Influence of National culture on internal communication process. A study on universities in Bangladesh & Sweden

Abdullah Al Mamun Khan 890311-1352 eea16akn@student.hig.se
Javed Ahmed 811016-T554 eea15zad@student.hig.se

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Supervisor: Ehsanul Huda Chowdhury
Examiner: Maria Fregidou-Malama
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Course: Thesis for Master Degree in Business Administration
Authors: Abdullah Al Mamun Khan and Javed Ahmed
Supervisor: Dr. Ehsanul Huda Chowdhury
Examiner: Dr. Maria Fregidou-Malama
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Aim: The aim of this study was to investigate how national culture influence internal communication of university.

Methodology: A qualitative approach was chosen to conduct this research. Semi structured interview were taken. Interviews were taken by face to face, skype and phone call. Ethical approach was considered while interpreting the data.

Findings: Our study showed that high power distance has negative impact on internal communication. We found that high power distance creates block between supervisors and subordinates to share information. Thus it creates barriers for effective communication flow and hinders organizations development. Our study also found that power distance is available in both countries but the degree of power distance is varied from one to another. In our study we also found that Individualism and collectivism has effect on internal communication. Our study showed that Individualistic or collectivistic decision making process of university effect internal communication of university in both countries. Previous study suggests that high power distance country tends to be a collectivistic country. Though the result is not always true. However, we found that true in our study.

Contribution: The study adopts employee centric approach to explore the effects of culture on internal communication. This is an important contribution to previous researches that focused on internal communication from different perspectives, inclusion of cultural differences on internal communication has added value to the research field. Moreover, this paper contributes insights in cultural differences as well as employee
perspective and by doing so it suggests theorist and practitioners that how internal communication can relate to employee’s engagement in different cultural perspectives.

**Limitations:** The major limitation of this study was that this study only focused on Hofstede’s power distance and individualism as cultural dimensions. Other dimensions were not focused. Another limitation of this study was the sample size. The sample size is too small to represent the whole population in regards to university perspective.

**Suggestions for further research:** Additional qualitative or quantitative methods can be required to explore the findings in different aspects. The study focuses on the educational institute. The findings may vary in accordance with the different industry and sectors. The study provides the guidelines regarding the impact of cultural differences on internal communication. Future research could consider other important factors that may have profound impact on internal communication in different settings.

**Keywords:** National culture, Internal communication, Power distance, Individualism, Cultural influence on communication, Hofstede’s cultural dimension
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1. Introduction:

This chapter includes seven parts and will present in the following order: research background, motivation of study, problem formulation, research aim and research questions, delimitation, and lastly disposition.

1.1 Research Background:

Culture is “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede's 2001, p. 9). Each culture has its own learning and communication process. (Wan Lee, Becker and Nobre, 2012). Members of different cultures learn different implicit theories to guide their behavior (Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, and Heyman, 1996). Culture is increasingly considered as fluid in the system as it has significant forces to shape value, lifestyles, beliefs and attitudes (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2001). According to Parboteeah and Cullen, (2003), national culture is one of the important elements which affects people’s mind, perception and thoughts. It influences national institutes and its characteristics within the nations. Each culture, nations or individual has their own perception and ideas to generate the systems or conduct business. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, (2010) study shows a model of national culture consists of six dimensions. The author claimed that cultural dimensions represent independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries (rather than individuals) from each other. Moreover, the country scores on the dimensions are relative, as we are all human and simultaneously we are all unique.

Shore and Cross (2005) state that Cultural dimensions are useful for describing management and communication process. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of reinforcing internal communications with employees. Internal communication plays significant roles in building a culture of transparency between employees and management (Mishra, Boynton and Mishra, 2014). Previous study on communication science offers extensive insight into the field of internal communication (Clampitt, 2004, Linke and Zerfass, 2011). Those study mostly covered the topic of how to convey information and ideas which has been considered crucial for organizations (Derieth, 1995; Quirke, 2008). Numerous studies have linked internal communication and the degree to which employees are informed to job satisfaction and performance (Gray
Howard, (1998) stated that the competitive advantage of strategic internal communication comes not only from the obvious benefits of employee satisfaction and productivity, but also from the positive contributions that well-informed employees can make to a company’s external public relations efforts. Employees can be an organization’s best ambassadors or loudest critics, depending whether and how they get information.

Cultural differences often cause misunderstanding and poor communication. Previous studies found that managers’ clear communication with subordinates makes their service superior with their customers (Kitchen and Daly, 2002). Sriramesh, Grunig and Dozier (1996) argued internal communication could interrupt by the changing cultural differences. The authors further added that internal communication could be difficult in workplace, which is composed of different cultures. A diverse workforce reflects the system where one size fits all approach is not effective and does not create any positive outcomes in the organization (Suzuki, 1997). White, Vanc and Stafford, (2010) found that internal communication can be influenced by personal influences in Asian cultures where power distance and collectivism are higher in comparison to western culture. It is increasingly important to study how national culture affects internal communication, decisions and design of the institutes. (Wan Lee, Becker and Nobre, 2012).

1.2 Problem formulation:

Previous researches that used a variety of frameworks has shown that national cultural values are related to workplace behaviors, attitudes and other organizational outcomes (e.g. Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1980a; Trompenaars, 1993; Schwartz, 1994). Among those researches the most adopted cultural classifications is that of Geert Hofstede. Based on a country level factor analysis, Hofstede developed a classification of 40 countries along four dimensions. Then, later he added another two dimension. The dimensions are Individualism vs collectivism, Power distance, Masculinity vs femininity, Uncertainty avoidance, Long term vs Short term, Indulgence vs restraint. Hofstede’s dimensions have been used extensively in literature to compare cultures (Lu, Rose and Blodgett, 1999). Kogut and Singh, (1988) studied the effect of national culture on entry choices of firms. They used Hofstede’s indices to measure culture. Merritt (2000) conducted a research to determine if Hofstede’s indexes could be replicated in the commercial aviation
environment such that differences in pilot behavior and training could be discussed in a broader cultural context. His research has reconfirmed the construct validity and workplace relevance of Hofstede’s four dimensions of national culture. Pagell, Katz and Sheu, (2005) used Hofstede’s typology to test the validity of national culture as an explanatory construct for international operations management decision-making. Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi and Leitner, (2004) used Hofstede’s cultural indices on higher education institutions but they mainly focused on quality dimensions of Higher education institutions. Kirkman et al., (2006) have reviewed 180 article published between January 1980 and June 2002 that has applied Hofstede’s framework to organizations. Most of the article that the authors had reviewed applied Hofstede’s theoretical framework on Multi-National Corporations.

Internal communication has been consistently identified as a key area of communication practice, growing in importance. Hargie and Tourish (2009) emphasized the need for research in this area and stated that internal communication is increasingly recognized as a crucial variable in determining organizational success, and as a vital issue requiring further research. White et al., (2010) studied how employees of a large, diverse organization view the flow of information from top managers to employees, employees’ communication preferences, their perceptions about the organization and their willingness to advocate for the organization. Mishra et al. (2014) studied the growing role of internal communication in employee engagement. Men, (2014) researched the effectiveness of various internal communication channels. The author also investigates how leadership influences internal public relations by building the linkage between transformational leadership, the use of communication channels, symmetrical communication, and employee satisfaction. Most of these studies studied on Multi-National Corporation. However, no research has been found about national culture’s influence; focusing power distance and individualism, on university's internal communication process. Therefore, a research gap has been identified and this gap influenced us to research on this area. We believe that our research will shed some light on this area and help future researchers to explore more.
1.2 Motivation of study:

Many authors have studied how national culture impacts on organizations (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993). Kirkman, Lowe and Gibson, (2006) showed that researchers have used Hofstede’s framework successfully to select countries that are culturally different in order to increase variance, and that most country differences predicted by Hofstede were supported. Thus, overall, Hofstede’s values are clearly relevant for additional cross-cultural research. Therefore, two culturally different countries were chosen for this study and Hofstede’s power distance and individualism dimensions were used to compare their influence on internal communication. The reason for choosing power distance and individualism is that, in these two dimension our chosen countries differs in great extent. Moreover, these dimensions have greater influence on internal communication (Leonard, Van Scotter and Pakdil, 2009). Question may arise that why we choose internal communication? Because of its importance on organization. Many international studies suggested that internal communication forms the backbone of organization (Asif and Sargeant, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Quirke, 2000; Welch and Jackson, 2007).

Most of the researches that used Hofstede’s theoretical framework conducted on Multi National Organizations. But very few researches have been conducted on universities internal communication focusing Power distance and Individualism. Thus, we were motivated to conduct our study on universities from diversified countries.

1.4 Research aim and research question:

Our research aim is to investigate impact of national culture on internal communication process. To narrow down our research aim we focus on Individualism vs collectivism and power distance. We will study the effect of these dimensions on internal communication process of university.

Research Question:

1) How does national culture influence internal communication process of university?
1.5 Delimitation:

One of the major limitation of this study is that, Hofstede’s dimension was chosen though his study has some criticism. Hofstede’s five dimensions together cannot be assumed to exhaust the universe of differences between national cultures, but they have substantial face-validity and have been empirically demonstrated to be related to many aspects of management and organization. (Kolman et al., 2003). Another limitation was that the present thesis covered only two cultural dimensions: Power distance and Individualism. Other four dimensions’ uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs femininity, long term orientation vs short term orientation and indulgence vs restraint were not taken into consideration. It would give more in depth result if all the factors could be considered. To collect our data, we have chosen Bangladesh and Sweden for our convenience. However, more country could be chosen. Another limitation we had in this study was that we only covered two universities. If more university could have added, then the given result would be more accurate.

