The role of corporate culture in managing cultural diversity
A case study on a German multinational company

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Abstract

**Research Aim:** Our aim is to understand how multinational companies integrate cultural diversity of employees in their corporate culture. To achieve this objective, we compare the employees’ perception with the company's view on the topic.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A qualitative case study is conducted with three sets of questionnaires. Two sets of questionnaires were designed for the foreign and the local employees. The third set was created for the department of human resource management who represented the company’s view. Analysis is done by comparing the theories with empirical findings of the study.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that corporate culture is inspired by the national culture. By implementing a proper recruiting process, socialization and teamwork, multinational companies can integrate cultural diversity successfully in their corporate culture. Several tools such as offering language courses, announcements in both languages, a welcoming at the new country booklet, mentors, anonymous feedback on cultural issues and sports or cultural outings are proposed to manage cultural diversity. These tools can be used for both the foreign and the local employees. The integration relies on both employees and the companies. However, upper management should support the department of human resources management to find solutions for the integration of a culturally diverse workforce.

**Practical implications:** Contemporary studies propose tools like mentoring programs that are costly and may ignite stereotyping while managing cultural diversity. This study proposes tools that are cost-effective and functional in integrating and managing cultural diversity of employees.

**Originality/Value:** Previous studies do not emphasize the role of corporate culture in integrating cultural diversity of employees. This study focuses on the empirical gap of employees’ perception on the role of corporate culture in integrating cultural diversity. It proposes, that to manage cultural diversity, companies should only focus on the national and corporate culture of the company and not necessarily of the employee’s culture.

**Keywords:** National Culture, Corporate Culture, Germany, MNC, Employee’s Perception.
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1 Introduction

In this chapter, we introduce our topic together with our problem formulation, research gap, aim of study and research questions. The chapter ends with limitations of the study along with disposition of how the study is proceeded.

1.1 Background

In a constantly changing world, globalization is becoming more common every day. Frontiers are disappearing. Cultures are losing barriers and becoming homogeneous. Companies are trying their best to create corporate cultures which comply with these mentioned characteristics. Sooner than later if a multinational, globalized, company strives to keep on growing around the world it will be necessary to follow this mindset.

According to Dresser & Carns (1969), culture enables us to communicate with each other with a shared language and helps us assume how others in our society are likely to respond to our actions. It is through cultural interpretations, we derive meaning to things, we learn to survive in groups through cultural knowledge and skills, culture unites us and divides us based on our collective upbringing (Miroshnik, 2002). To put it simply, it is the collective programming of the mind which differentiates the members of one group or category from another (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), a group of people holding the same set of values, beliefs and attitudes (Wild & Wild, 2016).

Cultural diversity is often described as a phenomenon where diverse individuals or groups of people from different social and cultural backgrounds work, live and interact with each other (Fleury, 1999). The world we live in today is becoming more culturally diverse due to factors such as globalization of economies, progress in science and technology, health and security, and changes in demographics (Stewart, 2007:). Economic activities have fostered the interactions of people of different cultural backgrounds as countries like China and India moved from a closed economy to a global one. Technological progress has worked as a catalyst and embedded this process at a faster pace than ever before. Different nations work in collaborations with each other to face common global challenges like global warming and security concerns (Stewart, 2007:9). The demographics of nations are changing due to
international migration making cultural diversity a growing concern among businesses and society at large (Stewart, 2007:9; Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996; Thomas, 1999).

Cultural diversity is an attribute limited to countries that take in migrant people’s culture and unite it with their own culture (Pires, 1999). Countries that have been identified and acknowledged as ethnically diverse include: New Zealand, Malaysia, Canada, Australia, United States & South Africa (Taylor, Pearson, Clarke, Mason, Abernethy, Willoughby & Sabel, 2010; Butler, Khoo-Lattimore & Mura, 2014; Pires & Stanton, 2000). Another country that has become culturally diverse in recent years is Germany. Since the 1960s, they have received political refugees and labor migrants (Schachner, Noack, Van de Vijver & Eckstein, 2016). In 2017, Germany held 9.2 million immigrants making it the country to hold the largest number of non-nationals in the EU, followed by United Kingdom (6.1 million) and Italy (5.0 million) (European Commission, 2018b). On January the 1st, 2016, Germany had a population of 82.175 million (European Commission, 2018a), making it the most populated country in Europe and the fourth biggest economy in the world with 4.2 trillion USD in GDP (Smith, 2018). The economic factors and the recent migrant crisis in Europe have made Germany a culturally diverse country in recent years.

1.2 Cultural diversity of employees in MNCs

According to Miroshnik (2002:521), the term “multinational corporation” or MNC “is more of a complex form that usually has fully autonomous units operating in multiple countries”. Cultural diversity as a topic, gained popularity in the early 1990s both among researchers and organizations (Süß & Kleiner, 2007). One of the greatest challenges MNCs face today is managing the cultural diversity of human resources (Cardoso, Madeira & Rodrigues, 2018). There are debates on globalization vs localization when it comes on implementing a design for managing cultural diversity (Süß & Kleiner, 2007). According to Ferner (1997), globalization has influenced MNCs to become stateless players, detached from individual nations. However, he also denotes that country of origin plays its role in how HRM practices are viewed. For example, the German cultural system views and treats human resources as an investment rather than a cost because of their long-term oriented culture which focuses on future potentials and long-term goals (Ferner, 1997). Cox (1994) defines management of cultural diversity as planning and implementing systems and practices to maximize the benefits of a culturally
diverse workforce while minimizing the drawbacks related to it. The benefits are in terms of group creativity, work cohesiveness, flexible attitude towards change and drawbacks such as cultural conflicts and employee turnover (Cox & Blake, 1991). It implies a holistic focus by integrating values in the organizational culture on empowering employees of different backgrounds to reach full potential in achieving company goals (Fleury, 1999; Seymen 2006). Successful integration of culturally diverse workforce means creating a work environment where individuals of various backgrounds can work as a cohesive unit while understanding and respecting each other’s personal differences (Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996).

1.3 Corporate culture

The relevance and significance of culture in business studies have been an issue of great interest among researchers especially since the 1980s with Hofstede and Trompenaars’s contributions of managing culture from a business perspective. Organizational culture is the way in which members of an organization express themselves and relate to each other, their work and the outside world in comparison to the organizations (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (2012) stated that employees’ perception of the organization and their belief regarding the organization influences the corporate culture.

Large corporations often try to establish a corporate culture that addresses the cultural aspects and differences of nations (Laurent, 1986). Comparative studies demonstrate managers often hold different beliefs about the nature of management which is derived from their own national culture (Laurent, 1986). Most managers hold the belief that organizational culture moderates or helps eradicate the strong biases of national culture (Miroshnik, 2002). Researchers have found that aspects of culture such as core values, beliefs and attitudes provide major contributions in determining a company's success (Gorman, 1989).

1.4 Problem formulation

Cultural diversity is often represented under the broader banner of diversity in general which includes different race or ethnicity, age, ability, religion and sexual orientation (Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018). Our research, however, only focuses on cultural diversity and does not analyze other noticeable demographic attributes that would otherwise complicate our study.
Most literature in “cultural diversity management” as a concept does not emphasize enough on the importance of corporate culture in terms of managing cultural diversity of employees. Subsequently, employees’ perception of corporate culture in managing cultural diversity has not been studied. Cox & Blake (1991) and Fleury (1999) argued that cultural diversity provides competitive advantage to organizations and hence should be supported and managed effectively. Hyder & Osarenkhoe (2018) found that a new and common organizational culture can be created that acknowledge the cultural differences of managers and maximize the benefits of such cultural differences while minimizing the disadvantages. They mention disadvantages such as difficulty in gaining acceptance of other partners in finding a common solution to problems. Fish (1999:196) mentions “...the existence of a corporate culture that values mindset reflective of the cultural diversity of the organization...”. He suggested that when cross-cultural values and attitudes can be found in an organization, the business managers do not follow an ethnocentric approach towards international businesses. It helps creating a mindset which is suitable for cross.border business activities (Fish, 1999). Research suggests that companies can create a corporate culture that understands the cultural differences of employees and can benefit from the diversity they bring to the organization (Fish, 1999; Hyder & Osarenkhoe, 2018). However, the stated values of the corporate culture need to be aligned with the HR practices so that employees can perceive them positively (Ortega-Parra & Sastre-Castillo, 2013). Süß & Kleiner (2007) propose tools like training programs and a team for managing cultural diversity while Magdaleno & Kleiner (1996) put focus on having support from the upper management to implement and conduct such training programs. However, these studies do not explicitly mention about to create a corporate culture to address the issue of managing cultural diversity.

1.5 Identified research gap

Contemporary literature on managing cultural diversity in particular to MNCs does not emphasize the role of corporate culture in integrating and managing cultural diversity of employees (Süß & Kleiner, 2007; Reiche, 2006; Moore, 2015; Vassilopoulou, 2017; Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018). Research in general associates organizational/corporate culture to managing diversity across borders or subsidiaries (Fish, 1999; Hyder & Osarenkhoe, 2018). We believe that analyzing the role of corporate culture in integrating and managing cultural diversity of employees is important. It can benefit companies of all sizes and be cost-effective for managing cultural diversity more efficiently. However, having employees’ perception of
their corporate culture in integrating cultural diversity has not been yet researched, and we assert that it is vital for a company’s success.

1.6 Aim of the study

Our aim is to understand how multinational companies integrate cultural diversity in their corporate culture. To attain this goal we compare the employees’ perception to the company's view on the topic. Then, we analyze the outcome in the lights of academic literature to propose what can be done to manage cultural diversity.

To achieve this purpose, we conducted a case study at the headquarters of a German multinational corporation. The headquarters is located in Germany and according to all of the interviewees, their workforce is culturally diverse. We will analyze and compare employees’ perception with HR’s definition of their organizational culture and management of cultural diversity of employees in lights of the academic literature.

1.7 Research questions

1. How do employees perceive the integration of cultural diversity management in the company’s corporate culture?
2. What can be proposed to manage cultural diversity?

1.8 Delimitations

We have limited our study and focused only on white-collar managerial and non-managerial positions. We have specifically chosen cultural diversity amongst the other markers that diversity is studied upon (gender, age, ability, religion and sexual orientation. When studying cultural diversity, we only focused on the national cultures and not on other aspects, like cultural differences due to ethnicities. Germany is considered to be a culturally diverse country in recent years. This and other factors made us chose Germany to conduct our study. Our research focuses on a company’s management of cultural diversity through their corporate culture. It did not consider managing cultural diversity in other scenarios (such as the integration of immigrants to society). These scenarios, with far more complexity, though can be related to our study, should be researched separately. We limited our study to a qualitative research because we set
out to gain a deeper understanding on the subject and desired to provide insights on the topic of cultural diversity management.

1.9 Disposition

The study is structured in six chapters. Chapter 1 is comprised of a background of the study along with the relevance of the topics researched in the academic literature. The problem is formulated on the basis of previous studies. Afterwards the research gap is identified. The aim of the study is stated with research questions. Chapter 2 represents the main concepts applied to the study based on the academic literature. A theoretical framework is constructed using the previous. Chapter 3 represents the methodology of the study. The chapter explains the research methods used and the procedures of how the study was conducted. Chapter 4 demonstrates major findings of the study under the heading empirical findings. Chapter 5 discusses the findings with the theories to provide an analysis of the research. Chapter 6 concludes by answering the research questions along with proposing a revised theoretical framework, theoretical implications, practical implications, limitations and suggestions for future research.

![Figure 1: Thesis Disposition, own.](image-url)
2 Literature Review

The chapter consists of major concepts in the following order: national culture, corporate culture and cultural diversity management. After reviewing the literature based on the concepts, a theoretical framework is proposed.

2.1 Theoretical background

Schneider (1988) mentions that corporate culture of organizations may vary due to the national culture of the multinational companies. It is important to understand the concept of national culture since it is often deeply embedded in the corporate culture (Newman & Nollen, 1996). That is why national culture is selected as one of the concepts. The corporate culture is used as a concept to understand how the employees perceive the integration of cultural diversity management in the corporate culture as stated in the first research question. Cultural diversity management is the central issue of the study and hence selected as a concept to view how other researchers theorized the topic.

