

Managing Across Cultures: Problems and Possibilities

Case: SOL Jyväskylä

Maria Fedina

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JYVÄSKYLÄN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
JAMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



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Abstract <p>The aim of the study was to analyze the state of cross-cultural management and based on acquired knowledge, as well as theoretical background, to create the list recommendations for improvement of the managerial practices regarding the foreign employees. The research was conducted for SOL Jyväskylä.</p> <p>The qualitative research method and case study, as one of the forms of this research method, were used. Such data collection method as focused interview was used in order to gain practical information that was used as the basis for the recommendations. The interviews were conducted both to the supervisors and foreign employees working in SOL Jyväskylä.</p> <p>The results showed that the management of foreign employees had reached quite satisfactory results in the case company. Despite the fact that the company did not implement strategic managerial actions, at this time there is no need to dramatically change the company's business and operations in this sphere. Nevertheless, the company faces several problems while managing and communicating with foreign employees. Possible solutions for these problems were represented in the thesis.</p> <p>The current theme could find future implementations in the next researches conducted for the purpose of writing a Bachelor's or Master's thesis, as well as of pure scientific reasons.</p>		
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1 INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, which is becoming more and more globalized and probably more and more “same-ish”, the concept of culture acquires new meaning and high importance. Alongside with the possibility to relatively easily enter the new countries and regions, people face with the problem of lack of abilities to understand of and adjust to the new cultures. This problem and consequences caused by it could be crucial not only in the everyday operations, but also in the business environment. Thus, the concept of cross-cultural or multicultural management, which is examined in the next chapters of the thesis, arises in this new reality. (Келле [Kelle] 2005, 69.)

The topic connected with the problems of multiculturalism is of great interest for the author because of her interest in intercultural affairs. The interest of analyzing the state of the cross-cultural management in service organizations comes from the previous studies of service management.

In this chapter, it is important to define the research problem, questions, aim and objectives concerning the implementation of the thesis.

According to Kananen (2013, 18) the research problem generally means a problem that needs to be solved in terms of the examined phenomenon. By solving the stated problem, a researcher may improve the subject of his / her studies. In terms of the current thesis, the research problem is formulated as a state of cross-cultural or multicultural management in service organizations in Jyväskylä. To make it clearer and narrower, it is important to mention that the research is conducted using case study, and for the case company SOL’s subdivision in Jyväskylä is chosen.

The research question is something that helps in solving the research problem, as well as formulating this problem to be more precise and clear (What makes a good research question? 2014). Thus, keeping in mind the research problem, it is possible to word the research question as “What is the state of cross-cultural management in SOL in Jyväskylä?” Here it is essential to mention that cross-cultural management has, undoubtedly, more to deal with than only national cultures, i.e. those cultures which are concluded in the framework of nations’ or countries’ borders (Moran, Harris, & Moran 2007, 6-10; Mäkilouko 2003, 25), but in context of this thesis, the author is more concentrated exactly

on this angle of multicultural management, i.e. the level of national cultures. The research sub-questions are the following:

- “What are the problems of multicultural management and its implementation from the case company’s managers’ point of view?”
- “What do the foreign employees think about the cross-cultural practices in the company?”
- “How do the managers and foreign employees see the future of cross-cultural management practices?”

As it comes out from the questions, the research is carried out from two perspectives: the managers and employees' .

The main aim of the thesis is to analyze the significance of multicultural management in the service industry in Jyväskylä. Foreigners are of the greatest interest for the author. Such aspects as implementation of multicultural management in service organization' practices, as well as the state of the foreign employees in the company, their influence on the company, as well as the problems which managers and foreign employees face during the working process have to be described and thoroughly analyzed.

The objectives, which describe the exact actions aiming in reaching the main goal of the thesis (Research objectives 2014), are:

- to analyze available literature, articles and other sources dedicated to the theme of multicultural management and its state in Finland,
- based on that information and knowledge to create the theoretical base for interviews with case company’s managers and foreign employees,
- to conduct these interviews,
- to analyze information gained from the interviews applying knowledge received from the theoretical stage of the study,
- and as the result of analyzing activities, to formulate the practical recommendations for improvement to the managers.