1.6 Disposition:

The first chapter deals with introduction, where the ideas and focus of the study has been narrated, with the aim and research questions that will be analyzed through the thesis. In second chapter, important theories and structures have been developed to acknowledge, provide frameworks for the background and literature review for the research. Third chapter is about methodology which includes the research methods, process, collecting data and procedures of analyzing data. Then, in chapter four deals with the interviews and interpreting all the primary data. After that, chapter five presents the analytical part where all findings and previous literature has been issued, analyzed and discussed. In the last part, conclusion sections have been added to answer the research questions, provided by the limitations, implications and share suggestions for the future research.
Figure 1 Disposition

Source: Own
2. Literature review

This chapter includes three parts to cover the literatures in the following order: Influence of culture in communication, national culture, internal communication, and then lastly a conceptual framework for this study is presented by applying the theories.

2.1 National culture:

Researchers have developed several theories about national culture and its effects in the society (Trompenaars and Hampden Turner, 2011; Hofstede, 2010). Hofstede (1991) stated that culture is collective programming of the mind that differs the society from one from another. There are four levels of culture in the society: Symbols, rituals, values and heroes. Symbols are objects and nature that can be changed time to time. Rituals are certain beliefs which are practiced in culture for achieving desired ends. Heroes are national characters which are highly valued in the society. Value is important elements of the society. It is invisible, can be learned in early lives and remain unchanged (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

Figure 2: Hofstede’s Onion Model of Culture

![Hofstede's Onion Model of Culture](image)

Source: (Hofstede et al, 2010: P 8)

Most people belong to different groups and they carry several layers of different feelings within themselves. National, organizational or corporate cultures have different levels of layers in the society. Differences in values and practices may determine the differences
between national and organizational culture. The impact of national culture on organizational culture is enormous. It means that an employee can follow and maintain the rules of the organization, but his practices can be largely influenced by his national culture which he has learned in his early lives (Jung, Su, Baeza and Hong, 2008). Financial success often fails to lead the managerial success when foreign managers have failed to understand the cultural differences. The poor performance of the multinational companies often has been acknowledged due to misunderstandings, language, cultural differences, cultural prejudices and stereotypes (Kuhn and Poole, 2000). When reviewing literature, it appears that value is considered a powerful source that shapes lifestyles and attitudes. Value plays a significant role in beliefs, lifestyles and attitudes that a society holds which is shaped by the culture. As management becomes more international, it is increasingly important to acknowledge national culture to see the impact on the society and how it is changing the society over time Wan Lee et al., (2012). However, the roles of national culture in decision making vary for each multinational companies. Conceptual framework of culture provides many insights for advances in culture. Culture is related to multi-layer, multi facet and contextual. Culture contains much more than cultural dimensions and it has many layers and levels. Some elements are static where other cultural elements are changing over time. A major challenge is to develop a dynamic framework for culture which is very challenging and sensitive to different contexts in respect of cultural elements (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez and Gibson, 2005).

Researchers have developed several models based on constructs (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993). Culture has multilevel constructs that has various levels nested within each other from the global culture through national culture, organization culture, group culture and cultural values. Global culture is the most macro levels in the models. It is created be global networks and global institutions that cross national and cultural borders. On the other hand, global organizational structure has common language in order to communicate across borders. Below the global culture, the national culture has own local culture varying from one culture to another. Furthermore, organizational culture that has the effects of own national culture. Within each organization,
Figure 3: The dynamic of top-down-bottom-up processes across levels of culture

It has sub groups or groups that share common national and organizational culture but differs from each other based on their functions (Leung, et al. 2005). Gupta & Govindarajan, (2000) argued that values are the powerful source in the global context which is influenced by market economy, acceptance, diversity, freedom of choices, openness to changes and individual rights.

2.1.1 Cultural dimensions:

Dimensions of national culture have been widely used in researches and several studies have been evaluated the validity of dimensions. Regarding national culture that influence organizational culture two framework have been widely used. One is Hofstede’s and the other one is Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011) have used seven dimensions for defining culture. Universalism concentrates on general rules whereas particularism concentrates more on exceptions. Individualism which is more focus on freedom and self-dependence where communitarianism focuses on group works. They are different on their focus and work.
Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions by Hofstede et al. (2010)

- **Power distance (PDI)** – Power distance is the degree of inequality that exist between supervisor and subordinate. High power distance country tend to be practice more control and hierarchy than low power distance country

- **Individualism/collectivism (IDV)** - labelled as the degree to which individuals place more importance to individual goals compared with group or collective goals. Collectivist cultures put more emphasis on the benefit of the group rather than their own.

- **Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)** - Defined as the degree to which people perceive the future, and if they plan for future or just wait to face the future.

- **Masculinity/ femininity (MAS)** - implies the differences of genders which describes the duality in behaviors, attitudes, emotions and social rules. High masculine cultures in society tend to focus more on assertiveness and decisiveness.

- **Long term orientation vs short term orientation** - represents the extent to which members of a culture are cognitively programmed to accept delayed gratification of material, social, and emotional needs.

- **Indulgence vs restraint** - Indulgence societies tend to allow relatively free gratification of natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun whereas Restraint societies are more likely to believe that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict norms.

2.1.1.1 Power distance

Hofstede, (1991) defined power distance as the degree of inequality among people, which the population of a country consider as normal from relatively equal (low power distance) to extremely unequal (high power distance). The author also includes that all societies are unequal but some are more unequal than others. Hofstede (1980a) measured power distance via questions about supervisor-subordinate relationships. Bochner and Hesketh, (1994) stated that, the degree of inequality present between a less powerful and a more powerful person, in real life which we call superior-subordinate relationship. The construct of work related power distance refers to how much hierarchical inequality people will accept and indeed regard as proper, according to that society's power distance
norms in its institutions and practices, such as the prevailing distribution of prestige, social status, wealth, the class and caste system and access to universal rights. According to Hauff and Richter, (2015), in low power distance cultures subordinate expect superiors to consult them and approach superiors to express their point of view on matters of relevance to the job or employee. Therefore, they have the opportunities to develop closer relationships with superiors compared to employees in cultures high in power distance, where employees are less open to their superiors or even afraid to speak up. The authors also included that, Good relationships with management is more important for job satisfaction in high power distance cultures than low power distance culture as there is closer supervision from management. Erkutlu and Chafra, (2017) added that, in organizations and cultures where the power distance is low, inequalities are minimized, everybody is involved in decision-making, subordinates are consulted rather than just ordered and the same rules apply to everyone. On the other hand, where the power distance is high, inequalities among people are expected and accepted, some people make decisions, and others obey; subordinates expect to be told what to do.

Schwartz, (1999) found that, in hierarchical cultures characterized by unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources, people highly value social power, authority, and humility. In addition, in such cultures, people are socialized and sanctioned to comply with the obligations and rules attached to their roles. According to, Erkutlu and Chafra, (2017) Leaders’ power distance orientation on employees’ attitudes and behaviours is an important aspect to consider because it influences all interactions between the leader and the rest of the group members. Leaders’ power distance orientation characterizes their psychological distance with employees, which, in turn, affects their approachability, the degree to which employees are aware of leaders’ self-emotional awareness and the ease of communication with employees. Leaders’ high power distance may compel employees to treat leaders as detached authority figures, which would reduce employees’ inclination to reciprocate socio-emotional treatment from leaders in commonly expected ways. Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) suggest that organizations in hierarchical cultures are likely to emphasize chains of authority, to assign well-defined roles in a hierarchical structure, and to demand compliance in the service of goals set from the top.
2.1.1.2 Individualism

Hofstede (1993) explained Individualism, it is the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than as member of groups. Collectivism is opposite of Individualism which can be called as low individualism. Individual Vs Collectivist worldviews have several consequences. One of such consequence is seen in actions of individual. In a collectivistic society the person is more inner-directed, more controlled by the need to maintain face. Face is lost when individual fails to meet the obligation placed on them by virtue of their social position (Bochner and Hesketh, 1994). According to Hofstede (1991), in a collectivistic society employee expected that the organization will take care of them and provide training and other facilities. People have less personal time and more office time in a collectivistic society than in an individualistic society. Group decisions are encouraged in collectivistic society and individual initiative often discouraged whereas in Individual society it is encouraged. Individualistic society emphasize what is best for the person rather than decisions from a “we” standpoint.

Collectivistic society emphasizes obedience, duty, and sacrifice for the group, cooperation, and preference towards members of the in-group, acceptance of in-group authorities, nurturing, and interdependence. In contrast, individualistic society emphasizes independence, self-reliance, creativity, and acceptance of disobedience. In individualistic cultures, people are adept at entering and leaving groups, but do not develop deep and lasting relationships with the same frequencies as collectivists. On the other hand, in collectivist cultures people tend towards shyness, tend to be less willing and able to enter new groups, but also tend to establish more intimate and long-lasting relationships than do individualists (Dash, Bruning and Acharya, 2009)

2.1.1.3 Relation between Individualism vs. collectivism and Power distance

Individualism vs collectivism and power distance are different and two individual linear function (Hofstede, 1980, 1984, 1985). The author also states that, the indices of individualism-collectivism and power distance are significantly correlated: and a graphical plot of these data shows that individualism is associated with lower power distance while collectivism is associated with high power distance (Hofstede, 1980, 1984). However, Hofstede went on to consider the two dimensions separately, and justified the decision on three grounds: first, the two dimensions are conceptually
different; second, even though most collectivist cultures are also high in power distance, third, this is not always the case, that collectivistic cultures are always high power distant cultures for example France or Costa Rica (Hofstede, 1984, 1985).