2.2 National culture

Hofstede & Hofstede (2005:6) describe culture as the “collective programming of the mind” of a group of people. Nations are not only separated by physical boundaries, but by people of individual nations that are conditioned by distinct ways of interactions, socialization and that view the world through different cultural lenses (Morden, 1995). Although there are different levels of cultural influences through family, education, job professions, social life etc. people also experience and prorate a common set of characteristics defined by their national identity (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) categorized national culture in five major dimensions:

1. Power Distance- How people in a society deal with the inequality of power. It is emulated in the values, motivations, attitudes and behaviors of individuals on how less powerful members interact with the powerful ones, on what is expected from both and what they accept from each other (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005:46). Small power distance countries view social inequality as inadmissible and try to reduce it which can be observed in their values, behaviors and policies (Morden, 1995).
2. Uncertainty avoidance- It demonstrates the attitudes of a nation towards uncertain and obscure circumstances (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005:167). Germany is regarded as a country with high uncertainty avoidance and hence “...people have an inner need for living up to rules.” so the guiding principle of organizations could be by using formal rules (Harvey, 1997:134).

3. Femininity versus masculinity- It attempts to explain whether the dominant values in a society are determined by masculine values like competitiveness and assertiveness or feminine values like nurturing and quality of life. In masculine societies, gender roles prevail where men are expected to be tough and assertive and women are expected to be soft and modest. In feminine societies, gender roles may overlap. (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005:121)

4. Individualism versus collectivism - Collectivist cultures put emphasis of group responsibility on individuals and the group is also held responsible for individuals. Whereas in the individualist societies, the ties between individuals are loose. (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005:76)

5. Long-term vs short-term orientation - The long-term oriented cultures tend to focus on the future. Immediate or short-term success is sacrificed or overlooked over long-term goals. Hard work, value of time and being able to adapt to cope with the future is appreciated and expected in long-term oriented cultures. They are organized and have a pragmatic approach towards life in general. Such cultures put emphasis on analytical skills in education and economy. Whereas in short-term oriented cultures, virtue is associated with the past and present and much emphasis is put on fulfilling social obligations. (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005:210).

6. Indulgence versus restraint- Indulgence is related to a society or a country that allows and can afford to enjoy life and having spare time for leisure activities. Restraint is defined by a society or a country having strict social norms and desire to control free gratification. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

2.3 National culture in managing cultural diversity

National culture works as a guiding principle on how employees of an organization understand and interpret work and their expectations on how they should be treated (Newman & Nollen, 1996; Plijter, van der Voordt & Rocco, 2014). Newman & Nollen (1996) argue that management practices that are congruent with national culture are more likely to perform better
in terms of financial aspects. However, their findings were based on a homogenous workforce. Plijter et al. (2014) also advocated for local management to decide on the characteristics of management practices. However, they acknowledge the fact that most multinational companies have multicultural teams. Therefore, they suggested observing on how specific teams work together and strive for a workplace environment that increases the communication between employees.

As most multinational companies have a culturally diverse workforce (Plijter et al. 2014), the role of national culture in diversity management has become crucial (Stoermer, Bader & Froese, 2016). Managing diversity of employees by acknowledging their differences in opinion enhances job satisfaction, ownership of responsibility among employees while reducing turnover intentions (Shore, Chung, Dean, Holcombe-Ehrhart, Jung, Randel & Singh, 2011). Stoermer et al. (2016) denote that countries with characteristics of low power distance, high collectivism, low uncertainty avoidance, low masculinity and long-term oriented cultures provide an inclusive climate to manage diversity effectively. They argue that low power distance facilitates the desire for equal treatment, whilst high collectivist cultures have a greater awareness for equity as they feel moral obligation over the group.

Countries with low uncertainty avoidance are found to be friendly and welcoming towards diversity. Diversity brings changes and nations with low uncertainty avoidance are better in dealing with change. Countries with high uncertainty avoidance emphasize on rules and documentation due to being precautious towards uncertainties and future. Such procedures hamper entrepreneurial activities such as risk-taking and dynamism. Therefore, low uncertainty avoidance is considered suitable for entrepreneurial activities. (Hangcioğlu, Dogan & Yildrim, 2014)

Garcia, Posthuma & Roehling (2009) found that more masculine countries are likely to prefer their own nationals for job vacancies over immigrants. Lastly, long-term oriented cultures foresee the benefits of diversity as a long-term competitive advantage and hence are suitable for diversity (Hangcioğlu et al. 2014).
2.4 Corporate culture

The concept of corporate or organizational culture gained importance in the business literature with the success of Japanese management style (Xiaoming & Junchen, 2012). The success of Japanese organizations is often associated with practices such as long-term perspective on business relationships, strong commitment and collaboration between employees and the company and constant probing to enhance productivity (Szostak, 1984). The culture of an organization was often considered as a determinant factor for companies’ success (Arogyaswamy, 1987). Corporate culture is defined as “...a set of norms and values that are widely shared and strongly held throughout the organization.” (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1996:166). Schneider (1988) defined corporate culture as a glue which holds the organization together by improving control, coordination and integration of their subsidiaries while Cremer (1993:354) defines corporate culture as “...the part of the stock of knowledge that is shared by a substantial portion of the employees of the firm...”. Its design is based on what an organization has accomplished, what it stands for and how things are done in the organization in terms of dealing with external adaptations and internal integration that can also be understood by and communicated to new members of the organization (Cremer 1993; Arogyaswamy, 1987).

According to Gorman (1989) the corporate culture differs from organization to organization. It is based on past crisis and the national culture of the multinational companies. He further denoted that corporate culture is comprised of the national culture it is operating in, the environment and the company itself. For example, an organization which is operating in a dynamic environment requires an emphasis on creativity, innovation and adaptability (Gorman, 1989; Schneider, 1988).

2.5 Corporate culture in managing cultural diversity

Corporate culture has been discussed in the literature as a way of exerting control for the headquarters of MNCs over subsidiaries by installing norms and values as a guide on “the way things are done around here” (Schneider, 1988:232). However, most multinational companies have a multicultural workforce (Plijter et al., 2014) and a diverse workforce is becoming a necessary element and contributor to the success of companies (Bolen & Kleiner, 1996). Cultural differences are not the challenge but they demand for a cultural fit so that employees of different cultural backgrounds can understand each other by having sufficient knowledge on
each other's culture (Hyder & Osarenkhoe, 2018). The company should realize that in order to foster creativity and productivity among employees it is necessary to be free from misunderstandings and conflicts occurring due to cultural differences (Bolen & Kleiner, 1996).

However, research shows that human resource policies that are developed at the headquarters not only reflect the company's culture but also the national culture of the organization (Schneider, 1988; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). For example, German HR practices are comprised of their preference of having a decentralized governing system with less hierarchical in structure and formalization of goals, timeframe and documentation (Schneider, 1988). Such business practices can be easily transferred when operating with a person or company with a similar national culture (Ryan, Windsor, Ibragimova & Prybutok, 2010; Kattman, 2014). Managers often hold different beliefs about the nature of management which is derived from their own national culture (Laurent, 1986).

Organizational culture may not be deeply embedded like the national culture as it is learned during an adult life of the employee after he/she joins an organization (Kattman, 2014). Nevertheless, it has been observed that employees can identify the strong culture of an organization. Hofstede (1980) found that most employees of IBM identified their corporate culture with a sense of pride.

In order to create and flourish a corporate culture, the recruiting process of employees is considered one of the most important apparatus. Organizations ideally want to recruit employees who would reflect on their values or select individuals with behaviors, values and beliefs that best “fit in” to their existing corporate culture. (Schneider, 1988)

For example, the organizational culture between two companies such as Olivetti and IBM is widely different. In Olivetti, the organizational culture represents values like freedom, informality, low in structure and discipline, which suits the typical Italian culture. Which is why Olivetti would prefer to recruit employees with such qualities which might present a typical Italian. On the contrary, IBM would avoid such typical Italian candidates as it does not go with their existing corporate culture. (Laurent, 1983)

Socialization is considered one of the most effective tools to promote corporate culture. Socialization through training programs, company programs on occasions like Christmas and
group gatherings of colleagues. This kind of events helps create a bond between employees which foster the integration of people from different cultural backgrounds and gain a better understanding of each other. Such informal gatherings can generate a feeling of “esprit de corps”, a shared experience enhancing the people values of a company. One of the common tactics to enhance socialization between subsidiaries and headquarters, is through the transfer of expatriates or employees on short assignments, for management and organizational development purposes. (Schneider, 1988)

In order to assist the progress of integration, organizations adopt English as the official language (Hyder & Osarenkhoe, 2018). Studies like McLaurin, (2008); Mahmood, (2011); and Kattman (2014) suggests that with guidance and initiatives, organizational or corporate culture can prove to be more influential than the national culture. Homogenized HRM practices derived from national culture may not be able to utilize the potentials from cultural diversity (Schneider, 1988). In order to manage the corporate culture effectively, employee's perception on company's stated values is found to be essential by Ortega-Parra & Sastre-Castillo (2013). They also found that employees perceive the corporate culture positively when the HRM practices reflect on the stated values of the company. The research suggested that the company's people-oriented values are judged by employees in terms of the commitment and practices of the HRM regarding employees’ job security and monetary rewards.

2.6 Cultural diversity management

Companies worldwide have been realizing for several decades that in order to run successful companies they must think and act global (Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996). Globalization is a process that has been integrating the global market: people are coming in contact with different cultures; they are living and working in foreign countries; multinational companies are becoming a commonplace & businesses are growing their multicultural workforce (Seymen, 2006). According to Seymen (2006), there has been an increase in diversity due to globalization. Diversity is studied on six markers: gender, ethnicity, age, ability, religion and sexual orientation (Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018). Locations that have shown an increase in diversity are companies, which since the ’90s started becoming more diverse on dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender and nationality (Cox, 1991).
Supporting diversity enhances organizational performance and parts from the perspective that all human beings should have equal opportunities in life (Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018). The center of focus for diversity often depends on the narration and the interpretation of the national culture (Moore, 2015; Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018). For example, it is claimed by researchers that in Germany, the organizations tend to prioritize gender diversity over cultural diversity, whereas in the United Kingdom the concept diversity is usually related to ethnic diversity (Moore, 2015).

Cultural diversity started as a reaction to a growing diverse workforce and to the need for competitiveness (Fleury, 1999). This increase is in part because of an evolving business environment, technologies and social media (Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018). However, business leaders are challenged by diversity since they must maximize the opportunities multiculturalism brings while reducing its costs. (Cox, 1991).

Diversity management has grown throughout Europe in recent years and advanced quickly in Germany (Süß & Kleiner, 2007). In fact, the government of this country has lately tried to promote diversity management as an organizational measure to help the integration of ethnic minorities (Vassilopoulou, 2017). However, only a few companies have implemented it in recent years (Süß and Kleiner, 2007). Even though EU & German legislation prohibit discrimination, in Germany companies are not required to actively promote diversity nor move beyond demographic variables (Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018). And in Germany, because of their political past and war guilt, many people evade race-related issues to avoid possible negative feelings towards foreigners (Vassilopoulou, 2017). It is claimed that more than half of the organizations in Germany still do not practice cultural diversity management (Vassilopoulou, 2017). There are clear goals for companies when it comes to gender diversity in Germany but the management of cultural diversity still remains “fuzzy” (Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018).

If companies want to obtain the competitive advantage of having a high amount of diversity and the benefit of it, they need to consider the practical aspects of managing diversity (Mathews, 1998; Alcázar, Romero & Sánchez, 2013). Harung & Harung (1995) proposed that stronger organizations are those who simultaneously strengthened diversity and unity. These authors believed this idea was consistent to the Gestalt principle - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts - but it could only be achieved through higher states of organizational and individual development (cognitive, affective, moral and affective growth). The positive impact diversity
will bring to a group’s performance is correlated to the extent to which companies manage this
diversity, however, this is a complex concept (Alcázar, Romero & Sánchez, 2013).

Having different cultural and ethnic backgrounds generate diverging presumptions, preferences
and meanings (Harung & Harung, 1995). Literature and research have recognized both positive
and negative effects on having diverse employees. If managed correctly it can be an asset,
however, if it is ignored, it can affect overall performance (Seymen, 2006).

Diversity within employees helps companies improve marketing strategies for new markets, to
understand culture effects on purchasing decisions and develop relations with new markets
(Seymen, 2006; Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996). Alternative ways of thinking, better decision
making, increased creativity, innovation and problem-solving quality, are some potential
benefits and net-added value that diversity can bring to organizations (Cox, 1991; Cox & Blake,
1991; Harung & Harung, 1995). Managing diversity adds value to companies and can reveal
new competencies from the employees (Fleury, 1999). It has been proven that when comparing
homogeneous employee groups to those with diverse cultural backgrounds, the latter ones
present more efficient solutions to business problems and in the long term show excellent
performance (Seymen, 2006).

