authors could find additional findings that represent differences between the employees. First, the organizational culture plays also an important role as it leads to distinct habits based on the daily work environment. Moreover, age and educational differences can represent a bigger issue than cultural differences. Finally, the managers do not seem to focus on cross cultural management at the LTU which is related to their long tradition of being an international workforce in the analyzed department. Generally, it has to be noted that while all of the differences have played a role and influenced the management of the workforce, hierarchies and relationships were found to have by far the most impact.

7.1.2 Cross Cultural Challenges

The first part is followed by the answers of the second research question by using the findings of the collected data. Hereby, the second research question is: What are the difficulties in cross cultural management at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences? The findings are going to be presented and discussed in the following. Related to this topic four different theories have been used in the frame of reference in order to collect data. These four theories have been from Schreiber, Chrobot-Mason, Chen and Feely like presented in the frame of reference. The analysis of the previously collected data confirmed the variables out of these four theories in assessing cultural challenges at LTU, however not all of them were considered equally important.

Starting with the first theory used in the frame of reference which was Schreiber’s theory, just four variables play an essential role in daily work life at the analyzed department at LTU. First, power struggles are present as the different cultures value hierarchies, titles and positions different which also affects the relationships and the communication with the managers or employees in higher positions. This is followed by the variable different style which is connected to employees having different ways of approaching problems. Moreover, there are also differences recognizable concerning behavior, levels of demand, expectations and opinions of employees with different
cultural backgrounds. In addition to this, substantive conflicts are present in the analyzed department at the LTU, however they seem to be beneficial. The reason is that the different points of view and opinions open up new perspectives which can have a positive impact. In contrast to that, affective conflicts are present as well in form of stereotypes and prejudice which lead to discrimination. These have a rather negative impact on the working climate and the work environment.

The second theory used in the frame of reference was from Chrobot-Mason. Out of his theory, four variables are pointed out to be important by the managers that were interviewed. First, identity-based conflicts and problems arise out of the fact that people are different in their nature not just related to their cultural backgrounds. Moreover, value disputes have been mentioned by the interviewees concerning the different valuing of hierarchies, titles and positions of employees with different cultural backgrounds. Finally, the variables nationality and race are also important factors as stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice related to the cultural background of employees seems to be present at the analyzed department at LTU.

Furthermore, the theory of Chen mentioned in the frame of reference earlier in the thesis includes two variables which both become apparent to be important. First, the diversity of languages at LTU is given, as the employees are multicultural and therefore have different mother tongues which obliges them to use a lingua franca in order to be able to communicate with each other. At the LTU English is used in order to maintain a successful communication. However, Swedish seems to be important as well and is therefore going to be demanded by the employees coming from abroad in the future. The second variable is connected to the first one as it concerns different skill sets. According to the interviewees, the cross cultural workforce has different skills in English which hampers the communication. This is due to different accents, levels of English, different vocabulary skills and the lack of fluency. Hence, this becomes especially apparent when discussing sensitive topics.
The last theory used in the frame of reference related to the topic of cross cultural challenges is Feely's theory. Like in the theory before, all the variables were pointed out to be essential at the department at LTU. First, communication problems seem to be present due to different language skills, accents and vocabulary skills. Also different use of body language, mimics and gestures represent a problem when employees with different cultural backgrounds communicate with each other. Following, language penetration as well as language sophistication play an essential role. Language penetration is present as the workforce is cross-lingual due to different cultural backgrounds which forces them to speak English which represents their lingua franca. Moreover, language sophistication is concerned with requiring complex language skills which is necessary at the department at LTU due to sensitive topics that have to be discussed in the lingua franca which is not the mother tongue for most of the employees. In addition, there are situation which force Swedish skills as well, as some processes and work at the LTU can just be done in Swedish.

In addition to the theories analyzed in this study, the authors could find additional findings that represent differences between the employees that have not been included in the frame of reference. First, the general occurrence of conflicts based on cultural differences is low at the analyzed department at LTU. The reason is that there are more positive than negative effects connected to cross cultural differences. Furthermore, Swedish seems to play an essential role even though English is used as lingua franca as there are tasks connected to the daily work at the LTU which can just be accomplished in Swedish. Therefore, the managers would like the employees to learn Swedish for the future. Finally, like already mentioned in the first section of this chapter, the organizational culture plays also an important role not just the national culture as it is also leading to different behaviors and habits. In general, the most challenges, problems and conflicts are due to power struggles as well as the diversity of languages, different language skills and communication problems which can lead to misunderstandings.
7.1.3 Cross Cultural Management

Finally, the answers of the third research question by using the findings of the collected data are going to be presented. The third research question is: How does the management encounter cross cultural challenges at LTU in the department of business administrations, Technology and Social Sciences? The findings are going to be presented and discussed in the following. Related to this topic eight different theories have been used in the frame of reference in order to collect data. These four theories have been from Budin, Katz, Algahtani, Schreiber, Casares, Ozgener, Kikosoki and McGregor like presented in the frame of reference. The analysis of the previously collected data confirmed the variables out of these eight theories in assessing cross cultural management at LTU, however not all of them were considered equally important.