2.1.1.4 Cultural Differences between Bangladesh and Sweden

Table 1: Comparison of Bangladesh with Sweden based on Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURAL DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POWER DISTANCE</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUALISM</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own, Adapted from: Hofstede (1980)

Power distance in Bangladesh and Sweden

Power Distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. From table 1 we can see that Bangladesh scores high on power distance. According to Hofstede which indicates that in Bangladesh there are more hierarchy and people generally accepts unequal power distribution. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities. Subordinates expect to be told from top management what to do and the leadership style is more autocrats. In contrast, Sweden scores low power distance which indicates that hierarchy is use only for convenience, top management is accessible for subordinates, everyone have equal rights. People are more independent and less supervision practiced in organization. Moreover, attitude towards managers are informal and communication is direct and participative (Hofstede, 1980).
Individualism vs. Collectivism in Bangladesh and Sweden

Bangladesh scores low in individualism which indicates that it's a collectivistic society. Collectivistic society emphasize on long term commitment towards group more than individual. Loyalty is given priority. In collectivistic society relationship are stronger and offence leads to shame and loss of face. Supervisor and subordinate relationships are perceived in moral terms. Hiring and promotion decisions often considers within group. In contrast with Bangladesh, Sweden scores high in individualism which means that it as an individualistic country. In an Individualistic society individuals are expected to take care of themselves. Supervisor and subordinate relationship is based on mutual advantage. Hiring and promotion decision depends on merit (Hofstede, 1980).

2.2 Internal communication:

2.2.1 Definition:

Communication is a central concept for organization and management theory and much of the nascent research on this topic has emerged from scholars of organizational communication and organizational psychology. Researchers of human resource issues see communication as a management tool while those interested in marketing perceive employees as internal customers and therefore have developed internal marketing to interact with employees (Tkalac Verčič, Verčič and Sriramesh, 2012). Frank and Brownell, (1989) define internal communication as the communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs, and to coordinate day-to-day activities. Internal communication, often perceived as a synonym for intra-organizational communication, is quite often equated with employee communication (Tkalac Verčič, Verčič and Sriramesh, 2012). Welch and Jackson (2007) categorized internal communication by stakeholders’ approach into four dimensions: internal line management communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication. Kalla (2005) categorized internal communication with four domains: business communication (focused on communication skills of employees), management communication (explained management skills and capabilities for communication), corporate
communication (focused on formal communication), and organizational communication (addressing more philosophical and theoretically oriented issues).

In figure 4, Welch and Jackson (2007) showed internal communication between top management and employees. The authors explained that internal communication designed to develop commitment, creates a sense of belongings to the company, to enhance the awareness of changing environment and to understand the aim of the organization. The four arrows emitting from the strategic management center circle in Figure 4 represent corporate messages. The dotted circle represents all employees in the organization.

*Figure 4: Internal communication*

![Diagram of internal communication](image)

*Source: Adopted from Welch et al., 2007: P 186.*

Internal communication can be effective if it has open and clear communication between employees and senior management. It has played vital roles in developing effective positive employee’s engagement (Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter, 2011; Saks, 2006.). Rindova and Fombrun, (1999) argues the link between Internal communication and strategy. Effective internal communication enhances companies competitive advantage
and positive outcomes. Internal communication represents the success of the organization by implementing the corporate strategy. In addition, Employees are the center of the organization as they can act as agents and contribute in changes, advocate for corporate brand and identity for effective communication (Foreman and Argenti, 2005).

Company can create competitive advantages by integrating its own employees to organizational culture and facilitate internal communication to form long term relationship with employees which in turn can affect company’s image and reputation. Further Yamauchi, (2001) finds the link between corporate strategy and Internal communication. Internal communication has an important factor in determining which constituencies are important and what information the company needs. Moorman, (1995) found that employees in organizations of high hierarchical society feel less comfortable in sharing information with their superiors and subordinates by using formal and informal channels effectively. Thus they block the communication in organization. Varey & White, (2000) emphasize in using internal communication to create effective dialogues with employees in order to understand their interests and feelings.

2.2.2 Importance of Internal communication:

Effective internal communication plays important role for successful organizations as it has impact on the ability of strategic managers to engage employees and achieve goals (Welch and Jackson, 2007). Considerable amount of evidence in literature suggests that internal communication helps improve the likelihood of an organization being successful (Robson and Tourish, 2005). Internal communications and its positive impact on organizational efficiency and effectiveness have been greatly acknowledged (Quinn and Hargie, 2004). Effective internal communications audit benefitted organizations by including improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, higher quality of services and products, increased levels of innovation, fewer strikes and reduced costs (Clampitt and Downs, 1993). Snyder and Morris (1984) found that two perceived communication variables (the quality of supervisory communication and information exchange within the peer work group) were positively correlated to critical revenue and workload measures of overall organizational performance. Poor internal communication is a major concern for organizations since it results to workplace inefficiency (Welch and Jackson, 2007). Poor inter-departmental communication creates lower levels of involvement into the
process of decision making. This means that poor exchange of information leads to insecurity and increases alienation (Hargie, Tourish and Wilson, 2002).

2.2.3 Internal Communication channel:

As new technologies are increasingly integrated into organizations, the channels of communication available to employees continue to expand. Communication media channels vary greatly in their richness. Channel richness depends on ability to communicate information, ability to handle multiple cues, feedback rate, and the amount of personal focus (Smith, Patmos and Pitts, 2015). Each medium involves receivers in different ways and also have impact on the scale and pace of communication (Men, 2014). Different communication channel has been used by company and managers to engage with the employees. Such channels are ranging from traditional printed publications to (e.g., newsletter, magazines, posters), phone calls, voice mails, and face-to-face communication, to Web 2.0 tools, such as intranet, blogs, instant messaging, and internal social networking sites (Crescenzo, 2011).

2.2.3.1 Face to face communication:

Though technological advancements create more way to communicate, but the personal interaction in face-to-face meetings remains essential. Wright (1995) found that effective communication is two-way communication, where both employees and managers communicate with each other. Face-to-face communication is considered the richest medium as it has the ability to transmit multiple cues and information at once (Lengel and Daft, 1988). According to Farrant, (2003) when done properly face-to-face communication has the potential to be the most effective form of internal communication. Formal face-to-face communication can be done in many ways – big meetings, small meetings, team meetings, team briefing and company or organization get-togethers.

2.2.3.2 Printed Publications:

Printed communications can be form of newspapers, brochures and reports. Nowadays, printed communication used extensively for education purposes and promoting the online content of a company (Crescenzo, 2011). According to Davis (2001), the major disadvantage of printed communication is that it’s a one-way communication. He states
that it often lacks credibility amongst the employees. However, this type of communication could be useful as employee can take the print and read it wherever they want with their own comfort. Another reason is the accessibility of the medium; a print can be read without having the demand of an Internet connection or access to intranets and e-mails. More importantly, since the intranet is full of information, print communication can be used to highlight the best parts of the online information within a company (Crescenzo, 2011).

2.2.3.3 Electronic Communication:

The advent of the Web 2.0 era fundamentally changed the landscape of communication and the internal communication of companies. Social media tools, such as blogs, bulletin boards, and social networking sites, which are interactive, social, communal, and relational by nature, have been increasingly used by companies to promote two-way communication and employee engagement (Crescenzo, 2011).

E-mail: E-mail communications are strictly text based, making it one of the leaner channels of communication (Lengel and Daft, 1988). Yet, over the years, e-mail has proven to be an effective and efficient communication medium for communication (Lee, Kozar, and Larsen, 2005)

Intranet: Now a days Intranet was used extensively in organizations. An intranet is the Internet captured inside your organization and leveraged to the organizations benefit; it includes e-mail, a Web interface, and other tools such as file transfer and network news (Holtz, 2004). The advantage of Intranet is that it can store a huge amount of information.

Social Media: Social media such as online communities and chat can help organizations employees to become more productive since it is easier for employees to connect online and discuss problems (Whitworth, 2011). New media channels with rich features (e.g., webcams, embedded audio or video, commenting and sharing features, and online chat functions) facilitate complex information distribution. Moreover, social media channels with two-way, interactive/dialogical, communal, personal, and relational features allow top leaders to listen closely to employees, respond in a timely manner, communicate in a genuine and personal fashion, and facilitate employee upward communication. Thus, the
communication hierarchy within the organization is blurred, the power distance is shortened (Men, 2015).

2.2.4 Matrix of Internal communication:

Welch and Jackson, (2007) developed a framework (see table 2) known as internal communication matrix that consists of four elements: line management, team peer, project peer and internal corporate communication. The internal communication matrix includes examples of the content of internal communication associated with each dimension. The content suggestions indicate principal content while recognizing the interconnected nature of subject matter. This view of internal communication leads to distinctions based on: who communicates, to whom, in what way, with what content, and leads to the question, for what purpose? The influential excellence study research stream identifies dialogue or symmetrical two-way communication as important to successful internal communication. (Welch and Jackson, 2007)

First, Line management communication occurs in every steps of the organization. Line managers are always responsible for their works and communicate with the top management regarding work progress. It considers roles of employees and personal communication. This type of internal communication focus on important factors such as target settings and performance appraisal. It relates to day to day activities specially access to resources, financial management and human resource department.

Second, team level internal communication may involve employees and managers in a team situation and as such can be considered as peer-to-peer or employee-to-employee communication in a group setting. Internal team peer level communication content includes team task discussions.

Third, internal project level communication includes special project work. Here employees in a group can work on special projects. It is predominately a two-way communication. It involves manager and subordinates as team members and can be considered as peer to peer communication. The aim of this type of project is to deliver special project work which involves extensive participation of team members in the group.
Fourth, the last part is internal corporate communication which involves the communication from top management to its employees, defined as communication between an organization’s strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organization, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims. (Welch et al., 2007).

**Table 2: Internal communication matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Internal line management</td>
<td>Line managers/supervisors</td>
<td>Predominantly two-way</td>
<td>Line managers-employees</td>
<td>Employees’ roles Personal impact, e.g. appraisal discussions, team briefings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Internal team peer</td>
<td>Team colleagues</td>
<td>Two way</td>
<td>Employee-employee</td>
<td>Team information, e.g. team task discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Internal project peer</td>
<td>Project group colleagues</td>
<td>Two way</td>
<td>Employee-employee</td>
<td>Project information, e.g. project issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internal Corporate</td>
<td>Strategic managers/top</td>
<td>Predominantly one way</td>
<td>Strategic managers to all employee</td>
<td>Organizational/corporate issues, e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own. Adopted from Welch and Jackson, (2007)*

2.3 Influence of culture in internal communication:

Culture is an independent variable that has impact on behavior and communication (Miller, 2002). Therefore, it is important to understand culture differences (Kagitcibasi and Berry, 1989). According to Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001), Culture consists of a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and patterns of behavior shared by members of a social unit.
Miller (2002) stated that, culture tells us not only how to behave but also how to interpret the behavior of others and how to communicate with them. Samovar, Porter, and Jain, (1981 p. 24) explained: “Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks with whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. In fact, our entire repertory of communicative behaviors is dependent largely on the culture in which we have been raised. Culture, consequently, is the foundation of communication. And, when cultures vary, communication practices also vary”.