However, cultural differences can potentially increase costs when there are conflicts between
employees, communication breakdowns or turnovers (Cox, 1991). When immersing into a new
culture, sometimes barriers such as believing one is incompetent or feeling resentful to a change
might arise (Cliffe, 2015). Unsuccessful cultural communication or language barriers can
produce psychological stress, make people feel excluded, and unhappy towards the host country
and its culture. (Seymen, 2006). These negative outcomes can be seen as a cultural shock, that
far from only being the encounter with the new and unknown, it is also a consequence of losing
what is traditional and natural (Kealey, 1989). Cultural shock is the process that affects people
living abroad that is characterized by homesickness, confusion and depression which commonly
occurs during stays of a few months or longer periods in an unfamiliar culture (Wild & Wild,
2016). However, in order to aid in this, some companies work with employees and have mentors
who become confidants of expatriates with whom they can discuss problems related to work,
family and readjusting to the home culture (Wild & Wild, 2016).
Cultural diversity management is believed to be the Human Resources’ strategy that allows a successful administration of culturally diverse employees (Seymen, 2006). Cox & Blake (1991) believe that quality human resources are the ones who are able to attract, retain and motivate their people, especially those coming from culturally diverse countries. And some researches made in Germany on management of diversity (Vassilopoulou, 2017; Mahadevan & Ilie, 2018; Reiche, 2006) suggest that a supporting HR infrastructure is crucial: they need to develop employees’ career paths, recognize the importance of managing ethnic diversity and how it is understood in their surroundings (nation, society and organization). Nonetheless, the key element is to have the support and commitment from the upper management and for the whole organization to be informed about this (Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996). This would all, be for the benefit of both the company and their people. Managing diversity initiatives has been estimated to save organizations thousands of dollars by lowering their ethnic minorities’ turnover (Cox & Blake, 1991) so at times organizations need to compromise by mixing cultural approaches (Cliffe, 2015). Diversity management is implemented to create changes in terms of workforce diversity, nevertheless, generally, it is implemented because of business-related reasons rather than treating issues like racism, discrimination or equal opportunities (Vassilopoulou, 2017). However, tools proposed by Süß & Kleiner (2007) such as training programs and diversity management team are often not endorsed by companies, especially in Germany.

Magdaleno & Kleiner (1996), amongst other reasons, believe a company’s success depends on their ability to understand world-wide competition and to manage a constantly changing workforce. That promoting awareness and sensitizing people would hopefully encourage understanding, tolerance, workplace harmony and ultimately lead to a more productive workforce. They also believe that organizations should include training and other managing processes that should be monitored continuously and applied to the entire company. Using isolated activities would not be suitable for managing diversity strategy. Some diversity programmes such as hiring a diversity specialist can be expensive. If a program is implemented inadequately, the programme could backfire and the organization might produce undesired results: During the sessions, the trainer will accentuate group differences about prejudice and discrimination to raise awareness and sensitize employees about diversity. However, if management thinks that the training program is complete with only a diversity specialist, unbeknown to them hostility has arisen amongst co-workers and differences in employees accentuated. Therefore, the ability to manage a culturally diverse workforce will be a major determinant of the survival and success of a global organization. For this reason, it is imperative
for a company to implement a process to continuously monitor the multicultural environment. Many organizations that have succeeded in managing diversity (like Bank of America) have added diversity management departments that initiate and give follow-up programs. Career development activities, performance initiatives & communication training are some examples of diversity program initiatives they propose. (Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996)

To be successful across cultures, employees need to be thoughtful, self-aware and be willing to jump into the unknown (Cliffe, 2015). They also need to own interpersonal and intercultural skills such as empathy, interest in local culture and people, flexibility, tolerance sociability, patience, intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness (Kealey, 1989). Individuals who learn how to code switch and know which behaviors to use in their new cultural setting are the ones who are able to adapt quickly (Cliffe, 2015). However, it is important for this encouragement to come from both the organization and the employee. Training, social support and personality traits are equally important for a person to be successfully immersed in another culture (Kealey, 1989).

2.7 Summary of the literature review

The influence of national culture on shaping the corporate culture of multinational companies is inevitable (Schneider, 1988; Gorman, 1989). Because national culture works as the guide on how employees of an organization decipher meaning on what is expected and what is accepted (Newman & Nollen, 1996). However, contemporary studies suggest that a corporate culture can be more influential than a national culture in managing diversity (McLaurin, 2008; Mahmood, 2011; Kattman, 2014). Previous studies dating back to the 1980s, Hofstede (1980) observed that employees can identify the strong culture of an organization when such culture is implemented correctly. Laurent (1983) and Schneider (1988) mention tactics like recruiting process and socialization to build such culture. Furthermore, Hyder & Osarenkhoe (2018) advocate for a “cultural fit” within the corporate culture. They referred the term cultural fit a way to solve problems related to cultural differences. They also believed that having sufficient knowledge on each other’s culture within the organization can help in having better understanding on how things work differently due to the distinct cultural distances between merging organizations.
For several decades companies have realized that to be successful they have to think and act global (Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996) and through globalization, companies have been expanding their culturally diverse workforce (Seymen, 2006). Companies need to consider certain aspects of managing diversity if they want to benefit from it (Mathews, 1998; Alcazar et al., 2013). There are pros and contras on having a culturally diverse workforce, however, appropriate management on diversity can overweight, the negative aspects. Human resources need to administer this management (Seymen, 2006), nonetheless, it is crucial to have the support and commitment from upper management (Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996). Lastly, to be successful across cultures, employees also need to own interpersonal and intercultural skills (Kealy, 1989), and to adapt quickly to the new cultural setting (Cliffe, 2015). It is important that encouragement comes both from the organization and the employee.

In the following figure, we present our proposed theoretical framework based on the interpretation of the literature review.

**Figure 2: Proposed theoretical model: The role of national culture and corporate culture in managing cultural diversity, own.**
The proposed theoretical framework suggests that cultural diversity management is affected by both the national culture of the country where the company is operating in and the corporate culture of the organization. Some dimensions of national culture can have a bigger impact on the cultural diversity management than others. In other words, the dimension of national culture’s importance and its impact will vary from country to country. The literature on corporate culture suggests that to manage cultural diversity, the recruiting process, socialization and knowledge of employees on each other’s culture can help manage cultural diversity more efficiently. Cultural Diversity Management therefore, must be supported by the upper management. Human resources and employees should be informed of this. The arrows from upper management pointing towards to HR and to employees indicate this. Upper management’s commitment will enable Human Resources to be the ones to implement a successful administration of culturally diverse employees. The arrow pointing from HR to employees demonstrates this. With a supporting HR infrastructure, employees will bring changes to the workforce and in turn will add value and benefit the company. The arrow emerging from employees and pointing upwards Upper management indicates this scenario.
3 Methodology

The chapter consists of methods used to conduct the research in the following order: qualitative, case study, company background, inductive, procedures, face to face interviews, interview questions, reliability & validity, data analysis and method critics.

3.1 Research approach

The overall research approach is demonstrated with a self-explanatory figure. The arrows pointing down show each method is following a sequence of the previous method used. Finally, the last arrow pointing up portrays some of the loopholes in the research approach under the heading method critics.

![Methodology layout](image)

**Figure 3:** Methodology layout, own.
3.2 Qualitative Method

There are different methodological strategies that researchers pursue to obtain their research objectives. Among them, the most commonly used are qualitative and quantitative methods (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Quantitative research methods focus on numbers and patterns while the use of the qualitative method is to focus on having a deeper understanding on the aim of the study and especially research topics that are exploratory and deal with “how” type of questions (Yin, 2014). Lewis (2015) defines qualitative research as a process of inductive data analysis, where researchers attempt to understand and review how the participants derive meaning to the research problem. The information is gathered through open-ended questions and this type of research helps to understand the context of a problem. Furthermore, Bryman & Bell (2015) also mention that qualitative is connected to the use of words as opposed to numbers. They further denote that the primary mode of data is collected through interviews when conducting qualitative research.

The nature of this study covers “how” and “what” type of questions. We aim to have a deeper understanding of the topic of cultural diversity management in corporate culture from the employees’ perspective. The primary source of data for the study is gathered by conducting interviews. All these characteristics are considered suitable for the qualitative method and hence it was selected for the study.

3.3 Case study

Case studies are either based on a single or multiple cases (Yin, 2014). According to Yin (2014), a single case study is preferred when existing theories are available but need some alterations. We found theories on how employees perceive corporate culture and how employees perceive cultural diversity management. However, when it comes to achieving an understanding of how employees perceive the cultural diversity management in their corporate culture, there is a clear research gap. The theories need some alterations from this aspect and hence single case study is found preferable. However, multiple case studies are considered to be superior in terms of having a broader perspective on issues and in generalizing findings (Rowley, 2002). Yin (2014) stressed on the validity of research while conducting a case study.
The company we selected for the research has approximately 7000 employees worldwide and around 1500 employees at the headquarters where the study was conducted. The size of the company justifies the single case study. However, we still believe that multiple case studies are suitable for such research. The size of the company and the country it is operating are two crucial aspects that are needed to be considered when conducting such research. It would be unethical to take subjects that are not identical in size and the social context they operate in for multiple case study purposes.

3.4 Company background

The organization selected for the case study is a German multinational company who is operating in the food & beverage industry. It operates in the business to business industry. The company has been around for almost 2 centuries. They have managed to expand at a rapid growth from the year 2013 with 3000 employees up to 7000 employees in the last 5 years in Asia, Africa, Europe and America. The company decided to stay anonymous and the authors respect their right to privacy by signing a non-disclosure agreement. All the employees participated in the study is also kept anonymous. It is a common ethical practice in social science to respect and keep the privacy and confidentiality of the participants in studies when possible (Crow & Wiles, 2008). They also mention that researchers should aim for preserving and collecting the data in such a way that it cannot be traced back to the participants. We in our research have ensured that the interviewees privacy is kept secret and minimal information of the company is given which also aids for the company to remain anonymous.

3.5 Inductive approach

While conducting a qualitative research there are many approaches that researchers follow, for example: grounded theory, phenomenology, discourse analysis etc. Researchers who are not familiar with these traditional approaches generally prefer to follow an inductive or a deductive approach. The deductive approach covers with reviewing and analyzing the data through existing theories constructed by the authors. While inductive approach means “...the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:12). In this approach, the concepts and models are developed by interpreting the data collected. However, this approach can be time-consuming as data is reviewed thoroughly to extract theories and construct the model. (Thomas, 2006)
The study was conducted by using the inductive approach. The nature of the study favored the research approach. We needed to ensure that the participants were not lead to answer in a certain way to prove or disprove any hypothesis.

3.6 Procedures

One of the authors started establishing contact with the German multinational corporation. The author has previously worked in the company. After the exchange of several emails and calls, the company responded by agreeing to participate in the case study. To get an understanding of the company's corporate culture and how they deal with the issue of cultural diversity management, we decided to interview the department of human resources. Human resources is the department that is in charge of managing human capital, as well as supporting and developing the corporate culture. They are the ones who translate the organizational values and norms to the new members of the organization. For this reason, we decided to begin by interviewing the people from the human resource department. HRM is the abbreviation used through this work while mentioning human resources management.

The first interview was conducted with HRM, we were assigned with two representatives from this department and the interview was conducted using GoToMeeting. GoToMeeting is an online meeting software widely used for online business meetings. It has features of video conferencing and desktop sharing.

The main research question deals with employees’ perception of cultural diversity in their corporate culture. To achieve this objective, we wanted to get participants from as many diverse cultures as possible. One of the authors has worked in the company before. She used her network and social skills to get participants from a wider range of different countries to participate in our study. From the total participants, 11 of the interviewees came from 11 different nationalities from the American, European, Asian and African continents. The other three participants were German. We chose interviewees from different areas and from different positions in both managerial and non-managerial. The average working experience of the employees participated was 3 years and 5 months. All the interview dates were confirmed through email, telephone or social media.
3.7 Face to face interviews

Face-to-face interviews provide interviewers the opportunity to follow social cues such as voice tone and body language (Opdenakker, 2006). Face-to-face interviews aid the interviewees to be more casual and freer which can be beneficial for the communication (Opdenakker, 2006). We strived to have face-to-face interviews since we believe it creates a bonding between the interviewee and the interviewer. We managed to have 13 out of 14 interviews in this way. However, Wengraf (2001) mentioned about “double attention”. He implied that the interviewer should follow on what the respondents say and simultaneously pay attention get the research answers within the timeframe of the interview. For this reason, one of the authors actively engaged with the interviewee while the other focused on issues dealing with time. During the interview, the passive interviewer would intervene in cases of managing time durations.

Bryman and Bell (2015) recommended to be prepared to ask follow-up questions and that the order of the questions could be changed. They also suggested that meanwhile one interviewer is asking a question, the other interviewer has the possibility to come up with other questions that can be suitable. This approach was useful with the questions that were not planned. This process also enabled us to avoid moments of silence.