Starting with the first theory used in the frame of reference which was Budin’s theory, both variables play a role in daily work life at the analyzed department at LTU. First, adaptation to cultures is present as a common culture is trying to be established which forces every employee to adapt to some degree to the other cultures. Following, understanding cultures is necessary in order to maintain a harmonious working climate and work environment. This also includes putting yourself into other people and understanding the differences in behavior, opinions, perspectives and expectations due to different cultural backgrounds.

Budin’s theory was followed by Katz’s theory in the frame of reference. Here, human skills play an essential role including showing empathy towards employees of different cultures. Skills in languages, rhetoric, body language and the awareness of other cultures come together with it. Moreover, managers have to be sensitive to cultural differences in order to recognize potential problems earlier. Furthermore, another important theory is from Algahtani which presents good communication as an essential variable. Hence, talking to each other is the key in order to avoid misunderstandings which provide a main ground for cross cultural conflicts, challenges and problems. Good communication however, is not just about talking but also includes listening.
Schreiber's theory plays an important role for this topic of cross cultural management as well as for the previous one of cross cultural challenges. All the variables presented in the frame of references came also up during the interviews. These variables belong to the team management theory. First, dissolving barriers is essential, therefore LTU provides a meet and greet program to give the employees with different cultural backgrounds the opportunity to build social networks. Moreover, having coffee and lunch breaks together gives a ground for getting to know each other and having communications about topics which are not work related. Furthermore, creating unity plays an important role. This variable, however, comes along in combination with two other variables which are: common goals and lessen difference. As LTU tries to create a common culture, the differences between the employees with different cultural backgrounds are lessened. Moreover, the employees work together as a team in order to achieve the common goals set.

In addition to these above mentioned variables, collective decision making and cooperative structures are also an essential part of the daily work life at LTU. These two variables are connected to each other as they come along with flat hierarchical systems and structures which provide the ground for all employees being able to work together on the same level. The last variable of Schreiber is avoiding offenses which is given by the LTU striving for their workforce to work well together. Moreover, every employee should feel well and nobody should be frozen out or treated in a bad way.

Casares’s theory is also essential as the variable respect is important in order to provide a good working climate by treating each other in a good way. Moreover, empathy plays an important role as well. Thereby, understanding other cultures is essential. Hence, the employees as well as the managers have to be aware, accept and understand the different opinions, behaviors, expectations and perspectives due to different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the two variables of Ozgener’s theory are also part of LTU’s daily work life. Valuing people as individuals is given as the employees treat each other well and the differences due to cultural backgrounds are harnessed as there are more positive effects resulting out of it like opening up new perspectives.
Another main role plays Kikosoki’s theory including the two variables body language and the Ivey model. Body language is essential in order to assure an effective communication by supporting the verbal language through mimics and gestures. The Ivey model is presented by the awareness of the different cultural backgrounds in the workforce at LTU. Finally, the last theory is McGregor’s. Hereby, just theory Y is applied at LTU as the management team has a positive view of their cross cultural workforce. The reason is that especially the cultural differences open up new perspectives which lead to new inputs and challenge the existing believes. In general, the most essential variables of the above mentioned are human skills, good communication, creating unity, respect, empathy, body language as well as harnessing differences. Hence, using this variables supports the cross cultural management in sorting out and avoiding cross cultural challenges, problems and conflicts.

7.1.4 Main Conclusions
Generally speaking the management team at LTU is not necessarily focusing on cross cultural differences as the impact is less negative than expected. In reality there are far more positive than negative impacts recognizable. However, conflicts still happen even though not that often. The conflicts that arise out of cross cultural differences, however, do not really seem to have bad consequences at LTU. Therefore, these conflicts can be fixed relatively easy by applying the most important variables connected to encountering cross cultural challenges in the frame of reference. These are, as mentioned in the previous section: human skills, good communication, creating unity, respect, empathy, body language as well as harnessing differences. Especially the personal attitude as well as the human skills of managers and employees play an essential role.

7.2 Theoretical Implications
This study was descriptive and explanatory and there has already been a lot of research done in this field. Hence, the purpose was to extend the literature on how to manage a cross cultural workforce and provide a better understanding of the issue. Thereby, the
three research questions were answered according to the frame of reference which contained all the important theories related to the stated research questions in chapter 1 of the thesis. The findings of this study confirmed the theory of the frame of references and underlying theories including the different variables partly. However, they were also partly opposed.

The findings of the three conducted interviews confirmed that the influence of the organizational culture can be greater than the influence of the national culture. Moreover, the main key in order to avoid or solve conflicts, problems and challenges due to cross cultural differences is communication. The reason is, that misunderstandings provide the ground for many conflicts. However, it has to be mentioned that all the conflicts seem to be manageable in a fairly easy way by applying the variables presented in the conclusion earlier in this chapter. The whole study looked at the topic of how to manage a cross cultural workforce with regards to an academic organization which was LTU, a university in Luleå, Sweden, where this case study has been conducted.