Over time, many variations of culture have been considered. In management sciences research, the most commonly used variation is individualism versus collectivism, because of its centrality to other variations (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand, 1995). Hofstede’s work has been considered useful because it is clear and easy to understand (Erez and Earley, 1993). The instrument that is used in determining cultural variation is also clear and practical for cross-cultural administration purposes.

Moreover, Power distance also has influence on communication. People in high-power-distance cultures are more likely to depend on superiors within their organization to make crucial decisions (Lim, 2004). Leonard, Van Scotter and Pakdil, (2009) stated that power distance influences the extent to which communication flows freely, both upward and downward within an organization. As an example the authors included that Asian cultures generally have higher power distances than does U.S. culture. Asian cultures tend to email their U.S. counterparts with copies to everyone above them in the hierarchy. This has led to significant misunderstandings and confusions between the two groups, as those in the U.S. culture tend to email their superiors only in specific instances, not in every email.

2.4 Conceptual Model:

A conceptual model is created based on the theory presented in theoretical framework (see figure 5). For research convenient, the model has been divided in two parts. The cultural dimensions regarding Power distance and individualism provided by Hofstede et al. (2010) has been divided in order to acquire positive reflection. On the other hand,
effective internal communication affects organization performance and increase employees’ engagement (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Differences in culture has profound impact on internal communication and practices (Miller, 2002). For this purpose, we have focused on two universities from Bangladesh and Sweden in order to understand the effects of culture on internal communications in respect to university perspectives.

In addition, from the literature review we found that internal communication serves as essential elements in cross-cultural organizations (Leonard, Van Scotter & Pakdil, 2009; Welch & Jackson, 2007; Robson & Tourish, 2005 and Clampitt & Downs; 1993). So internal communication has been discussed to reflect its importance in the organization. Later internal communication which is our main theme has been highlighted to gather necessary information for the research purpose. The model is focusing on cultural differences of two countries Bangladesh and Sweden which reflects their impact on internal communication in the universities.

*Figure 5: Conceptual model*

![Conceptual Model](Source: Own)
3. Methodology:

*This chapter includes six parts and will present in the following order: research strategy, structure of interview, interview process, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity, ethics consideration, and limitation of methodology.*

*Figure 6: Summary of the methodology*

| Research Strategy | • Why it’s a qualitative study  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>• How we plan to execute our plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Data Collection   | • Primary data  
|                   | • Secondary data                |
| Structure of Interview | • Open and close ended interview questionnaire |
| Interview Process | • Skype, phone call, face to face  
|                   | • Documented                    |
| Data Analysis     | • Approach of data analysis      |
| Reliability and validity | • Validity of our study finding were discussed  
|                   | • Reliability of our study      |
| Ethical Consideration | • Ethical approach was taken into consideration when interpreting and presenting data |

*Source: Own*
3.1 Research strategy:

There are many styles or variants in qualitative research, such as survey, case study, ethnography, and experiment. These styles of research have their own purposes, foci, paradigms, and approaches in studying the phenomena. Due to the nature of these styles, researchers have proposed ways to plan and execute qualitative studies (Gaus, 2017). In view of the research questions, it can be concluded that they are the “how” questions which are explicitly suited to explore in qualitative research, rather than quantitative research (Yin, 2009). Therefore, by looking at our research question “how national culture influence internal communication process of university” a qualitative approach is appropriate for this study.

This study has adopted an inductive approach. The purpose of selecting an inductive approach is to observe and get a feel of what is going on, so as to understand better the nature of the problem. Developing such an understanding is the strength of an inductive approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Research using an inductive approach is likely to be particularly concerned with the context in which such events were taking place. Therefore, the study of a small sample of subjects might be more appropriate than a large number as with the deductive approach (Saunders et al, 2012). As our sample size is small so an inductive approach for our study seems appropriate. Moreover, an inductive approach is more suitable in qualitative study rather than in quantitative study (Saunders et al, 2012). Thus, we choose inductive approach for our study.

Our study will be based on constructivist epistemology. Crotty, (1998, p.3) explained epistemology is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know.” According to Gaus (2017, p.101) “constructivist epistemological position is that truth or knowledge is not separated from human beings, rather it is integrated into the social context through which knowledge is co-constructed.” The purpose of our study is to explore a social phenomenon Therefore, by adopting this epistemological premise, the theoretical perspective adopted in the study is that an exploration of a social phenomenon that requires a study of lived experiences of people through an understanding of their social world.
3.2 Data collection:

3.2.1 Primary data:

Semi structure interviews have been used for our study and primary data purpose. In semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to be covered (Saunders et al, 2012). To explore our research field, we prepare a list of themes and interview questionnaire to cover those themes. Semi structured interviews has been used for qualitative analysis purpose. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews provide Interviewer with the opportunity to ‘probe’ answers, where Interviewer want their interviewees to explain, or build on, their responses (Saunders et al, 2012). In addition, it creates the opportunities to gather specific and reliable answer for our study purpose. Semi structure interviews have played significant roles when it deals with the exploratory studies (Saunders et al, 2012). Since our study is exploratory, semi structured interviews is appropriate for our study.

3.2.2 Secondary data:

Secondary data have been used for research purpose. Secondary data are those which are peer reviewed academic journals, books and topics with resourceful information and insights (Saunders et al, 2012). Secondary data provides the fruitful information to our research purpose. For our literature review, we have used articles which have been published in related journals. Google scholars have been used for finding our relevant journals and articles. It is a resourceful server which is accessible from our university portal. For literature part, we have searched for articles which are highly relevant to our topics. Articles have been chosen based on highly citation and dominant in the literature. Few new theories have also been added to explore our research study. By doing so, we have focused on theories which lead us to gain information regarding national cultures, internal communication and the effects of cultural dimensions from national perspectives. It helps us to identify the research gaps and in addition we are able to collect the necessary information for our research study.
3.3 Structure of Interview:

While using interview questionnaires researchers have the option to choose between open and closed questions. The use of open questions will allow participants to define and describe a situation or event. An open question is designed to encourage the interviewee to provide an extensive and developmental answer, and may be used to reveal attitudes or obtain facts (Saunders et al, 2012). Closed questions are suitable when researchers know and interpret the facts beforehand. From that perspective, we have designed questions so that respondents can give all answers openly without hesitation and constraints. The questionnaires have been developed in three parts. First part is relatively easy and deals with respondents understanding with the topics. The second part will focus on internal communication from university perspective and the last part will emphasize on how the cultural dimensions affecting the internal communication. The purpose of the question is to explore the relationship between cultural dimensions and internal communications from university perspective. The research questions can be analyzed by exploring the fields. Interviews in qualitative research are vital part for analyzing questionnaires (Saunders, 2011). The questionnaires have been designed in such a way so that respondents can understand the topics. It will help us to identify the differences in internal communication between Bangladesh and Sweden from university perspective based on cultural dimensions. We believe the present study has not been analyzed before and it has created the opportunity to gather depth information from cultural and university internal communication perspective.

Table 3: Overview of interview questions regarding internal communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Supporting theories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>This is an open question</td>
<td>To know Participants background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power distance &amp; the process of Internal communication</td>
<td>How do you receive information regarding different issues of the university?</td>
<td>To understand the communication flows and to understand the influence of power distance</td>
<td>Hofstede et al. (2010), Welch and Jackson, (2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism &amp; collectivism</td>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>The effects of communication flows</td>
<td>Power Distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you communicate with others in university?</td>
<td>Is there any information of the university that you think is not reaching you properly or do you feel that information is not reaching you regarding policies and other issues of the university?</td>
<td>How would you describe the communication flow within your organization?</td>
<td>Do you think the organizational structure effects the communication flow?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own
3.4 Interview process:

Semi structure interviews allow to explore in depth of studying phenomena (Saunders et al. 2012). This process allows the respondents to describe the subject without hesitation and helps us to reveal the actual scenario before ending the topic. Interview questions have included ten questions. Before selecting interview, the subject has been analyzed properly specially to understand the company's core activities. In our case, it is applicable from university perspective. Respondents have been selected carefully so that it will help us to lead the research. In addition, it has facilitated us to reduce the gaps in interview process and focused more on core subjects (Saunders et al. 2012).

Before conducting interviews, we have the interview guidelines with possible to the respondents with cover letter so that they can understand the subjects and prepare to do the interview. It has reduced the confusions and facilitates the process effectively. Due to the distance factors in Bangladesh and Sweden, it was not possible to take face to face to interview in Bangladesh. The respondents have been managed to do the interview on Skype and phone calls. Interview details are given in below table:

Table 4: Interview details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>MEDIA</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ehsanul Huda Chowdhury</td>
<td>01/05/2017</td>
<td>Approx. 1 hr</td>
<td>Assistant Professor in Business Administration</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>UOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thomas Källquist</td>
<td>09/05/2017</td>
<td>40 min</td>
<td>Education Manager</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>UOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Akmal hyder</td>
<td>08/05/2017</td>
<td>47 min</td>
<td>Professor of Marketing,</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>UOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Arne Fagerström</td>
<td>09/05/2017</td>
<td>43 min</td>
<td>Professor of Accounting,</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>UOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Michelle Rydback</td>
<td>08/05/2017</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>PhD in Business</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>UOG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Data analysis:

After collecting primary data, all data has been analyzed so that it helps us to reach the actual findings. The interactive nature of data collection and analysis allows us to recognize important themes, patterns and relationships as we collect data. As a result, we are able to re-categorize our existing data to see whether these themes, patterns and relationships are present in our cases where we have already collected data. Relevance of information has been maintained. It helps us to reduce the uncertainties (Saunders et al. 2012).