Face to face interviews require more interactions and paying attention to the interviewer. For this purpose, Bryman (2015) suggested to record conversations with the permission of the interviewees. However, he also mentioned that transcribing can be exhausting and time-consuming. He estimated that it takes around five to six hours to transcribe an hour-long interview. We took permission from all the interviewees to record the interviews. It took around 5.5 hours to transcribe each interview. One of the disadvantages of face-to-face interviews is considered time and financial cost (Wengraf, 2001). We traveled from Sweden to Germany and had to stay there for a week to take those 13 interviews. Wengraf (2001) also mentioned that face-to-face interviews provide the interviewers the opportunity to thank the interviewees in person and ask for their opinions and feedbacks. We showed our gratitude by thanking all the participants and also got positive feedback from them. They showed enthusiasm to see our study findings.

Only one of the interviews was conducted through Skype as the employee was not available in Germany during our visit. Each of the interviews lasted between 50 to 60 minutes. All
interviews were conducted in English. Since all the interviewees worked in positions that required a higher level of English skills for everyday communication, it was the most convenient language for them to have the interviews. We made sure that the interviewees came from different working areas by asking them about their department.

3.8 Interview questions

One of the most common qualitative interviewing techniques is by constructing semi-structured questions. Semi-structured questions allow the interviewees to add new ideas yet do not permit them to change or divert from the main topic. (Edward & Holland, 2013)

We created three sets of interviews: one for the HRM, one for the German employees and one for the foreign employees working in the company. The major issues covered in the interview questions are similarities and differences between the national culture and the corporate culture, corporate culture and management of cultural diversity.

The first set consisted of 15 questions specifically designed for human resources. (See appendix 1). The second set of questions was designed for German employees, which consisted of 18 questions (See appendix 2). The third set of questions were similar to the questions for the German employees, however, they were adapted to also compare to the German culture for the non-German employees (See appendix 3).

3.9 Reliability & validity

Reliability deals with the consistency of results over a population and is suitable to measure in quantitative information. In qualitative research, validity is considered. There are two kinds of validity: external validity and internal validity. The external validity deals with to what extent the data gathered can be considered as truthful information or generalized in the larger context. While internal validity deals with interpreting the information correctly. (Bryman & Bell, 2015)

Since our study is qualitative in nature and deals with “how” and “what” type of questions, validity is considered to be crucial while interpreting information. We ensured that the data is interpreted correctly by asking repeated questions during the interview in cases of confusions. The recordings also helped to ensure consistency in interpretations. We further strengthened
our internal validity by contacting all the interviewees and made sure that the interpretations of the findings were correct. To ensure external validity the authors carefully examined the interview questionnaire. The first interview with the HRM people was arranged in advance about 11 days in advance so that the second and the third set of questions are better structured based on the HRM interview. One of the important aspects of external validity is the generalization of the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To ensure this aspect of the study, the interviewees came from different countries representing different cultures. We also managed to get interviews from employees working in different departments.

3.10 Data analysis

According to Thomas (2006:239), “Data analysis is guided by the evaluation objectives, which identify domains and topics to be investigated. The analysis is carried out through multiple readings and interpretations of the raw data, the inductive component”. It suggests that even though the findings are shaped by the research objectives, there are no expectations of them based on any theoretical models.

Organized and filtered the data from repeated readings and then summarized the findings that were considered relevant to the research objective. Thomas (2006) further mentions that inductive data analysis is common when researching themes to identify what works in a program and what needs to be improved. One of the objectives of our first research question “How do employees perceive the integration of cultural diversity management in the company’s corporate culture?” is to identify what is already working in the existing corporate culture that is helping to integrate cultural diversity management. Our second research question “What can be proposed to manage cultural diversity?” deals with the theme of improvement. Although having a specific objective influence us on interpreting the results and outcomes, it is still preferable than deductive investigations where researchers are constrained by a model or framework in analyzing the data (Thomas, 2006).

An inductive approach gave us the freedom to not set any prior expectations based on any model. During our interviews, we wrote down the most important aspects such as main topics, insights and overview of the interview and the interviewees. We started off with HRM. After finalizing the first interview we transcribed the raw data into a word file, analyzed the information and came up with different themes. We organized these themes in sequential order.
We selected from the transcribed information what was relevant for our study, aligned with our aim and compiled it per theme. Each theme was redacted following a congruent sequence and will be found in the empirical findings. We followed this pattern with the employees’ interviews too. However, since there were 14 employees, we had to eliminate repetitive answers and select the most relevant data. For these interviews, we used instead an excel file to organize our information that gave us a clearer vision of the themes we were going to address. We paired all the interviewees’ answers next to one another so it would be easier to analyze and discriminate important information. Once all the themes were developed, we organized them in sequential order to our theoretical background.

The following table displays a pattern proposed by Thomas (2006). The table illustrates the process of inductive data analysis. It shows that the raw data from the transcribed recordings can be many pages of text. Then the data needs to be separated based on the objective of the study into segments. The segments need to be divided in categories. The categories are then required to reduce based on unnecessary and repeated information. Finally, creating a model based on the most important categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Reading of Text Data</th>
<th>Identify specific text segments related to objectives</th>
<th>Label the segments of text to create categories</th>
<th>Reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories</th>
<th>Create a model incorporating most important categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many pages of text</td>
<td>Many segments of text</td>
<td>30 to 40 categories</td>
<td>15 to 20 categories</td>
<td>3 to 8 categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data, Thomas (2006:242)

Our approach towards analyzing data was similar to the one proposed by Thomas (2006). We had pages of texts which were transcribed from the recordings. The texts were then divided into segments based on our aim and relevance of the study. The segments were afterwards categorized and ordered in sequence to our theoretical background. We analyzed which information was important for the study and dismissed the rest. After this filtering process of data, we redacted all themes into a chronological order based on our theoretical background.
However, once the analysis of the data was made, we created a revised theoretical model that will be found on chapter 6. This model includes our most important themes found in the empirical findings that were then analyzed on chapter 5.

3.11 Method critics

For some of the answers, we were aware that the issue of confirmability might come up. Interviewees might place their own values when answering our questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011), which is something we took into account when interviewing and analyzing the answers. For example, during the interviews, a few interviewees felt insecure that they might be making a politically incorrect comment, especially since dealing with culture is a delicate subject. However, we assured them that they could be completely honest and open to us and should not worry about being diplomatic since we were really interested in knowing their thoughts. We also guaranteed them that their answers would not be traceable and that the more honest they were, the easier it would be for us to obtain the essence of their answers. Face-to-face interviews are sometimes criticized because of the presence of the interviewers. The interviewers may motivate the interviewees to answer questions in a way that would influence and support the research hypothesis (Bryman & Bell, 2014). This issue is a difficult aspect for us to judge, therefore we ensured the anonymity of our interviewees which helped them to open up. Some researchers also claim that the interviewees may feel a slight discomfort in front of two interviewers (Holmgren & Jonsson, 2013). However, the presence of two interviewers served our research purpose well as there was an active interviewer and a passive interviewer. The passive interviewer would intervene in cases of where there was a need for explanation or establish a follow-up question if and when the participants gave us interesting insights.
4 Empirical Findings

This chapter consists of empirical data divided into 13 subtopics. Subtopics 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 are the empirical findings from HRM’s point of view. The rest of the chapters are the point of view from the employees. The subtopics are divided into: (1) Corporate Culture in comparison with the National Culture, (2) The Corporate Culture, (3) Employees’ perception on the National Culture, (4) Employees’ perception on the Corporate Culture, (5) Recruitment process, (6) Integration of the employees, (7) Working in a MNC, (8) Cultural diversity, (9) Advantages and disadvantages of cultural diversity, (10) Coping with cultural differences, (11) Management support on cultural diversity, (12) Standpoint on tools to manage cultural diversity, (13) Role of the employee and the company towards integration.

4.1 Corporate culture in comparison with the national culture

According to HRM, the company has a flat hierarchy, with open and direct communication being the norm of the company. They do not consider themselves to be a global company, but a massively growing international company. Until the year 2013, it was a typical German company. With a small portion of people from different nations, most employees were German and the business language was German. As the company expanded internationally and rapidly in the last five years, they hired more people from different parts of the world with a global mindset and helped them integrate within the environment. They changed the business language from German to English. In the company, some cultural traits like discipline, punctuality and strictness on their timeline are not stressed as it would in a typical German company since other values, such as agility, are of greater importance. Risks are taken, it is not necessary to go through a board decision and then circle around business plans for 2 years. The process is faster, more direct and emotional. From these aspects, the company culture is not entirely aligned with the German culture. However, they believe the company is still very German in many other forms.

The company is structured, organized and number driven. They always keep focus on the performance. They emphasized on direct communication by referring to “…not so much about hovering topics and not coming to the point...”. According to the HRM interviewees the communication is direct, which is also an aspect of the cliché German culture on how things work. There are employees who have worked with the company for a long time. One of the
concerns of the company is to embrace change but simultaneously find a balance to ensure employees that have been with the company for a long time, can relate to the company’s new ways of working.

4.2 The corporate culture

According to HRM, the corporate culture of the company has an entrepreneurial spirit. They further explained that when coming to the company, you could feel ownership for the job, caring for it and its importance in the organization. Since the company is expanding at a rapid rate, they require a lot of agility to cope with the constant change due to the growth. The growth also provides possibilities. For the same reason, incorporating new entities, new people and colleagues is a daily part of the company's culture. Agility, flexibility pragmatism and a high degree of integrity are an important part of their culture. These characteristics, according to their interviewees, are needed in their ways of working and thinking. They stated that the company has many opportunities and that the constant growth provides them an energetic feeling. They think that they are very fact driven and performance-oriented company because they operate in the business to business industry.

They identify that the collaboration among people as an integral part of their culture. It is also fundamental to deal with the dynamic environment the business operates in. Equality is also considered to be a big part of the values the company represents and stands for. It is the company’s culture to treat men and women as equals, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Matters of conflicts regarding equality are addressed directly and quickly. The company's way of working is influenced by the cultures of the colleagues that are part of the organization. Cultures influence the way they communicate and the expectations they have. The organization has learnt that the approach varies from culture to culture, although they believe that this might also depend on personal experience.

4.3 Employees’ perception on the national culture

Most interviewees viewed the German culture in similar ways and there are few contradictions to be found. The interviewees had differences on the cultural aspects they focused on, mostly, reflecting from their own experiences. However, there are some commonalities which most employees perceive to be uniform and relatable to the German culture. We begin by stating
such major common perceptions we found and then we proceed to describe more qualitative aspects of the findings.

The majority of the interviewees, both Germans and non-Germans find and associate German people to be well organized and hardworking. They attribute these qualities as part of the German culture. Simultaneously, most foreign workers find Germans to be closed people, who do not open up easily. Employees perceive the German people, in general, to be very strict with time and rules.

The issue of power distance is mentioned by one German and a foreign interviewee, they both find Germany to be a low power distance country with a desire for equality among people. The German interviewee related the low power distance with their desire to play by the rules and having very few problems of corruption in Germany. The foreign interviewee also identified this cultural trait to be a positive aspect. He/she stated in a sarcastic way that “vitamin B” is not as important in Germany in comparison to his/her own country for career success. This interviewee explained that “vitamin B” means to obtain support or help from relationships to obtain job offers or opportunities. The alphabet B stands for “Beziehung” in German which means relationship.

Another important aspect the interviewees' focus, was the desire for people to follow rules. Two of the interviewees mentioned that when people are driving, they stop their car at a traffic light even when the street is empty. This does not happen in several other countries. However, one of them explained that they do not want to break such a minor law without consequences because there might be a child watching and learning the wrong ways. Two of the three German interviewees mentioned their concern about the future. One of them mentioned “…I tend to… overthink things and strategies, so I’m trying to plan ahead… I believe it is pretty German to be analytical and very well organized and plan things while for Dutch people, for example, it’s much more likely to be more relaxed about it, which I completely believe is a positive thing…”.

The other interviewee mentioned that it is a common practice among Germans to have retirement insurances at a young age and indicated they worry about the future. Both these interviewees perceive their foreign colleagues to be more relaxed and more spontaneous. They recognize it as an advantage and further mentioned that the company needs more calm and relaxed people to deal with the uncertainties of the dynamic environment they operate in. Some foreigners do not associate the German culture with flexibility.
Six foreign interviewees find Germans to be closed people who are generally not conversation starters. Three of them, however, also acknowledged that once one takes the initiative, they can be warm and open up. All three of them had fluency in speaking German. They indicated that language is a vital factor for integration with Germans in the German society. One of them also stressed on the individualistic nature of Germans by mentioning how cautious they are in splitting the bills at dinner tables by paying for exactly what they have consumed.