7.3 Managerial Implications

From the findings of this research, advice and recommendations can be derived for managers who intend to manage a cross cultural workforce. First, the managers should consider cross cultural education or trainings in closely connected areas and subjects as this seems to be helpful in managing a cross cultural workforce and dealing with cultural diversity. Moreover, greater emphasis should be put on communication as this is the key to avoid or sort out problems, conflicts and challenges based on cross cultural differences. Furthermore, it is essential to have good human skills, especially with regards to empathy and being sensitive. This will also help to become aware of potential conflicts or misunderstandings earlier by trying to understand the other side and put yourself into the other person’s position.

Additionally, the managers should assure that all the employees as well as the managers themselves act proactively by making everyone feel welcome and treating
everyone well. Nobody should be left out or treated in a bad way. By doing so, many conflicts can be dealt with in an early stage or avoided altogether. Connected to this is, that one of the aspects that were found to contribute to a successful cross-cultural environment is a positive attitude towards cultural differences. Valuing the different backgrounds and seeing them as opportunities rather than obstacles can impact the workforce’s performance in a positive way and reduce cross-cultural clashes.

7.4 Implications for Future Research

In addition to this research further research within the area could be conducted. Thereby, different aspects seem to be worth focusing on. In this section factors are described that were not within the scope of this research, however, could be of interest in order to gain a deeper understanding of how to manage a cross cultural workforce. Firstly, during the data collection and analysis of this thesis, the topic of organizational culture became apparent. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate the impact of organizational culture in comparison to national culture. Furthermore, its impact on employee behavior in general could be examined.

Hereby, its impact might be even bigger than the effect of national cultures, which would make it an important factor to consider when dealing with a cross cultural workforce or for managers of any kind of workforce in general. Research in this topic could therefore be beneficial also in order to potentially re-evaluate the importance of cross cultural management and cultural training. Moreover, it has to be taken into account that this study was conducted within an academic organization, which might be of a different nation compared with a non-academic organization or corporation. Therefore, a similar study could be conducted examining a non-academic company to find out if special setting had an influence on the findings. Given the outcomes, further conclusion could be drawn and new findings would arise from them, which could be beneficial for both practioners as well as in a theoretical setting.
7.5 Limitations of the Research

Just like every other study, this thesis is subject to a number of limitations that have to be taken into consideration. Due to limited resources and a tight time plan, the study focused exclusively on one division within one department within the Luleå Tekniska University. Even though it can be seen as a good representation of a cross-cultural workforce, it might be interpreted as a restraint in terms of the sample selection. Connected to that is, that all three managers happened to be Swedish, which could also be perceived as a restraint.

Due to the fact that the study relied on qualitative data, the findings might be influenced by the authors of the thesis, as both collection and analysis were both influenced by their interpretation. Therefore, other researchers might have interpreted certain aspects differently resulting in different findings. Furthermore, the generalizability of the study is restricted due to use of a case study with the research strategy. Additionally, the use of English when conducting the interviews can interpreted as a limitation, as neither of the participants was a native speaker. Thus, it might have led to confusion, misunderstandings or a restricted ability of expressing one’s thoughts correctly.
References

Articles


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Appendix

Interview Guide

The interview follows a semi-structured approach. Therefore, the three main topics are set, but the order and number of questions is flexible. Furthermore, there is room for individualized follow-up questions to clarify or dig deeper. The planned time frame is 20-30 minutes.

Introductory Question
Could you please introduce yourself?

First Topic: Cross Cultural Differences

1. How does culture/do cultural differences influence your daily work?
   1. What are negative influences?
   2. What are positive influences?
   3. Which parts of your daily work are influenced the most?
2. What are the main differences between employees with different cultural backgrounds?
   How do these differences become apparent?
3. Which cultural differences have the most impact on your work?

Second Topic: Cross Cultural Challenges/Conflicts

3. Which kind of conflicts do you usually have to deal with due to these cultural differences?
4. What are the most common reasons for conflicts within the workforce?
5. Do cultural differences provide the ground for conflicts among the workforce?
1. Stereotypes? Which aspects of culture/behavior are usually involved?
2. Discrimination? Which aspects of culture/behavior are usually involved?
3. Bullying? Which aspects of culture/behavior are usually involved?
4. Misinterpretation due to foreign language use?

Third Topic: Cross Cultural Management

6. How do you deal with these conflicts?
7. How do you maintain a productive working climate within your workforce of culturally diverse employees?
   1. How do you decide when to get involved in a conflict?
   2. Do you get involved due to your own initiative or based on your employees’ request?
8. Do you have any cross cultural management training?
   How did/does it help you in dealing with cross-cultural conflicts?
9. Is there anything you would like to improve/apply for the future?