In the next process of data analysis, empirical findings are analyzed and linked to theories for exploring the research purpose. The themes, patterns and relationships that found in empirical data have been displayed so that it will fit us to our research purpose. It has leaded us to the summary where actual similarities and differences between respondents and two countries have been properly outlined to find the conclusion. The analysis will
help us to identify the depth of cultural perspective on internal communication from university perspectives followed by implication and suggestions.

3.6 Reliability & Validity:

Reliability measures the extent in which the results are consistent over time and the population under the research methods can be considered as reliable (Golafshani, 2003). There are two types of reliability: they are internal and external reliability. The internal reliability is referring to the degree where two or more researchers using particular methods and instruments on studying the same phenomenon can produce the same results or findings in different contexts. The external reliability is using the same methods and conditions at different times and conditions a researcher can replicate the findings of another. In qualitative research, this issue is problematic. Because with time reality or human behaviors changes. The researchers acknowledge reality as changeable. Thus, results can vary in line with the changing context. The most important thing in the interpretive and constructionist framework is the detailed and rich descriptions of the context in order to convince readers that such an event really occurs in reality (Gaus, 2017, p.109). Therefore, in our study we tried to collect information as detail as we can to understand the real context of this two universities. In order to reduce the gaps and biasness, the interview have been recorded and transcribed properly so that it enhances the credibility of the study.

Validity refers to the accuracy of the research findings. Like reliability, validity consists of two types, internal and external validity (Gaus, 2017). The internal validity refers to the degree to which the findings are able to be interpreted accurately. The external validity refers to the degree to which the results of the research are able to be generalizable (Bryman, 2012). In order to ensure the validity of the study, the questionnaires have been designed very carefully that align with the subject. Data reduction phase has been implemented to reduce the irrelevant answers that might affect the validity of the study. Filter data have been selected which are appropriate for our topics such as culture, cultural dimensions and internal communications. The process will increase the validity of the study.
3.7 Ethical consideration:

The issue of ethics plays a vital role to protect and prevent people from any harm arising from the relationship between the researchers and participants. Ethics in research should be considered in light of the rightness, appropriateness, and wrongness of actions applied in the whole research processes. (Gaš, 2017). Bell and Bryman, (2007) identified the importance of the ethical consideration while interviewing participants and emphasized on the cautious measurement of the researchers before concluding the study. Harm and safety of the participants are important. Researcher should also respect the time and space of the interviewees. Confidential information regarding the research, the organization and participants need to be acknowledged. Privacy and manipulation should be avoided. Honesty and transparency are also vital in gathering and developing data. In addition, the mutual understanding and bonding must be present in order to receive the correct information. The manipulation of the data and an influence on the participant should be avoided (Bell and Bryman, 2007). In Our study we tried to follow the guidelines regarding ethical issues. Before the interview we have taken permission from the participant regarding using their names and the name of the organization. In addition, permission has been taken to record their interviews and the before beginning the participants have been full described the aim of the research of the topic. Each participant has been received a cover letter with research topic to understand our aim of the study. It has created mutual understandings between researchers and participant for gathering information.

3.8 Limitation of Methodology

First limitation of this study is its research strategy. As we choose interpretivists approach for our research which depends on authors interpretation of collected data. Though we tried our best to be free from biasness and being judgmental but this could affect the study. Another limitation is, not all the interview was taken in English. Few interviews were taken in Bengali for respondents’ convenience. Then later we translated the collected data to English. This process required authors interpretation of statement. Moreover, Face to face interview could not be arranged for all the respondents due to geographical distance. Skype and phone call interview were taken. Only 10 interview were taken from two universities. More interview could be taken from other university for better comparison and more developed analysis.
4. Empirical findings:

4.1 Organization profile:

University of Gavle (UOG):
University of Gavle, a government funded University, located on north part of Sweden. Approximately 17000 students are studying in this university. It offers more than 50 study programs and second-cycle programs and 750 courses covering humanities, social and natural sciences as well as technology. International programs are offered in several fields, such as Business Administration and Electronics/Automation. International educational exchanges and academic cooperation across national boundaries have long been a tradition at the University. A range of courses and international programs taught in English open opportunities for students from abroad to study at UOG. The main part of this international collaboration takes place at the undergraduate and master degree levels. International mobility at undergraduate level mainly occurred with other EU countries and with university’s bilateral partners in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Canada and the USA. International mobility at graduate level in turn consists of incoming students from all over the world, but especially from Europe South Asia, China and a number of countries in Africa. Today the University has more than 90 international partnerships, resulting in a large number of international students. Moreover, the on-going international exchange of Gävle faculty members and lecturers create a stable foundation for the University’s international network of educational programs and research projects (Hig, 2017). However, our interview participants are only from School of Education and Economics department and special program.

American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB):
American International University-Bangladesh is a well renowned private university in Bangladesh. It is located on Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. The University established on 1994. Since the commencement of its journey in 1994, AIUB has progressed by leaps and bounds both as an institution and the programs it delivers to the students. Approximately 10000 students are studying in AIUB at present. The university
is an independent organization with its own Board of Trustees. The academic programs are divided among the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Faculty of Business Administration, Faculty of Engineering, and Faculty of Science and Information Technology. All the faculties offer both undergraduate and graduate level studies (AIUB, 2017). We choose participants only from Faculty of Business Administration. Thus this research is limited to Business administration only.

4.2 Power distance effect on internal communication in UOG:

The participants from Sweden who took part in the interview have minimum six years to maximum 25 years working experiences with the university. Participants have good communication with the higher management and aware of university policies and changes. Regarding information receiving from the university participants from Sweden mentioned that department head is the responsible for delivering important messages. Dean is also an important figure in delivering important information. In case of Sweden, information passes very quickly from top to down before the deadline.

“Sometime we receive information before the meeting through informal way (Respondent)”

Regarding information sharing and communication, participants in Sweden informed that communications from employees to supervisors are very clear and open. Departmental head always encourages subordinates to share their ideas with them. Generally, they conduct meeting with employees and discuss problems with them. Then in the next meeting, departmental head sit with them again to know the updates and feedback. Email has been used for one to one meetings update.

“The departmental head encourages us to know how the new course or examination system can be revised or developed. They are very much supportive and helpful in developing new ideas and issues.” (Respondent)

Regarding communication flows, participants mentioned that department head leads the meetings. Any new information regarding changes or courses, the department head is the medium to pass the information from dean office to employees. Respondents several
times mentioned that the department head explicitly reveals all the information to them and want to know the feedback about the new plan. For example, how the budget plan has been utilized and revenue from different departments are coming. Participants mentioned that communication flows are usually flat and steady. Communication flows from top to down and vice versa.

When asked to the participant if they think that organization structure effect internal communication, majority of the participants informed that each department is independent here in the university. Each department have their own planning and designs. Participants also mentioned that there is no hierarchy level in the university.

“The structure here is more like a flat structure. There is no power distance; the professor and the lecturer are in the same order. They will sit together, take tea together and will discuss about anything.” (Respondent)

Department encourages more freedom to their employees for sharing information and communication with each other. When any problem arises one respondent mentioned that they like to share it with their department heads. One respondent mentioned that the organizational structure affects the communication flow positively. Majority of the participants agree that few layers in the organization make the communication very effective.

4.3 Individualism/ collectivism effect on internal communication in UOG

When the participants asked about how they perceive the freedom in the communication, many respondents have mentioned that they have full freedom to express their views and opinions. They can consult with their supervisors if they find anything difficult or if they don’t like anything.

“If anyone wants to disagree with higher authority they can express it. There is no shame in it. (Respondent)”

There is no hidden communication and everything is prescribed in proper way. They agreed that communication flow between them is clear and supportive. The department
head also plays an important role here. Department always incurs cost for outing with their employees in Sweden or outside Sweden. In that way, team bonding has been
developed and the communication flow between employees become stronger. Participant
agreed that the informal meetings with subordinates help them to understand their
colleagues easily and develop a good mutual understanding with them. It makes the
communication clearer and open between them. However, Respondent 2 argued that
inside the department the communication flow is more informal and there is no power
distance but the communication flow from top management to department employee is
more formal. He thinks that communication flow from top management to department
employee is one-way communication and most of the time they are written statement for
department employees. He added that, Sometime message is unclear and it creates
communication gap. He also mentioned that for his position he has the access to top
management but for a newly joined lecturer that level may not be accessible informally.
Moreover, he thinks that the power distance is present if one considers the communication
flow from top management to department.

Participants in Sweden informed that communication reaches to them quickly without
any doubt. If problem arises, they can consult the problems with department head. The
participants never feel that they are mis guided and miss communicated with any
important issues. The organizational structure plays an important role for making the
smooth and clear. They mentioned that they sometimes receive the information which is
not relevant to them.

Regarding the relationship with supervisors about internal communication, respondents
informed that the supervisor is not like traditional supervisors. Supervisors and employees
both have mutual understanding and respect for each other. Before booking any
appointment supervisor usually check whether, his subordinates are available or not. Here
department head respects the time and bonding with their subordinates. The dialogue is
always a two-way communication.

“Most of the time I talk with my supervisor in informal way. I don’t have to fix a meeting
or ask for his appointment. I just knock his door and ask if he have 5 minutes to talk”
(respondent)
However, few respondents have slight disagreement. One respondent said that when it comes to top management the decision making process is more individualistic though they collect data from department employees by conducting meeting but department employees have very less participation on their decision making process. He included that sometime the message coming from top management to department is unclear and creates frustration. Moreover, he thinks that employees’ participation should be given more priority on decision making process so that the decision doesn't create barrier for their work. However, he agreed that though the decision making process is individualistic but everyone’s opinion would be listened.