Being organized, hardworking and pragmatic are the most positive virtues associated with the German culture by both German and the foreign interviewees. Three of the foreign interviewees emphasized on the professionalism they observed in their German colleagues making it easier to work with them. Conflicts are never personal but strictly professional and are separated from personal life and relationships. They find Germans to be helpful with each other, which they also attribute to the German culture. One of them also stated that his/her field of work demands people to be direct, pragmatic and facts driven. From these aspects, he/she views such cultural attributes to be complementary to his/her profession. The interviewee stated that his/her line of work requires people to be professional and direct in communication.

4.4 Employees’ perception on the Corporate Culture

The majority of the interviewees view bonding between colleagues as the most integral part of the corporate culture. For most foreigners, the working environment friendly and warm. The headquarters are located in a mid-sized city in Germany. However, the international atmosphere of the company is seen overwhelmingly positive by both German and non-German interviewees. The people value is transferred into teamwork which is visible to all of the interviewees. However, the non-German interviewees perceive teamwork from an integral perspective. One of the interviewees mentioned the following:

“...you have a lot of foreigners working . . . [the corporate culture] has an international environment. . . the people that you are working [with] are friendly people . . . they accept us as part of the team, which is something that is very, very, very valuable...”

Most interviewees stated that people were the best asset the company has. However, one employee mentioned that he/she does not believe teamwork is part of the culture that is pushed down from the top management, but rather as a reaction to “...a lot of unpredictability and
“chaos...” in the work environment. People like to collaborate and teams naturally form as “...the way of trying to organize...”.

Apart from the team spirit, another most common perception found among the interviewees is the open-minded nature of the company which is also visible in the organizational culture by both non-German and German employees. Most interviewees mentioned that the company is open to hiring people from other cultures. Most of the participants associated the recruitment of culturally diverse workforce with the company being open-minded. One of the interviewees also mentioned that the company has strict policies against racism and child labor. The company also claims to treat men and women equally.

Germans and non-German interviewees had a contradictory opinion on the issue of flexibility. The German interviewees acknowledge the corporate culture to be flexible, while the majority of the non-German interviewees identify the corporate culture to be less flexible. By flexibility, one of the Germans mentioned that less documentation is required and being less bureaucratic in the regular procedures while one of the foreign interviewees stated that there are a lot more paperwork and system-oriented processes in the company. However, he/she also appreciated such processes by attributing it to the German culture and he/she believes that finding a middle ground would be more suitable. Four interviewees emphasized on the creative and innovative environment of the company’s culture while two of them also stressed that dynamism requires them to be creative and innovative.

Most employees perceive the organization to have a flat hierarchy, however, two of the interviewees indicated that there is a centralized control over resources from the top management. One of them mentioned having a feeling that it is a top-down culture, where the person at the top makes the ultimate decision of how things should work. Another interviewee identified the decision making to be a “one-man show” in terms of prioritizing resource allocations. Two other interviewees suggested that there is a struggle for transparency from the top management. By struggle for transparency, they imply that the upper management does not reveal a lot of information regarding their mergers, acquisitions and management decisions to the employees at the headquarters.

A few of the interviewees stated, that the workload makes many of them burn out quickly while three of them mentioned the high turnover of employees. Two other employees stressed this
factor by stating that they felt like “being a number” to the company. Regarding the issue, two other interviewees believed that the HRM department should look after these matters. One interviewee suggests that small remunerations in terms of bonuses or acknowledging a new member’s outstanding performance as a token of appreciation should be the initiatives coming from the company. Nevertheless, the entrepreneurial spirit of the employees and the strong bonding of teamwork is found to be the main driver behind their motivation. Most employees relate company success to their own contributions and the growth of the company makes them feel accomplished at some level. Most employees identified their teams and the people around to be one of the most important reasons to stay and work for a company.

All of the foreign interviewees have previous international experience of either working for a different company abroad or having studied abroad before joining the company. One of the foreign interviewees mentioned that in the company’s website there are a few questions to check the mindset of the potential candidates. If the answers provided by the candidates match with the company’s expectations they are encouraged to apply for the job.

Informal socialization is found to be a big part of the company's culture. Initiatives for socializing come from the individual will of the employees and not necessarily from the company. Most foreign interviewees informed us about the natural tendency for colleagues to spend time together outside of work. Outings with colleagues is something that is contributing to the integration of employees of different cultures and enhancing relationships. However, language seemed to be a barrier for integration of foreign employees. Nonetheless, foreign employees with a high level of German language proficiency were found to be more integrating and socializing with German colleagues outside of work. Relatively new members with less or zero proficiency level in the German language will find colleagues from similar cultures and languages to hang around with inside the company to not find themselves completely isolated. Although having an international environment in a mid-sized city is not directly associated with the company’s corporate culture, a few interviewees suggest that it provides foreigners a common roof and a desire to integrate with each other. Foreign interviewees stated that they feel more integrated inside the company than in the German society, whereas for Germans, the integration level was found to be equal.

Even though the company language was changed from German to English, most foreign interviewees suggest that working proficiency level of the German language is required for
optimal integration. One interviewee mentioned that most “e-learning” instructions are in German which takes a lot of time and effort for foreign employees to understand and utilize information. Upon asking what e-learning was, he/she stated:

“...they have different courses or different modules . . . it takes 20 minutes and you have 20 slides with packed information about let’s say, safety measures in the plant and [in] the end you have a quiz of 5 questions. That’s the e-learning, and sorry, I find it a little bit sad . . . most of them are in German but . . . [i think they should] address other topics . . . make it friendlier and useful on something that you can apply at your job.”

Another interviewee informed us that sometimes meetings that were being held in English, employees would suddenly switch to German to address different topics or exchange ideas. They would afterwards not explain what was discussed making the foreign employee feel isolated and unimportant. He/she also acknowledged the fact that the company went international in the last 10 years or so. According to the interviewee, it is relatively new for the company to manage people from different cultural backgrounds and have a multinational atmosphere. Many systems and trainings are still in German and they are slowly moving their systems to English, the universal based language.

All three of the German interviewees perceive the benefits of working in such corporate environment with people with different cultural background. According to two middle ranked managers, people from culturally diverse background brings stability to the company’s volatile and dynamic environment.

However, two of the German interviewees also mentioned that some of their colleagues of different cultural backgrounds struggling to cope up with the German way of working, which they associated with being direct, procedure-oriented and time-oriented. Most interviewees both Germans and non-Germans commented that the HRM should focus more on practices that benefit the employees to enhance the people value of the company.

The table below shows the highlighted positive and negative aspects of the employees’ perception of the corporate culture based on the feedback of the interviewees.
### Positive aspects

- Teamwork and collaboration among people
- Honesty, equality and integrity
- Flat hierarchy
- Strong bonding between colleagues
- Open towards cultural diversity

### Negative aspects

- Struggle for transparency
- Excessive workload with less appreciation
- All trainings and systems are not available in the English language
- Insufficient initiatives from HRM

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<th>Positive aspects</th>
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Table 2: Employees’ perception on the corporate culture, own.

4.5 Recruitment process

According to HRM, the company’s headquarters holds around 1500 employees. They do not look into the number of employees coming from different nationalities. However, they have a diverse workforce in many areas and estimate that around 600-700 foreign employees work in supply-chain alone. When recruiting employees, the company does not fill any quotas. They do not have pressure from the Government and while being a private company, they do not have to comply with this. However, according to the HRM, their “...only quota is that we want the best person for the job . . . we don’t really keep statistics on nationalities, . . . it doesn’t bring any value, we closely look into performance and we look into potential . . . [it] is completely irrelevant where you come from.”

To achieve this, HRM will search for candidates that can “...come from any place in the world...”. The company supports gender equality. However, sometimes that is not possible since they look for the most fitting and competent person for a position, the principle of “the best person for the job” remains to stand above. The company, to a certain degree, moves employees amongst subsidiaries whenever those cultural characteristics are in favor of their tasks. For example, if a specific task is to develop “x” product for the local population and they
bring in someone from a different nationality, then that employee will have a hard time developing the right product. This limits the company’s abilities to move people across the globe. HRM stated that they do not have an “expat culture”. According to HRM, career development in the company is not based on moving positions every 2-3 years, unless it would bring value to the company. However, they do bring people in or move people to subsidiaries to train on processes and to share expertise on how to run certain methods. These extended expertise exchanges, however, are almost never permanent.

4.6 Integration of employees

HRM stated that the company does not have policies or procedures to integrate cultural diversity, however they support integration within the framework of the regular onboarding process. As a “non-expat company” they do not have a dedicated department only taking care of people coming to the HQs and helping them settle. They mentioned that these companies normally give guidance upon arrival or support employees like taking them to offices to register for documents. HRM acknowledged it has been an issue, in a few cases, when colleagues have had the expectations that upon arrival the organization would have a company that would help them settle in Germany. They believed it could be tricky for employees who do not work themselves into the local situation. They also believe employees should have ownership value and HRM looks for this when bringing people in. It is important to them that colleagues feel welcome and they support them however they are also expecting the employee’s mindset comes with a willingness to integrate.

The company uses some tools as part of the corporate culture that can help with integration: They have an e-learning platform and their code of conduct is mandatory for every employee. They also have a sustainability report and a digital newspaper in German and in English. However, HRM believes that cultural integration programs are not necessary since integration comes naturally. They have observed this when entering the canteen and finding tables of Portuguese or Dutch speaking people chatting in their own languages.

The HRM interviewees recognized that they are just learning on integrating people, “...especially at the beginning, when they come here, has been too simple, so we are doing more and more on these topics...”. However, their standpoint remains that employees should have a proactive approach. One of their core missions is to “...have the right people that have the right
mindset...” and to make sure that the employees live up to those standards. This makes it more difficult for them to recruit people, but they believe that their way of selecting personnel is a different approach. According to the HRM, sometimes the most sophisticated process and structure is not needed to support diversity as long as employees “...live it from the fundamentals...” [employees apply the company and people’s values of their corporate culture].

4.7 Working in a MNC

Every employee said they liked to work in an international company. One of the German employees felt it was interesting to get to know people from different cultures and that it could be something you could benefit for your professional and private life. Another interviewee thought it was great to work in an international environment and believed it is necessary for almost any company nowadays. One German employee said he/she loved the internationality and thought that perhaps it could be boring if it were an only German company.

Non-German employees came to work at this company and/or to Germany for many reasons. Some employees are connected to Germany because of a past or current relationship. Others have German family members or were brought up with German culture. Some are very happy with German culture and feel they are welcoming, integrating and non-judgmental against religion, ethnicity and race. Some interviewees keep Germany in high regards because of their reputation (good jobs, free education, good automobile industry). Some had previously studied in Germany or the German language. Some saw Germany as a challenge they would like to take on and/or found a good job opportunity in this company.

4.8 Cultural Diversity

Unanimously all employees agreed that the company is international. One employee mentioned that employees coming from different regions make it a culturally diverse company. It is appreciable that some colleagues not only have different cultural backgrounds but also that they were born and raised in different countries. Cultural diversity can be observed when people interact in different languages during lunchtime. One interviewee told us that up to what he/she knew, the company looked into hiring people with international background: having worked in international companies, lived in different countries, speaking in more than one language, etc. This, according to the interviewee, didn’t mean that they would not hire people without these
characteristics. However, he/she believed that “…people who always,[are] used to know how to work in an international environment… I would say they are way more trained and prepared to deal with other cultures…”.

4.9 Advantages and disadvantages on cultural diversity

Every interviewee mentioned positive aspects of having a culturally diverse workforce. The reasons would range from having different points of view and ways of working to giving the person a better perspective of the world. According to the interviewees, an international staff can make you be more sensitive to cultural differences and teach you how to approach topics in different ways. By having a culturally diverse workforce, employees are able to learn about other countries, other people’s way of living and ways of operating. Reaching new customers, and new markets are advantages. International people are needed to be the bridge between HQ’s and subsidiaries and you an employee can gain a better perspective of the world with them. One employee even mentioned that you cannot make a company that is international function just by following the rigid German way of working (direct and inflexible). One employee expressed “…if you come to a company and you find out that oh, yeah, [there are] other people that look like me, it makes you feel more free… and you don’t feel like you [are] alone…”.

Even though all employees found advantages to working in a culturally diverse company, some interviewees found disadvantages. Having different habits or dealing with certain topics might be difficult because you are dealing with culture. Another issue can arise from language misinterpretations (when someone does not speak proper English). Misunderstandings and frustrations may come up when colleagues with completely different cultural background are expecting others to act in the same way. One interviewee mentioned that some cultures might agree to deadlines even though they won’t be able to meet them because it would be embarrassing to say they aren’t achievable. Another interviewee pointed out that certain cultures agree on deadlines but according to their culture, those deadlines are understood to be met a couple of days later. Germans are very strict on target date and time limit, so for them a deadline should be met on time. Expecting cultures to work in the same way as others is unproductive. Three interviewees stated that coming to a common ground or coming up with solutions needs an investment of time and effort. According to the interviewees, foreigners who are not used to German specific ways of interacting and working, such as their tone of voice, working rhythm or directness, may understand it as unfriendliness.
4.10 Coping with cultural differences

Having cultural differences might result in conflicts. We asked employees when encountering these situations if there was anything that the company provisioned to solve these differences. Eight employees (all Germans and some non-Germans) told us that they don’t see that the company is involved or doing something to solve cultural conflicts. From these employees: One told us that he/she would like to have teaching of cultural backgrounds because even though the company was international, the values “...are still from a German view [National Culture values]...”. Three employees have had to solve problems personally and another two believe it is the employee who has to come to a common ground and solve the conflict with the people involved.

Two non-German employees don’t know if the company does anything to solve cultural issues but one of them believed that if employees were solving this situation, then there would not be any need for the company to solve it. One employee believed that it was the company that should address whomever was responsible for the group or task. This opinion was shared by four of the employees mentioned previously, who believed HRM should act and find a solution. One interviewee mentioned that sometimes when undertaking responsibilities, the way to do it is addressed as the “German way” or as the “X way” (the culture was substituted by “x” to keep anonymity). They solve situations with different approaches because of cultural differences and consequently label the approach according to the cultural way of sorting it out.

4.11 Management support on cultural diversity

One interviewee believed that the company supported cultural diversity by hiring many foreign people. Five interviewees mentioned that the company offered online German language lessons, but it was only up to a certain level and afterwards the costs had to be absorbed by the employee. Two employees told us that the company offered them an apartment for the first 2 months when they arrived, since it is quite difficult to find accommodation in the German city where the company is located.

There were seven employees (both German and non-German) that told us that the company does not support cultural diversity. One of them believed that the only support they received
was having some announcements in English. In some areas, employees don’t care if people speak German at all and will hold meetings in German even if they speak English. One interviewee mentioned that there is no mentoring in the company and one is thrown in “cold water” upon arriving. Another interviewee believed that employees don’t have a lot of opportunities to talk to each other, to talk about other things that are not only about work. He/she believed employees have a deeper feeling to get to know each other but it is difficult because it costs and it takes time, so “…we always learn by doing.”.

4.12 Employees’ suggestions to support cultural differences:

- Two employees told us about how necessary it was to have a mentor which should help employees learn all the processes, how to operate and know what to do. One interviewee mentioned that he/she wasn’t sure that everybody had one. It might be the person sitting next to you, and in case they did have one, it all depended if the mentor was a good person and interested in helping others: “...we have people here who just don’t care, so you are just on your own . . . HRM is not pushing or checking that or tracking...”. The other employee told us that the mentor was there to translate for employees who didn’t speak German and they might give you tips on how to get along with the people inside the company. But sometimes mentors do not support employees so much, or can even give them quite poor translations. Mentors will depend on a boss’s decision of who will work with who. However, the interviewee also told us: “…I have the feeling that some bosses maybe they don’t care...”.

- One employee believed that getting language classes before starting at the company would be nice. He/she struggled much at the beginning and needed colleagues to translate basic requests such as asking which was the men’s or which was the women’s bathroom.

- HRM could have meetings once or twice a year and ask how are the employees feeling, if they have a problem, would like to improve something or if something isn’t clear. An employee with over +5 years in the company told us that only once he/she had been asked how he/she felt, and it was not by HRM nor by his/her direct boss. Another employee, with less than a year of experience, also commented that no one has come up to ask him/her on how he/she is feeling or what support does he/she need. The
interviewee mentioned that HRM is quite friendly but unless you request for support, no one will come up to them.

- Make E-learning or other HRM announcements friendlier. Have those announcements and tools at least also in English (sometimes it is only in German).

- Explain how German requirements (like Tax declaration) and work rights (pension benefits, what happens when they leave the country, etc.). Advice about dates, responsibilities and a brief explanation about them.

- Another employee suggested for the company to give a 1-hour presentation where they highlight cultural issues of Germany, clubs and sports (which he/she thought are a big part of German life), and other external activities. This because he/she also believed that it was difficult to engage with Germans and this was an easier way to get involved with them.

- Have a roundtable for Non-German employees and German employees (if they are interested) where you can discuss about cultural topics. “We never have such an organized [initiative] like this . . . HR should do something actually...”. Another suggestion for a roundtable from another employee was to ask employees for concerns and perhaps just answer by e-mail so it would not be a big investment.

4.13 Standpoint on tools to manage cultural diversity

Nine employees believe that having tools would be very useful. They believe it is important for a multicultural company and that it could be interesting and positive. One interviewee mentioned that tools would be great, especially with people who are physically moving to other countries. This interviewee shared with us that one colleague, that is “…quite German thinker…” moved to a country with a very different culture. This employee had to train the team in the new country. However, he/she was still struggling because he/she doesn’t know how to get used to or along with people from that culture because they work differently.

A few employees were skeptical about the tools: The first employee said he/she didn’t know if it would make sense to have intercultural training for many cultures (since he/she deals with
Another employee stated he/she was not sure that mentoring programs were needed since he/she mainly worked with numbers. The third employee believed it wasn’t needed because he/she was well integrated, but also believed that this was perhaps because he/she wasn’t in the minority group. One of the employees believed that even though it is an important issue, seen from a business perspective, there are more important things that the company should prioritize.

4.14 Role of the employee and the company towards integration

Four employees believed that an employee’s success in integrating relies mainly on the company. Employees might be afraid or shy to engage contact upon arriving to the company. If you are new to the German culture, you might not understand their rigidness and take things personally. One employee believed 80% of the responsibility relied on the company, especially when being in the HQs. The company should do whatever is possible for the employee to integrate, but the longer an employee would be ina company the more that the responsibility would fall on the employee. One interviewee believed that the company, just like an embassy, already has all sorts of information regarding their employees. The company should organize and offer meetings with other employees with comparable cultural backgrounds that are already well integrated. Well integrated employees could offer some guidance to others on how to deal with issues. He/she believed that employees integrate because of the nature of their work environment, however, the company should first initiate these gatherings. Another employee believed that the first 3-6 months were critical for someone in a company. If an employee does not have the level of confidence, especially being in a big company perhaps they can’t be honest with their direct boss about how they are feeling. This employee believes HRM should be helping out with the integration, however he/she doesn’t see it in this company.

Four employees believed that the integration relied with equal weight on both sides. The company should be welcoming and the employee should be able to adapt and change.

Three employees gave us their perspective on what a person’s role should be and what they have done when trying to integrate: The employee should not be shy, ask many questions and learn in a short time about the company and his/her colleagues. Employees should be open and treat everyone with respect and be humble to approach others. This employee believed that at the beginning you need to follow how things are done and observe how people behave. After
becoming comfortable with the people around you, then changes can start to happen. “Welcome at x” is a great idea for training and to know what other people are doing. “Welcome at x” is a half day tour around the company’s facilities where employees learn where certain departments and employees are located and overall activities that are performed in the company. An employee told us that this welcoming tool initially was only given in German and that even though the company has been improving the way they are managing their tools, he/she still feels they could do much more for employees.
5 Analysis

In this chapter we analyze the theories we have researched together with the empirical findings.

5.1 The Corporate Culture and the National Culture

The company claims to have a corporate culture which is similar to their national culture in some aspects even though they have a multicultural workforce. Their organizational structure is flat in hierarchy yet organized and performance driven. The majority of the interviewees perceived this to be true. Furthermore, most foreign interviewees relate Germans as organized and hardworking people who are also strict on time and rules. They see no difference in the corporate culture of the company from these aspects. Schneider (1988), mentioned that the German HR practices are comprised of their preference of having a decentralized governing system with less hierarchy in structure, formalization of goals, timeframe and documentation. In other words, it is a reflection of their own national culture (Schneider, 1988; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

One interesting contradiction among a German and a non-German interviewee was on the formalization of documentation. According to the German respondent, the company requires less documentation while the foreign interviewee stated that the company requires lot more paperwork and formalities. Most foreign interviewees find the corporate culture of the company to be less flexible than their own cultures, while all German respondents relate the corporate culture with flexibility. This contradiction among interviewees was also found by Laurent (1986). His findings revealed that managers hold beliefs on the nature of the management that is derived from their own national culture. Our findings suggest that the issue of flexibility was perceived and interpreted by their national cultural perspectives. Germans are used to working in an environment with formal rules and documentation. Most foreign interviewees associate such formalities and procedures with less flexibility. On the contrary, the German interviewees find that requirements of documentation and procedures are relatively less in the corporate culture of the company in comparison to traditional German companies.

The company keeps equality as one of their core corporate values and all the German interviewees related the corporate culture with equality and honesty. One foreign interviewee also attributed the fairness at workplace being a virtue of the German culture. Small power
distance countries perceive inequality as undesirable and is reflected from their values, beliefs and policies (Morden, 1995). This national characteristic helps the employees more integrated as they feel their treatment in the company and the society is dealt with fairness and equality.

Two of the German respondents identify German people to be over analytical and stiff in general. Germany is regarded as a nation with high uncertainty avoidance (Harvey, 1997) implying that their attitude towards uncertain situations is calculative through formal rules and careful measures (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The interviewees also recognize their foreign colleagues to be more flexible and calmer. Even though the majority of the foreign interviewees do not consider Germans as flexible people, they do find their German colleagues easy to work with. They consider Germans to be professional and helpful. Most importantly the conflicts are strictly professional and never personal. These virtues are associated with long-term oriented cultures and also small power distance. (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Our findings suggest that both German and non-German employees perceive Germans to have low power distance, high uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. They associated these national characteristics with the corporate culture of the company. However, one of the most valuable findings of the research shows that majority of the interviewees identified their colleagues and teams to be the main reason to stay and work for the company. There is a strong bonding among employees which is found to be an essential part of the corporate culture. Even though Germany is known to be an individualist nation where the ties between individuals are loose (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), employees of this organization find a collective atmosphere. Studies like McLaurin, (2008); Mahmood, (2011); and Kattman, (2014) suggest that with guidance and initiatives, organizational or corporate culture can prove to be more influential than the national culture.

5.2 Teamwork and integration process.

From our observation, the strong bonding between colleagues is a result of collaboration between teams and socialization. This is consistent with what the HRM interviewees mentioned about teamwork and collaboration being essential to deal with the dynamic environment. One of the interviewees argued that the collaboration among employees was not a part of the culture that is pushed from the upper management but rather as a reaction to unpredictability and chaos in the work environment. Gorman (1989) emphasized on creativity, innovation and adaptability
in organizational culture for operating in a dynamic environment while our findings suggest that teamwork is equally valuable to deal with such conditions. Moreover, a diverse workforce is becoming a necessary contributor for multinational companies (Bolen & Klein, 1996) and therefore we find teamwork to be crucial for the integration of employees from different cultures. One of the foreign interviewees stated that: “...you have a lot of foreigners working . . . [the corporate culture] has an international environment. . . the people that you are working [with] are friendly people . . . they accept us as part of the team, which is something that is very, very, very valuable...”. This statement shows that employees, especially those from different cultural backgrounds feel integrated when they are valued and viewed as a part of the team.

We can conclude that not only creativity, innovation and adaptability but teamwork is essential when working in a dynamic environment. Teamwork also helps the integration process as the foreign employees feel that they are considered as a part of the same team. HRM also mentioned the fact that team play is a crucial element in the company's corporate culture.

5.3 Socialization

For the foreign interviewees, socialization with their colleagues outside of the work played a role in creating bonds and integration with each other. Schneider (1988) suggested that companies can organize parties and group gatherings to foster the integration process between employees. He further denoted that such informal gatherings can generate a feeling of “esprit de corps”, a shared experience that enhances the people values of the company. However, in our case study, such initiatives did not come in a formal way from the company but from the individual will of the employees. The majority of the foreign respondents considered themselves to be integrated with the company more than within the German society. The reason that the overwhelming majority of the foreign interviewees feel more integrated inside the company is because they also spend much time with their colleagues outside of work. The circle is small and intimate. Since such initiatives are not coming directly from the management, the company is not being able to take credit and maximize the benefits of this high level of integration. In order to integrate, employees have had to be open, humble and treated everyone with respect. They have also tried to learn about the company and colleagues in a short period of time. This is supported by Cliffe (2015) who believes that employees need to be thoughtful, willing to jump into the unknown and adapt quickly.
5.4 Corporate Culture and recruitment of employees

Most of the interviewees indicated and identified the organization to be open minded towards hiring people from different cultural backgrounds. They also recognize the company to have a culturally diverse workforce. All of our foreign interviewees came from 11 different nations and represented all continents. The company encourages people from all cultural backgrounds to apply for a job. All the foreign employees we interviewed had previous international experiences either by studying or living abroad. One of the foreign interviewees also suggested that before applying for a job, the potential candidates can verify at the company’s website whether their values match with the company’s. It is in coherence with the studies of Schneider (1988) and Laurent (1983) that companies ideally want to recruit individuals who would fit into the existing corporate culture. The company operates in an innovative environment which requires agility or the ability to deal with constant change as a top priority when recruiting individuals.