Another respondent included that there are more meetings and it takes a lot of time. Most of the meeting takes hours and sometime the message is not clear. If anyone have anything to say they can give comment. He included that most of the time the decision is taken before the meeting. He also included that employees have less influence to alter the decision.

Majority of the participants are satisfied with the communication flow within the organization. They agree that the communication structure is very effective and improved in the university. But respondent 1 mentioned that Swedish language is an important factor in communication. The respondents mentioned:

“As I don’t know Swedish language well sometimes it creates difficulty for communication.”

Although the respondent further mentioned that as he knows English well, the university support him a lot in making internal communication in English rather than Swedish.

Regarding communication flow differences in other countries than Sweden, one respondent who worked both in Bangladesh and Sweden mentioned that there is a huge difference. In Bangladesh, power distance is clearly visible. The dean is the responsible for making any new decisions and plans. The respondent further mentioned that the communication is not clear and implicit. The communication flow is top to bottom approach. Employees cannot get all the information in the department. The respondents mentioned that the impact of national culture is very influential. In Bangladesh it has
affected the group communication. More layers in the organization often make the communication difficult. According to the respondent who has working experiences with both local and foreign deans in Bangladesh:

“Local dean was very conservative and did not like to share information with subordinates. Local dean was very much influenced by Bangladeshi culture. It is very common scenario in country like Bangladesh. On the other hand, foreign dean is more supportive and likes to discuss information with their subordinates.” (Respondent)

Most of the respondent in Sweden think that the internal communication in Bangladesh is effected by their hierarchy. They think that there is a lot of hierarchy. And in their hierarchy top management have more power to control their subordinates. There is more supervision which creates barrier for subordinates to communicate properly. One respondent stated that, there is less freedom of speech. You can’t oppose your boss. If you oppose, then it means that you aren’t respecting him. So subordinates have to be careful about what they say. One respondent included that when he worked in Bangladesh as an exchange teacher he observed that everything has to be done with the permission of higher authorities. He shared a story about his class with Bangladeshi student in AIUB that after finishing the class students generally don’t leave the class before the professor. He thinks that there is too much respect which creates barrier for communication. He thinks that in the organization couple of peoples are growing not all the employees. He believes that the top management is responsible for this. Because then the top management positions could be questioned. Another issue he mentioned that the salary differences is quiet huge in Bangladesh and dowry is possible. It creates power distance among employees and hinders the communication.

4.4 Power distance effect on internal communication in AIUB:

Regarding information receiving, majority participants informed that dean is the primary resource for the information. As the university has many layers, communication flows from dean office to departmental head. According to respondents, each week meeting and seminar have been conducted to generate ideas and share opinions. Department head later escalate information to other employees regarding important internal communication. In academic council meeting, higher post employees and board members are usually present.
One respondent mentioned that lecturers and bottom line employees are not generally participates in academic council meetings.

*Each department head participates in the meeting and present their own ideas. Junior position employees or subordinates have little scope to present in the meeting. Without board director’s approval, the proposal will not be passed. Board directors’ opinions are vital in making important decisions.* (Respondent)

One respondent informed that employee’s manual guideline is under progress for employee communication regarding policies and decision making. Higher authorities and department heads are mainly responsible for the development of the manual. The respondent further argued that employees are also welcome for giving the feedback regarding manual development. But the process is still not effective.

Regarding internal communication with other colleagues, respondents informed that they have good communication with their subordinates. Departmental head has good relation with deans. Each department has good internal Communication and understanding. Communication between them is clear and encouraging. But one respondent mentioned:

“*Communication with dean is fine but above that layer it is not easy to communicate. Vice chancellor and board of directors are mostly inaccessible. It requires permission to meet them separately and often depends on their moods for approval for direct communication.*” (Respondent)

Another respondent further mentioned that sometimes it is hard to work. Recognition from superiors and subordinates are not encouraging even missing. It demotivates employees and affects the internal relationship and communication. Employees sometimes missing the belongings of the organization. In that case, higher management has failed to understand the communication from bottom line. It creates the boundary between lower and top management.

Regarding organizational structure, majority of the respondents argued that different layers in the university makes the communication flow more complicated. Communication from top management to bottom level is not always reachable.
Sometimes it is limited to higher authority and the authority does not feel the importance of communicating bottom levels. When it comes to important decision making, sometimes it communicates faster through the channel to bottom levels and sometimes it is affected by the top management approval. It often hinders the communication flow. The authority has the supreme power to recruit new employees and filling vacant positions.

“Communication from top management to lecturers is complicated. Junior lecturers are often not aware of all communication flows. They must be proactive in knowing the new information and department head is primary source for making the communication clear to them.” (Respondent)

One respondent mentioned that organizational structure makes the internal communication difficult. Although the university is trying to reduce the layers but the communication problem is still visible from bottom to top management.

4.5 Individualism/collectivism effect on internal communication in AIUB

Regarding internal communication with supervisors, majority of the respondents mentioned that they have good relation with their supervisors. It makes the internal communication more effective. Although one respondent mentioned that trust is an important factor in building relationship. Participants further mentioned that information flows from top management to department regarding important decision making requires approval from department. But sometimes, top management makes their own decisions without consulting the department head. They approve and make important decision without department concern.

Respondents mentioned that communication flows can be improved by reducing layers and building trust among them.

*Because of the hierarchy sometime we receive information late or sometime it could be distorted if we receive it through informal way.* (respondent)
Top management needs to trust their employees as it makes communication flows easier. Otherwise, due to trust factor most of the important communication has been limited to the higher authority. Further respondents argued that sometimes higher authority makes decisions without knowing their employees. It restricts the communication flows and often misguides the employees which impacts on the performance of employees for organizational growth. One respondent in Bangladesh have working experience both foreign dean and local dean mentioned that foreign dean is more active then local dean. According to local respondent:

“Local dean who is from Bangladesh is more conservative and has been influenced by local culture. He is not always accessible where foreign dean from Philippine is more active. He likes to share information with subordinates and easily accessible.” (Respondent)

Majority of the respondents in Bangladesh agreed that working under the foreign dean is much easier than the local dean. National culture plays an important role here in developing the relationship with subordinates.

The major difference between local and foreign dean is their leadership style. I believe that leadership style could influence relationship between supervisor and employee. (respondent)

According to respondents, foreign dean always encourages them to communicate and conduct meetings with subordinates each week to know what is going on department. Foreign dean plays vital role for developing internal communication with subordinates. It is clear that majority of the respondents like the concept of foreign dean and appreciate that their university have appointed foreign dean to develop progress in knowledge and internal communication.

One respondent mentioned that communication level is very clear and fast in Sweden compare to Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, access to different department in not always easy. It takes time to conduct meeting with other departments although the department has good communication and relationship with other departments. The respondent further argued that fear factor has impact in Bangladesh and people often fear to disagree with their
supervisor. Higher authorities’ exercise of power makes it difficult for subordinates to communicate with them. Sometimes employees are limited to their own department for better communication rather than facing the higher authority. It affects the communication flows and alters the information to the employees.

When asked about Bangladeshi employees about their experience in Sweden most of the participant said that they feel that communication process is more transparent in Sweden. Information are accessible to everyone. One respondent stated his observation

“Relation between Supervisor and subordinate is very friendly and informal. People call their boss or elder people by their first name but in Bangladesh you can’t call your supervisor by name.”

Another respondent mentioned an experience about Swedish “fika” (coffee break) He found it interesting and motivating for employees to communicate with each other informally and building a strong bond. He added that in Sweden he observed that everyone’s job is respected and everyone opinion have given importance.

Respondent also stated that, the job stress is less in Sweden comparing to Bangladesh which also creates a possibility for authorities to emphasize more on improving communication.
4.6 Empirical finding summary:

Table 5: Empirical Finding summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UOG</td>
<td><strong>Power distance</strong></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Top to bottom clear communication but in certain cases limited to supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Fewer layers in the organization makes communication easier</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Effective structure for internal communication</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Weekly meetings, presentations, electronic mails and strong internal network for sharing internal communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UOG</td>
<td><strong>Individualism/collectivism</strong></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Supervisor subordinates relationship is influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Easy access to supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Both formal and informal relationship have been observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Individualistic culture that prefers to work in groups regarding decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIUB</td>
<td><strong>Power distance</strong></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Communication mostly limited to supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Many layers in the organization hinders the communication flows</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Trust and fear factors are important elements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Weekly meetings, presentations and group discussion for better communication</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Positions are influential in making decisions</td>
</tr>
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<td>AIUB</td>
<td><strong>Individualism/collectivism</strong></td>
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<td>Supervisor subordinates relationship is influential</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Access to supervisor regarding communication is satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Both formal and informal relationship have been observed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi structure interviews</td>
<td>Collectivistic culture but approval from higher authority is still important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own
5. Analysis

5.1 Power distance effect on internal communication in UOG:

It has been observed that in Sweden respondent are having effective communication flow from the organization. Most of the participants have access to the important information. The communication flow is very transparent and clear. On the other hand, department heads are playing vital part in effective communication. Respondents several times mentioned that there are layers in the organization but the layers are not creating barriers for effective communication flows. Communication flow is smooth and faster as the organization always plans ahead before implementing the process. Respondents ensured that they always had necessary information and guidelines to take the correct decisions. One respondent has mentioned they know in 2016 what will happen in 2017. Although few respondents have mentioned that the communication flows sometimes limited to the top management and higher authority plays an vital roles in making decision which differs the arguments concluded by Hofstede et al. (2010) where low power distance countries have fewer layers and fewer higher authority power exercise.