5.5 Issues regarding integration

According to the HRM interviewees, the company has adopted English as their business language. On the contrary, most foreign interviewees mentioned that the German language is necessary at some point. Three of the respondents specified that all trainings and systems were not available in English. Hyder & Osarenkhoe (2018) found that companies adopt English as the official language for the integration process of working with different cultures. HRM should make sure that all trainings and systems are be updated in both English and German languages.

Most interviewees, both Germans and non-Germans expressed that the HRM practices lack commitment in terms of enhancing the people-oriented values that the company has. Ortega-Parra & Sastre-Castillo (2013) found that employees perceive the corporate culture positively when the HRM practices are in coherence with the stated values of the company. Magdaleno & Kleiner (1996) also mentioned about support and commitment from upper management to manage cultural diversity or else it is not possible for the HRM department to find such solutions.

5.6 Cultural Diversity
The company recruits their employees according to their skills and competencies and not depending on their nationality or cultural background. These characteristics are also supported by Kealey (1989), who believed that to be successful amongst cultures, people need to have interpersonal and intercultural skills. The company also does not look into the number of foreign employees that they have and stated that they don’t keep statistics on nationalities. However, all employees agreed that the company is culturally diverse and their employees notice this every day. Amongst the employees’ feedback, we were told that the company looked into hiring people with international background: having worked in international companies, lived in different countries or speaking more than one language. This matched the profile of all the employees we interviewed, both German and non-German. The interviewees expressed their preference for internationality.

5.7 Advantages and disadvantages on cultural diversity

All employees found advantages to this cultural diversity, which is consistent to findings from many authors (Seymen, 2006; Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996; Cox 1991; Cox & Balke, 1991; Fleury, 1999). Some employees could find a few disadvantages to having to work with employees with different cultural backgrounds. These disadvantages mainly came from having cultural differences due to different habits, different ways of understanding and working. Harung & Harung (1995) stated that different cultural backgrounds give rise to dissenting assumptions and meanings. Even though four employees solved the conflicts or believed that it was their responsibility to understand and solve them, eight employees stated they have not seen support from the company to deal with these situations. This was also explained by HRM when they stated they don’t count with a department only dedicated to help employees settle in once they have arrived in Germany.

5.8 Integration of employees

HRM believes that integration comes naturally and can be observed in the canteen with groups of people speaking the same language. What we realized is that interaction at work is “relatively forced” due to employees being expected to interact with one another. Ultimately employees will interact with one another, however, the interviewees told us they would like this interaction to come more naturally. Since it is easier to integrate with people from a similar culture to your own, employees end up integrating with these cultures and not with different ones. However,
sometimes employees not only do it because it is easier, but because they aren’t integrated with other cultures or cannot communicate well in the same language. Hence why we think that at the company’s canteen you can find sometimes tables of just one language speaking people. Employees end up interacting only with cultures with the same language, and in a way, excluded from others too. This is backed up by Seymen (2006), who stressed that language barriers can produce psychological stress and make people feel excluded. We deduct that this integration with their same culture comes as a “surviving adaptation” tool, however, it also increases the gap between cultures. Five employees believed that HRM or the company should do something in order to come to a solution when encountering cultural difference problems. Researches from Vassilopoulou (2017, Mahadevan & Ilie (2018) and Reiche (2006) recognized the importance of HR managing cultural diversity and how it is understood.

5.9 Management support on cultural diversity

The company does, however, offer a few tools to support culturally diverse employees and issues that might arise from these cultural differences: Five interviewees mentioned that they offer German language lessons for foreigners up to a certain level. And in the case of two foreign employees, they were helped with an apartment for two months upon arrival. Nonetheless, seven employees (German and non-German) stated that the company does not have any tools to support the management of cultural diversity. This was also acknowledged by HRM, who previously told us that they are just learning on integrating people and are doing more on these topics.

German employees felt their level of integration in the company and in Germany was the same, however, most of the foreign employees felt their level of integration in the company was higher than in Germany. Foreign employees are struggling more in Germany, and this could affect their way of viewing Germany as a home. Consequently, they might leave the country (and thus the company’s headquarters) sooner than later. A suggestion that would help foreigners cope more easily with this situation would be to receive prior to arrival, a welcoming booklet with important and necessary information when living and working in Germany, similar to “Om Sverige” that exists in Sweden. (Holmström & Ashjari, 2018). Information that can be included in this booklet could be obligations (such as tax declarations) and rights (such as pension benefits). The booklet would not necessarily have to give all the legal information; however, it could include websites, telephone numbers and contacts of institutions where employees can
obtain legal advice & support. It could also include important information like locations for hospitals, police stations and drugstores and where to obtain more information. It can also include names and contacts of sports clubs and other activities to do. Many topics, such as stopping at a red traffic light might be regarded as common sense. However, what might be obvious for one culture, might be oblivious to others. Practices can be learnt and by raising awareness of what is required and how things work in Germany can make people feel more integrated and find it easier to get around in the new country they now call home. We are not necessarily saying that it is needed to highlight cultural differences, but for everyone to learn what are the ways (or the national culture) of the country people are living in. This measure can also lessen cultural shocks (Wild & Wild, 2016). This booklet should not be regarded as a company’s obligation, but as a support to integration and cultural knowledge for non-Germans and perhaps even Germans.

The literature that was analyzed throughout this research states what could be done for foreigners. However, we believe that cultural-difference conflicts and integration concerns are issues that are not solved or mitigated only from one side. For this case, since the country is Germany and the corporate culture is closer to the German national culture, it is clear that non-Germans require more of these tools. However, we believe that integration and cultural differences have to be addressed for both Germans and non-Germans. In this way, just like Harung & Harung (1995) proposed, by strengthening diversity and unity, organizations will be stronger. Which is why is important to both strengthen cultural diversity but at the same time bring it together and integrate people. For most interviewees, language is the most important tool to integrate. Which is why one suggestion to the management would be to provide English lessons for Germans and non-English speaking employees. This could bring closeness to both the company’s corporate culture and proximity between cultures. Another suggestion, that was proposed by one employee, could be to start with the language courses a few weeks prior to the arrival. This would make it more comfortable for employees to get around in Germany. One thing that employees mentioned is that overall the company is welcoming and open to them, however, for most foreigners their main struggle is outside the company. This is due to the nature of Germany’s national culture and the language barrier, which can be tough on many foreigners. Living in Germany is also part of their experience in a foreign country and in our view, it has a direct impact on the employee’s welfare. It is also suggested to keep all internal announcements and tools both in English and in German.
Another suggestion would be to reinforce the company’s culture especially on topics where employees are having issues to understand which is the way they can solve them. Everyone has different ways of thinking, there are several ways of solving situations and there are different points of view. However, when a cultural difference is creating a conflict inside a company, and the involved parties are not coming to a resolution, we believe that it should be solved according to what the company’s corporate culture dictates and not only according to their way of thinking. One way could be to request employees to send anonymously a few issues they are encountering and struggling with at work that derive from cultural differences, and how they believe it should be solved. The company should then share an announcement with the employees where they address these issues without mentioning which are the cultures, since this could arise prejudice and hostility. Actually, when interviewing employees, even though they tried to be as politically correct and respectful as possible, we were able to identify that during the interviews some cultural differences had aroused in them some prejudices against other cultures. Magdaleno & Kleiner (1996) acknowledge that when differences and discrimination issues amongst employees are accentuated, an unknown hostility may arise amongst co-workers. HRM should reinforce which is the way that the corporate culture dictates to solve issues and what type of thinking should employees stick to. Seymen (2006) suggested that Human resources should use cultural diversity management as a strategy to successfully administer culturally diverse employees.

We are not stating that one way is the only correct way to approach solutions to issues and cultural differences, however, making awareness of how a subject should be dealt will provide support to cultural diversity management. For example, two interviewees mentioned some differences and struggles they have noticed when two different cultures met deadlines with the German one. The conflict was not on failing to meet deadlines but on how each culture understood what those deadlines meant: to deliver on the discussed date; to deliver a couple of days later or that it is best to avoid an embarrassment rather than to say the date is not achievable. The understandings come from their own cultures, and each of them view and solve situations in different ways from their counterparts. The way that we believe time and dates should be agreed and respected are according to what the company dictates.

One suggestion would be to give cultural training to employees coming or going to subsidiaries. The organization could take advantage of the cultural knowledge from their employees and train other employees. Schneider (1988) mentioned that a common tactic to increase fraternization between the headquarters and subsidiaries was through the transfer of their employees. This
could avoid situations like the one where the employee moved to another country and is still struggling because he/she cannot get used to the people in the new country they work differently.

Another suggestion would be to have mentors in each area that guide newcomers and teach them how the area they work in operates. This mentor will give the new employees guidance and advice on how to proceed and deal with other colleagues. He/she will also teach the new employee the overall environment and ways of working at the company. Wild & Wild (2016) explained that in some companies, employees have mentors who become confidants to employees whom they can discuss about issues related to work, family and accommodating to the new culture. This mentor does not necessarily need to be their boss, however the mentor must be active and interactive. Even though someone with a similar background might seem an appealing mentor to the new employee, we recommend the mentor being from a different cultural background so employees can interact with cultures they would normally find it more difficult to interact with. Ultimately, people from the same cultural backgrounds will find each other in the company, so pairing them with a same-culture mentor is not necessary. After a certain period (we recommend between 3-6 months) HRM should check with the new employee how he has felt in the company and with the mentor. HRM should take actions, keep a history of their employees and monitor the multicultural environment, just as Magdaleno & Kleiner (1996) supported. Afterwards they should revisit their employees (we suggest once a year) as a follow-up on the employee’s welfare. The relationship with the company should not only be through the employee’s boss but also through HRM.

Organizing gatherings after office hours not only amongst team members from a department but also between departments can be regarded as an integrational activity. Activities like bowling, marathons, volleyball matches etc. can be regarded as healthy leisure activities as well as a part of integration amongst employees.

Even though some initiatives to manage cultural diversity might be expensive (Magdaleno & Kleiner, 1996), overall the advantages of being multicultural outweigh by far disadvantages. Ultimately the adequate management can save companies thousands of dollars. The suggestions we give to the management require small investments which we, in turn, believe can bring many benefits.
6 Conclusion

This chapter includes answers to the research questions, revised theoretical framework, suggestions for companies and suggestions for future research.

6.1 Q1- How do employees perceive the integration of cultural diversity management in the company’s corporate culture?

The majority of the employees that participated in the study perceived the corporate culture of the company to have been notably inspired by the national characteristics of the German culture. The cultural traits of low power distance and long-term orientation act as a benefit for the integration of culturally diverse employees in the organization. On the other hand, uncertainty avoidance is perceived negatively by both German and non-German employees.

The company that was researched has made great efforts to create a corporate culture where employees feel welcomed, are honest and cooperative. Employees view the company to be open towards hiring people from diverse culture but concurrently believe that language barrier is a huge issue for both integration and work-related problems. The foreign interviewees find themselves more integrated in the company than in the German society. They find the corporate culture to be receptive and tolerant towards their culturally diverse workforce. They associate their higher level of integration because of their collaboration with each other due to the nature of their work and socialization outside of the work. Regardless of which culture they came from, most employees stated that colleagues are the main reason to stay and work for the company.

According to the employee's perception, the most integral factor of the corporate culture in managing diversity is the teamwork and people they work with. The HRM interviewees also acknowledged it to be an integral part of the corporate culture. However, the employees gave a better description of how such corporate culture is lived and maintained by them. The collaborative nature among colleagues is a result of the existing corporate culture. According to the interviewees, they always receive help from their colleagues in work-related problems which in result spreads as “word of mouth”. Considering this fact, we imply that once the employees receive help from their colleagues, they also initiate and provide assistance to others and especially when new employees require them. To summarize, the collaborative nature of
employees practiced in the corporate culture helps integrate and manage the cultural diversity of employees as they feel part of the same team.

From the negative aspects, most interviewees think that the HRM should act more in order to enhance and practice what is preached as the corporate culture. However, some interviewees hinted that the decisions are taken with a top-down approach. Which means that the important management decisions are made by the person at the top. We imply that the HRM department needs support from the upper management in order to take more initiatives and show commitment to manage the cultural diversity of employees. For example, updating all trainings and systems in the English language may require resources which could only be approved by the upper management. Employees may perceive it as a failure by the HRM department when the reality could be that they are not provided with the tools and resources required to make such changes. This is why it is crucial to have support and commitment from the upper management.

The revised framework proposed shows that corporate culture is derived from the national culture. We concluded this by answering the first research question as employees perceive it that way. Then the corporate culture of the company is found to manage cultural diversity through the collaboration among teams and people. This is partly due to the nature of the employees’ work and partly due to their own initiatives to socialize with each other outside of work.

6.2 Q2 - What can be proposed to manage cultural diversity?

There are several tools that can be implemented by companies which can enhance their cultural diversity management which will, in turn, make employees, regardless of being a foreigner or national, feel more integrated. Our study shows actions and activities both proposed by the interviewees and by us, that can be implemented. Offering language courses, announcements in both languages, a welcoming at the new country booklet, mentors, anonymous feedback on cultural issues and sports or cultural outings are some suggestions that are made.

Even though the company has mentioned they are just learning how to integrate people, they are currently using a few tools that are helping foreigners. Nonetheless, other tools and suggestions can be implemented for Germans too. These inexpensive tools (compared to hiring
a diversity specialist) that can aid in the integration process. Tools should not be implemented only for foreigners if avoiding segregation and building a complete integration is desired.

Employees’ mostly agree that the best asset this company has is its people. This could be due to many reasons: the recruiting selection, the company’s environment, or leader’s support and guidance. The company has recruited employees with a certain type of mindset and characteristics. We believe that this rich human capital should be potentialized by giving employees support. Employees have proved to have worked on adapting, however, just as most of the interviewees stated, we also believe that the responsibility should fall 50% - 50%. We support the idea that when an employee is a new recruit, the company should share more responsibility for their integration. The company should also monitor the welfare of their employees and follow-up on the implemented tools. However, we believe that integration comes from both the company and the employees, and as time passes by, the responsibility relies more on the employee. Even though management of cultural diversity may seem it is solely for foreign employees, local employees also have a task in adapting to the international environment. This international environment does not necessarily mean to learn from every other employees’ culture. We propose that the national culture of where the company is located should be learnt by all employees. However, its main key is to learn the company’s corporate culture. All employees should be aware of how it is expected to work and deal with situations inside the company according to the company’s corporate culture and not according to their own.

Accentuating cultural differences amongst employees can arise hostility problems if not dealt adequately. If employees become aware of their peer’s cultural prejudices, these differences might bring even more discrimination against them. Which is why we recommend avoiding mentioning which are the cultures that have the biggest differences in comparison to Germany. We suggest management to focus on bringing awareness of Germany’s national culture (since the company is located in Germany) and the company’s corporate culture (so employees know how to deal with situations).
Our findings suggest that the employees perceive that the Human resource management is not delivering sufficient tools to support the employees. Theory suggests that if HRM does not have the support and resources from the upper management, then they will not be able to implement successful programs for the employees. According to our revised framework, these programs should be implemented for and endorsed by both local and foreign employees with the purpose of integrating them through the corporate culture of the company.

**Figure 4:** Revised theoretical model: The role of national culture and corporate culture in managing cultural diversity, own.
6.3 The revised theoretical framework

The findings suggest that corporate culture is inspired by the national culture of the country. In this case study, low power distance, long-term orientation and uncertainty avoidance are prevalent in the company's corporate culture due to the culture where the company is located in. These two characteristics are working as an integral factor to manage cultural diversity. Companies operating in countries with similar cultural characteristics can benefit in managing cultural diversity of employees. The most crucial role perceived by the employees in managing cultural diversity is found to be socialization and teamwork. Companies need to make investments in team building activities and give space to the employees of various cultural backgrounds for socialization. It has been observed from this study that socialization is the most natural way of integrating people of different cultures. It was also observed that knowledge on each other's culture comes from the individual will of employees. It is not practical for companies to provide knowledge on so many cultures while risking conflicts which may result from stereotyping employees by their culture.

In order to implement a corporate culture that successfully manages cultural diversity, it is imperative for Human Resources and all of the employees to have the support and commitment of the upper management. Arrows pointing from upper management to Human resources and other arrows pointing from upper management to the employees indicate this. With this support, human resources can implement a series of diversity management tools such as language courses, a welcoming booklet and mentors. HR should implement these tools and solutions for integrating both the local and foreign workforce. The arrows pointing from HR to local and foreign employees indicate this. The integration responsibility between employees relies on both local and foreign ones, which is why an arrow points out between them. The employees will take initiatives to interact and work with others according to what the corporate culture dictates, with the tools offered by HR and to their mindset and skills. Employees in turn, will add value and bring many advantages to the culturally diverse company. This is explained by the last arrows pointing from both types of employees to the upper management. Having a corporate culture that manages adequately cultural diversity will bring many advantages to a multinational company, especially one with such a rapid growth and international expansion.
6.4 Theoretical Implications

Our framework proposes that corporate culture is derived and inspired from national culture which is widely acknowledged by the researchers. It also proposes to manage cultural diversity the upper management needs to support the human resource management. It is also discussed in the contemporary literature. However, we extend the research area by adding on the role of employees in the integration process for cultural diversity management. For complete integration, companies need to engage both local and foreign employees at equal level. The local employees should be provided English language lessons as it is expected from foreign employees to learn the German language.

6.5 Practical Implications:

The findings suggest that employees struggle more with external integration with the national culture than the corporate culture of the company. HRM department should be able to provide tools like language courses, welcoming booklets and mentors to manage cultural diversity amongst other tools.

The study also suggests that companies need to consider making small investments in recreational activities and other means that can help employees fraternize with one another. Employees of different cultural backgrounds integrate with each other better when they spend more time together. Creating such a platform for socialization will help not only help contribute to integration but also positively influence the employees’ perception on the corporate culture.

6.6 Limitations

Even though our analysis, empirical findings and theory have proven that diversity can bring more benefits than drawbacks, our study is not about promoting cultural diversity. We have also not focused on highlighting cultural differences from other cultures to the German one. Our study is about managing cultural diversity in workplaces through a company’s corporate culture that has been derived from a National Culture. We have specifically analyzed a German company in Germany, for which our study is directed at German companies in Germany. However, companies with similar cultural characteristics can also benefit from this study.
Due to a non-disclosure agreement for the company and anonymity on the employees’, names, cultural background and job position were not revealed. This, however, affected our internal validity since the company’s and employees’ profile cannot be evaluated by the readers. Interpretation can be interpreted incorrectly depending on the person.

In our attempt to increase the credibility of the study, we interviewed employees from 12 different nations, different job positions and departments. However, the interviewees’ distinct cultural background, position and area may have influenced their interpretation of the interview questions.

The external validity was challenged by our method of research, which was qualitative. Due to the type of research, the limited representation of the whole population, we only interviewed 16 people. The company has over 1500 employees, for which our validity is tested based on this sample size. However, qualitative research cannot have a large sample size because of the time-consuming processes. Due to limited resources such as time and funding, we were not able to conduct a multiple case study. From this aspect, the generalization of our findings was reduced. Our case study was based in Germany and on a German company. Consequently, the study may only be applicable to Germany and countries with similar characteristics. However, some findings can be used in most multinational companies around the world. Our study focuses on the management of diversity and not on cultural differences.

The study did not include participants from upper management. Their opinion would have provided deeper insight on the researched topic.

6.7 Suggestions for Future Research:

Similar studies need to be conducted with multiple companies in order to understand the role of corporate culture in managing cultural diversity on a deeper level. Multiple case studies can compare the differences between organizations’ corporate cultures and provide a comparative analysis in managing cultural diversity. When considering such studies, interviewing the upper management is recommended to add valuable knowledge on the study topic.

Lastly, external integration of culturally diverse employees to the national culture should be extensively researched to analyze how it can affect their internal integration in the company.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for HR

1. Could you please explain major ways and principles of the company to organize its activities?
2. Could you explain what is your corporate culture?
3. How did you come up with the present culture you practice in the company?
4. Since you are based in Germany, how much is your company influenced by the German culture? What do German values and ideals mean to the organization and structuring of the company?
5. Could you briefly explain how your recruitment process functions?
6. When you recruit people, do you have quotas to fill?
7. How many employees do you have at the headquarters? How many of them come other countries than Germany?
8. How does nationality play role while recruiting employees?
9. Is there any policy to recruit employees from other countries? If yes, please explain.
10. Do you intentionally hire people of different cultural backgrounds?
11. Do your non-German employees mostly come from other subsidiaries or are they directly recruited at the headquarters.
12. What does the company think about cultural diversity? What positive or negative elements does this diversity bring to the organization?
13. People from diverse cultures are used to doing things in different ways. How does the company manage such situations?
14. Does your organization have certain policies and procedures to integrate cultural diversity? If yes, please explain.
15. What kind of outcome has managing the culturally diverse workforce brought to the company?
Appendix 2

Questionnaire for Germans

Could you tell us how much working experience do you have?
Have you worked in other German companies aside from this one?
How many of these years have you been working in this company?

Culture is the group of rules, behaviors, values, beliefs, traditions, etc. that people share, generally delimited by a country division. A corporate culture would be these sets of characteristics but inside the company, within the working environment.

1. Could you tell us about the cultural differences you have noticed by living in Germany and being German versus working in this company?
2. Could you tell us about some similarities as well?
3. Could you describe what do you believe is this company’s corporate culture?
4. (In case they have not mentioned it) - Which do you believe are the values of the company and of the people working here?
5. Which are the advantages you find of having such a corporate culture?
6. Can you also think of some or any drawbacks as well?
7. What suggestions would you have in order to avoid these drawbacks?
8. Could you give us your opinion on the company’s corporate culture?
9. (If they have worked in other German companies) Could you compare the corporate culture of your other German company to this one?
10. Do you feel your level of integration in the company is equal or different than the integration level you have in Germany?
11. What is your opinion on working in an international company in your own country?
12. Do you consider this company to have a culturally diverse workforce? If yes, then why?
Are there any advantages working in such environment? Can you point out a few disadvantages?
13. Diverse cultures are used to doing things in a different way… when this becomes a conflict, how does the company solve it?
14. Do you know if the company does anything to support cultural diversity? (mentoring programs, diversity trainings, consulting services for diversity groups…)}
15. What do you think about having specific tools to support and manage cultural diversity? For example: mentoring programs, diversity trainings, consulting services for diversity groups?

16. In your opinion what role do you think an employee should play or can play when they have to integrate in a culturally diverse work environment?

17. What do you think is the most important thing that makes someone stay in a company?

18. May we know in which area you work in?
Appendix 3
Questionnaire for Non-Germans

Which country do you represent?
How many years have you been living in Germany?
Could you tell us how much working experience do you have?
Have you worked in other German companies aside from this one?
How many of these years have you been working in this company?

1. Are there any significant cultural differences you have seen from living in Germany and working in this company?
2. Could you also point out a few similarities?
3. What made you want to come to work in Germany?

Culture is the group of rules, behaviors, values, beliefs, traditions, etc. that people share, generally delimited by a country division. Corporate culture would be these sets of characteristics but inside the company, within the working environment.

4. Could you describe what do you believe is this company’s corporate culture?
5. (In case they have not mentioned it) - Which do you believe are the values of the company and of the people working here?
6. Which are the benefits you consider of having such a corporate culture?
7. Can you also think of some or any drawbacks as well?
8. What suggestions would you have in order to avoid these drawbacks?
9. Could you give us your opinion on the company’s corporate culture?
10. (In case you worked in other German companies) Could you compare the corporate culture of your other German company to this one?
11. Do you feel your level of integration in the company is equal or different than the integration level you have in Germany?
12. Do you consider this company to have a culturally diverse set of employees? If yes, then why? Are there any advantages of working in such environment? Can you point out a few disadvantages?
13. Diverse cultures may cause doing things in a different way… when this becomes a
conflict, how does the company solve it?

14. Do you know if the company takes initiative to support cultural diversity? (mentoring programs, diversity trainings, consulting services for diversity groups…)

15. What do you think about having specific tools to support and manage cultural diversity? For example: mentoring programs, diversity trainings, consulting services for diversity groups?

16. In your opinion what role do you think an employee should play or can play when they have to integrate in a culturally diverse work environment?

17. What do you think is the most important thing that makes someone stay in a company?

18. May we know in which area you work in?