In addition, employees are satisfied with overall communication flows and it motivates them to perform better. The findings are supporting the arguments provided by Ruck & Welch, 2012 and Welch & Jackson, (2007) in which the authors argued that clear communication could motivate employees’ performance. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), Sweden has low power distance which means lower hierarchies and layers are visible in the organization. It has been found that departments are independent from each other. There is no discrimination based on positions. One respondents mentioned that most of the employees hardly know the name of the top position employees. The top position has supreme power but the supervision is very less. Top management respects all the positions and can be accessible by anyone.

Power distance has less impact on internal communication in case of UOG in Sweden. The university communication process is almost accessible to the all employees. This is essential for effective internal communication in the organization. From the literature it has been found that employees will be motivated if they feel they are being well treated by the top position (Saks, 2006 and Welch & Jackson, 2007). It can be done by making
clear transparent communication between employees and top management. In case of UOG, the university communication practice is able to reach the bottom levels which effects the bonding between employees and top management. Employee’s participation in decision making have been encouraged in UOG. It has been made the communication flows easier and cooperative. However, it is also visible that top position’s influence on decision making is important even in Sweden. It can hamper the communication flows in the organization but it reduces the influence of top positions in decision making if higher authorities make it clear to their subordinates that why top positions has interfered in certain important decision makings in the organization.

Respondents agreed on the facts that supervisor support, communication flow transparency and organization layers are important for effective communication flow from top management to their employees. The findings support the arguments emphasized by Parboteeha & Cullen, (2003) in which the author argued transparent communication flows and supervisor relationship are important for internal communication in the organizations. It has been observed that department head or supervisors ‘roles are effective in terms of effective communication. It has been argued by Hofstede et al. (2010) that high PD countries managers are more commanding and their subordinates tend to follow their supervisors. There are little scope for discussion and sharing. As Sweden is a low power distance country, it has been found that supervisor is very active in information sharing and always encourages their subordinates to come forward with their idea and opinions. Subordinates can easily reach to their supervisors and the ‘Big Boss’ concept has not been practiced. In low power distance countries like Sweden supervisor subordinate relationship is open and cooperative (Hofstede et al. 2010). It is also further supported the arguments provided by White, Vanc & Stafford, (2010) that personal influence and high power distance affects the communication flows.

However, the disagreement from participants also shows that there is hierarchy and power distance in Sweden. But if we take major respondents answer in to consideration who worked in high power distance country before working in Sweden, they found that hierarchy has less effect on internal communication in Sweden. Therefore, we can relate it to Hofstede’s (1993) statement that all societies are unequal but some are more unequal than others.
5.2 Individualism effect on internal communication in UOG:

Hofstede’s et al. (2010) dimensions regarding individualism / collectivism refer to the equality and freedom between individuals in the society. In case of Swedish culture, individual are open-minded and independent. According to the empirical finding Respondents are exercising more freedom and become more independent in regards to information sharing. If they face any problems they don’t hesitate to report to their supervisors. Respondents mentioned that weekly meetings and seminar are very effective for generating ideas. They further informed that department is always keen to listen to their feedback. The department always has additional funds for outing with the employees. It helps the employees to know each other and make good relationship with their supervisors. The study found that members in the meeting would not take any final decisions before everyone agrees on any important particular issues. A mutual agreement enhances the relationship between individuals and reduces the miscommunication. This finding supports the argument which is concluded by Saks, (2006), Shore & Cross (2005) and Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) where the authors argued how any miscommunication can damage the company performance and reputations.

Employees in the university never found themselves misguided or miscommunicated. All the decisions have quickly reached to them. It reveals that employees are receiving information which are sometimes not related them. Faster communication reduces the gap between individuals. It promotes employees engagement and reduces miss communication which is vital for effective internal communication. Faster communication can increase transparency between subordinates and supervisors. As Sweden is high individualistic country, members in the organization likes to share their own voices in decision making. Sharing and participation in decision making at UOG has made the internal communication more transparent and visible. It can be argued that sharing and participation is vital for effective internal communication in the organization. in this way, supervisor can understand their subordinates and feel free to communicate with each other. It reduces the gap between supervisors and subordinates (Kitchen & Daly, 2002) as well as increases positive involvement among employees (Saks, 2006) which affects internal communication positively.
The study found that internal relationship with their supervisors is more effective and two-way communication. Supervisor has respects their subordinates opinions and encourage to come forward with positive ideas. On the other hand, it has created positive impacts on both supervisors and employees. The finding aligns with Welch et al., (2007), Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, (2011) where the authors argued that clear relationship is vital for better internal communication in the organization. Hofstede et al. (2010) argued that individualistic culture is more prone to personal freedom and open relationship with subordinates and tends to work independently. However, our study found that in UOG, participants prefer to work in groups. Even if Sweden is high individualistic country, participants prefer to work in groups rather than individuals that slightly differs from Hofstede et al. (2010). It provides us the evidences that even if high individualistic country like Sweden individual can work in groups which is important for clear internal communication in the organization. However, this finding is limited to only one institution and further research needs to be implemented for clarify it.

5.3 Power distance effect on internal communication in AIUB:

It has been observed that in Bangladesh communication flows have barriers from top management to bottom layers. According to Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) Bangladesh is a high power distance country. Top management has biggest influences on their employees. It has been found that top positions employees are exercising more control and information. The information is hardly reach to lower employees. The top management makes several decisions without acknowledging other employees. For example, employee guidelines book has been developing to let the employees know all the rules and guidelines and employee feedback is taken from employees. But the success of implementation rate is lower as per respondents’ comments.

Moreover, it was found that communication flows are interrupted by various sources from top positions which ultimately affect the communication flows. It further reduces the commitment and positive engagement. As argued by Welch et al., (2007) that internal communication is designed to reduce the gap between employees and top management and to increase the commitment in the organization. From the study, it is visible high power distance may affect the communication flows from reaching top management to lower management. Furthermore this also supports finding of Moorman, (1995) that
employee of organizations in hierarchical culture feel less comfortable to share information with their supervisor and subordinate and by doing that they block the organizational communication flow.

In power distance countries, the organization tends to have many layers (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2001). Respondents agreed on the fact that the layer can be barriers for effective communication flows. The information can be limited to management and the higher authority has been unable to acknowledge the importance of their employees. It is due to that Bangladesh is high power distance country. Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) argued that in high power distance culture, the organization tends to have many layers. It is noticeable that the impact of national culture on communication flows in organization is enormous in Bangladesh and the individual are very much influenced by national culture. It provides the arguments which are supported by Jung, Su, Baeza & Hong, (2008) and Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) where individuals are largely influenced by their own national culture in the organization. The study has found the differences of communication flows between two countries in Bangladesh and Sweden. In this context, Varey & White, (2000) argued that effective dialogue and communication is important for long term relationship which can create positive image for the organizations.

5.4 Individualism effect on internal communication in AIUB

In regards to information sharing, in Bangladesh top management has more freedom and power then the lower level employees. The top management especially department heads have more power to share their opinions in the organization. But in case of lower management employees, they have limited authority and preferred to work in groups. According to Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) high collectivistic society like Bangladesh can prefer to work in groups rather than individuals. But it has been found that in group discussion higher authority approval is still important. In that case, information sharing is not transparent between employees and subordinates where Welch et al., (2007) argued that the success of internal communication depends on the clear message between employees and subordinates.

From the study it has been observed that in Bangladesh the supervisor has good relation with their subordinates. But in most cases it depends on the personal relationship and
influences. Personal relationship can be important factors for receiving information and better communication. Otherwise, much information may not reach to the lower levels. Top management negligence has been observed in Bangladesh context regarding clear communication and guidelines. Fear factor works here where subordinates feel afraid of sharing information with supervisors due to the lower positions. It can hamper the effective internal communication which is argued by Welch, (2012) and Varey & White, (2000). Also this result supported the finding of Schwartz, (1999) that in hierarchical culture people highly value social power, authority and humility.

It has been found that events such as picnics, get together between top management and subordinates have not been practiced regularly at AIUB in Bangladesh. It can affect the relationship and bonding between supervisors and employees. According to Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) cultural dimensions, Bangladesh has collectivistic culture where group interest is much more important than individuals. But it has been observed that personal relationship has also played an important part in making good relations. Majority of the respondents agreed that trust is important factor for good understandings and relationship.

It has been observed that respondents in Bangladesh worked under both Bangladeshi dean and foreign dean (Philippines) have experienced different relationship with each other. The respondents mentioned that they were very much comfortable working under foreign dean. The foreign dean is very much open minded and keen to listen to other subordinates. In addition, it was effective for better communication and has made the employees more commitment to their work. On the other hand, regarding Bangladeshi dean the employees have expressed optimistic opinions. According to the respondents, the Bangladeshi dean was not very much active and had commanding voice. The respondents agreed that under his leadership, the communication was not so effective. National culture of the dean have influenced the communication flows in AIUB. Due to the national culture differences of the dean, the respondents in Bangladesh have been exposed to different understanding and communication at AIUB.

As Bangladesh is high power distance and low individualistic country, the Bangladeshi dean was influenced by Bangladeshi culture and it affects his communication flow between him and subordinates in the university. Bangladeshi culture tends to prefer distance communication and follow commanding voice in group discussions. But in case
of Philippines dean it was different as Philippines is low power distance and collectivistic country in comparison to Bangladesh. Philippine dean was very much open and cooperative with subordinates regarding internal communication. This finding further supported by Jung, Su, Baeza & Hong, (2008) and Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) where national culture differences of the individuals have profound impact on the communication flows in the organization.

5.5 Cultural impact on internal communication:

It has been found that cultural differences in Sweden and Bangladesh have impact on communication flows. Welch et al., (2007) argued that transparency is important for effective communication. In Sweden, the lower layers in the organization and higher authority active participation have made the communication clear and transparent. It has been noted that the top management are keen to know the feedback from employees and acknowledge their importance in the organization. It is necessary for better communication and employee engagement which is concluded in the arguments by Ruck & Welch, (2012), Lee, (2009) and Mishra, Boynton & Mishra, 2014.

On the other hand, in Bangladesh high power distance and collectivism interrupted the communication in various ways. It has been found that communication from top management is not reaching to employees. Cultural beliefs and practices in the particular organization has made the communication unclear and limited to the higher authorities. This finding supports the arguments provided by Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001) and Sriramesh, Grunig &Dozier (1996) where national cultural differences has made the communication different. It has been also found that trust and fear factor is important for effective internal communication. Top management of particular university in Bangladesh have limited trust to their employees. On the other hand, employees feel unsecure to go forward with ideas to the higher authorities as it depends on the top management approval. Mentioned factors may hinder the internal communication which is essential for effective internal communication argued by Welch et al., (2007), White, Vanc & Stafford, (2010), Stein (2006) and Hofstede & Hofstede, (2001). Below table represents the findings of analysis briefly:

It has been noted that different countries or culture in the organization have been practising internal communication differently. Previous literature argued that clear and
effective internal communication is necessary for organizational growth. However, it did not consider the intensity of cultural impact on internal communication in the organization. Our study found that institutions in Sweden and Bangladesh have been practising and implementing the internal communication differently. In Sweden it is open communication but in Bangladesh it is restricted communication. It is due to the fact that Bangladesh is high power distance country as well as trust and fear factor are important incidents for delivering clear communication from Bangladeshi respondents perspectives. So it can be argued that in Bangladeshi context the practise of internal communication in the organization is right choice considering cultural impact. Our study suggests that open and clear communication is not always possible from cultural perspectives. It is important to consider the cultural impact on internal communication in the organization to make it more effective and prosperous.
### Table 6: Findings from analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power distance</td>
<td>Hofstede et al. (2010), Welch and Jackson, (2007).</td>
<td>Top to bottom clear communication but in certain cases limited to supervisors</td>
<td>Top to bottom clear communication but in certain cases limited to supervisors</td>
<td>Aligned with Hofstede et al. (2010), layers and misunderstanding hinders communication flows which is argued by Welch and Jackson, (2007)</td>
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<td>Power distance</td>
<td>Hofstede et al. (2010), Welch and Jackson, (2007).</td>
<td>Fewer layers in the organization makes communication easier</td>
<td>Less hierarchy in organization makes communication easier</td>
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<td>Power distance</td>
<td>Hofstede et al. (2010), Welch and Jackson, (2007).</td>
<td>Clear understanding between employees are essential for internal communication</td>
<td>Weekley meetings, presentations, electronic mails and strong internal network for sharing internal communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UOG</td>
<td>Individualism/collectivism</td>
<td>Saks, (2006), Hofstede et al. (2010), Kitchen and Daly, (2002)</td>
<td>Emphasize the importance of two way communication in internal communication.</td>
<td>Supervisor subordinate relationship is influential</td>
<td>Finding Aligned with authors</td>
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<td>Individualism/collectivism</td>
<td>Saks, (2006), Hofstede et al. (2010), Kitchen and Daly, (2002)</td>
<td>Cultural differences as well as distance between subordinates and supervisors often creates misunderstanding</td>
<td>Easy access to supervisors Both formal and informal relationship have been observed</td>
<td>Finding Aligned with authors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individualism/collectivism</td>
<td>Hofstede et al. (2010).</td>
<td>Individualistic culture prefers to work independently regarding decision making</td>
<td>Individualistic culture but prefers to work in groups regarding decision making</td>
<td>Differs from Hofstede et al. (2010), prefers to work in groups even in individualistic culture.</td>
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Source: Own
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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<td>AIUB</td>
<td>Power distance</td>
<td>Hofstede et al. (2010), Sriramesh, Grunig and Dozier (1996), Parboteeah and Cullen, (2003)</td>
<td>Communication mostly limited to supervisors</td>
<td>Supervisor mostly influence the communication flow</td>
<td>Finding Aligned with authors</td>
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<td>Culture affects the communication flows in the organization</td>
<td>Many layers in the organization hinders the communication flows</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Positions are influential in making decisions</td>
<td>Employee Position is influential in making decisions</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Effective communication is important for employees engagement</td>
<td>More formal communication with top management</td>
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<td>Organizational practices largely influenced by national culture</td>
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<td>Hofstede et al. (2010).</td>
<td>Collectivistic culture prefers to work in groups</td>
<td>Collectivistic culture but approval from higher authority is still important</td>
<td>Differs from Hofstede et al. (2010), in group decision still higher authority approval is important even in collectivistic society</td>
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Source: Own
6. Conclusion

6.1 Answering research Question:

“How does national culture influence internal communication process of university?”

Hofstede's power distance and Individualism are taken into consideration to answer the research question. The study tried to find out how these dimensions affect internal communication in two culturally diversified country's university. The study showed that cultural differences have effect on internal communication.

**Power Distance effect on internal communication:** Previous study showed that high power distance has negative impact on internal communication. Our study found this result true. From our respondent's view high power distance creates block between supervisors and subordinates to share information. Thus it creates barriers for effective communication flow and hinders organizations development. Our study also found that power distance is available in both countries but the degree of power distance is varied from one to another.

**Individualism vs. collectivism effect on internal communication:** In our study we found that Individualism and collectivism has effect on internal communication. Our study shows that Individualistic or collectivistic decision making process of university affect internal communication of university in both countries. Previous study suggested that high power distance country tend to be a collectivistic country. Though the result is not always true. However, we found that true in our study.

The current study aimed to investigate the impact of cultural differences on the internal communication. It has been noticed that internal communication flows have been influenced by several factors in two countries. The study found management centric communication flow preferences rather than employee centric in case of both Sweden and Bangladesh perspective. In addition, it focuses on the importance of the needs of employee communication in terms of engagement and channel. Communication is undermined due to the upper management negligence and ignorance.

It has been noticed that clear communication encourages the employee’s engagement and positive performance in the organization. In terms of clear communication, the study has
acknowledged the recognition of employees in terms communication preferences. Further, supervisor and subordinate relationship has also been important to enhance the communication flows. It is important for manager to understand and assess the importance of internal communication in the organization. The study found that in several incidences, manager is the medium of the communication flows between upper and lower management. Good relationship and clear understating with subordinates and manager helps to reduces communication gap between higher authority and employees. Trust and fear factors are also seen as an influential element in regards to internal communication.

The study also reveals that how cultural differences can have an impact on internal communication in the organization. The degree of nationality and the organizational practice have severe impact on the communication flows. The perception of internal communication to employees has been reflected by cultural differences. In addition, hierarchy levels in the organization is another element for influencing the internal communication. Power distance, individualism and personal relationship are the critical elements in the organization which can have an impact on effective internal communication implementation in regards to cultural differences between countries.

6.2 Managerial implication:

The study provides guidelines regarding how cultural impact differentiate the communication flow in two countries. The study provides the arguments that how supervisor has influenced internal communication flows in the organization. It is crucial for mangers to understand the importance of subordinates regarding clear communication. The study provides important insights on how communication flows can be interrupted due to misunderstanding and negligence. Frequent interaction and fewer distance between employees and supervisors have been found as an essential element for better communication and understanding. Supervisor needs to understand subordinates in order to better communication with them. This requires employers and managers to find a meaningful way for internal communication that accommodate the various aspects of employee’s preferences in terms of direct communication.
6.3 Theoretical implications

The study adopts employee centric approach to explore the effects of culture on internal communication. This is an important contribution to previous researches that focused on internal communication from different perspectives, inclusion of cultural differences on internal communication has added value to the research field. The study has also identified theories which differs now in present context such as Hofstede et al. (2010) in regards to group decision making which has been outlined in our analytical part. The study reflects the impact of cultural differences on internal communication in two different countries where it has been able to show how culture can affect the flow of internal communication from theoretical background.

This paper contributes insights in cultural differences as well as employee perspective and by doing so it suggests theorist and practitioners that how internal communication can relate to employee’s engagement in different cultural perspectives. Trust is another important factor which have been found in our empirical data as an important element for effective internal communication. However few researches have been observed in the field of effective communication flows in different cultural perspectives. The literature suggests that open and clear communication is essential for effective communication flows. But it did not consider how culture can define the communication flows in different countries. Our study can be served as basis that how different culture are practicing the communication flows in different organizations. Further researches need to assess the practice of different culture in implementing internal communication and whether their own practice is fit for the organization or not.

6.4 Reflection of study

In this study one of the university is private funded and another one is government funded. We think that if we could consider on this fact and analysed in more depth, then we could provide more details about the organization. We focused only on power distance and individualism effect on internal communication in university setting. However, other dimensions may affect the internal communication of university. Because of the relevance of study, we didn’t focus on those issues. Another issue we faced during the interview was time shortage. As our respondents hold important position of the organization they give us as much time they can from their busy schedule. But, we believe that if we could
manage more time from them we could provide more depth analysis. In addition, we think that our analysis section could be developed more by adding more aspects of the factors.

6.5 Suggestions for future research

While the study is limited to the discussion of two universities, it contributes consideration of the data collected from qualitative approach. Additional qualitative or quantitative methods can be required to explore the findings in different aspects. The qualitative findings here cannot be considered as conclusive. In addition, the sample size is too small to represent the whole population in regards to university perspective. Further, the study focuses on the educational institute. The findings may vary in accordance with the different industry and sectors. The study provides the guidelines regarding the impact of culture on internal communication. Future research could consider other important factors that may have profound impact on internal communication in different settings.
Reference


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Appendix:

Interview Questions:

1. How do you receive information regarding different issues of the university?
2. How do you communicate with others in university?
3. Is there any information of the university that you think is not reaching you properly or do you feel that information is not reaching you regarding policies and other issues of the university?
4. How would you describe the communication flow within your organization?
5. Do you think the organizational structure effects the communication flow?
6. What communication freedom do you have to communicate with others in the university?
7. How you would describe the relationship between you and your supervisor regarding internal communication?
8. How well do you think information flows from the department head to you? How do you think the information flows could be improved?
9. Do you think you are satisfied with the communication process of the university?
10. Have you observed any difference in communication process and communication flow while visiting the other university as an exchange faculty?