The author anticipates that the recommendations could help the case company to make some conclusions from its attitude to and managerial practices concerning the multicultural employees, and design further steps to improve this part of its business. Apart from the aforementioned objectives, the author also wishes to increase knowledge about a certain subject (multiculturalism

in the service organizations), experience analyzing and researching activities, as well as apply the knowledge gained during the studies.

2 DEFINING CULTURE

Among all the phenomena, there are such that have clear enough, stable and almost unchangeable definitions, and a big part of them relates to the natural sciences, like chemistry, physics or biology. At the same time, there are such occurrences, the definitions of which have changed a lot in time, and thus, these phenomena need to be explained more thoroughly, while keeping in mind different aspects influencing the whole sense of the phenomena, and in regard, their definition. According to Fellows and Lui (2013, 401-402) culture is supposed to be one of this kind of phenomena.

The very first definition of culture is connected with Ancient Greece and Roman Empery. By culture, the Romans meant mainly agriculture, but the definition was also connected with such aspects as care, development, improvement, and respect (Eagleton 2000, 7). The first person who gave the definition of culture as an independent concept was Samuel von Pufendorf, German lawyer and historian who lived in the 17th century (Борзова [Borzova] 2013, 24). He used the definition in terms of “artificial human being” who was raised in the society, in contradiction to “natural human being”. According to Jandt (1998, 6), in the 19th century, the term “culture” was associated with Western civilization, which was so to say the final product of all developments happened from the savagery and barbarian times.

Nowadays, there is still no definition of culture which can be named as the most obvious one. Culture is understood as the practical realization of all humankind’s mental values (Выжлецов [Vyzhlezov] 1996, 66), a historically defined level of society development, expressed in types and forms of organization of humans’ life and activity, as well as material and mental values created by them (Культура [Culture] 2014).

According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010, 5-6) the concept of culture may be defined as software of mind or the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group from others. They stated that culture “lies” between human nature, something universal that

unites all people, e.g. instincts and emotions, and personality, which describes all the individual features of a person, including the obtained and inherited ones (see Figure 1).

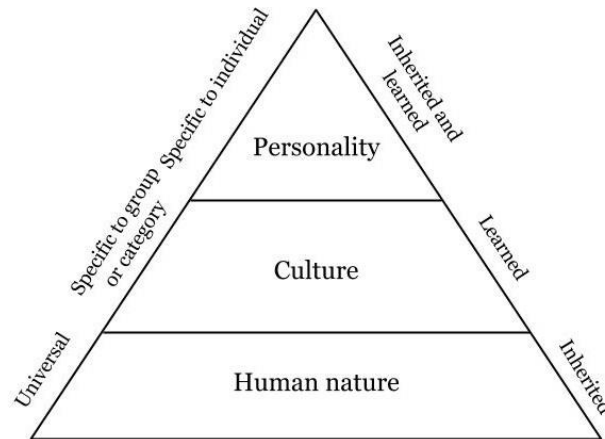


FIGURE 1. Three levels of Uniqueness in Mental Programming (Hofstede et al. 2010, 6).

It is important to mention those things that distinguish persons from different cultures. These elements could be generally assembled into such categories as symbols, heroes, rituals, practices, and values (see Figure 2). By “symbols”, the authors mean different words, gestures or objects, which are specific for a certain culture, but could be copied by the others; the “heroes” are obviously persons who represent the main characteristics of the culture and thus serve as the behavioral models; the “rituals” are the collective activities which are considered to be of great importance for culture. All three elements are united under the concept of “practices”, which means that, from one hand, the elements could be visible for the representatives of the other cultures, but from the other, could be understood only in terms of these practices. The last element is “values”, which defines the attitude of a certain culture to the opposite things, such as understanding of evil and good. (Hofstede et al. 2010, 8.)

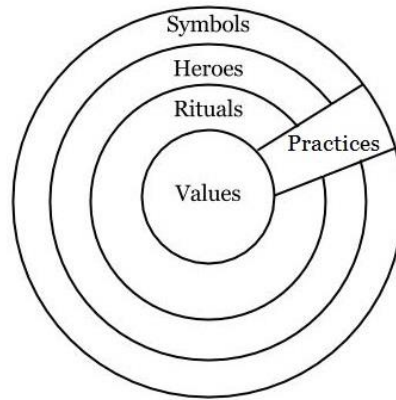


FIGURE 2. The “Onion”: Manifestation of Culture at Different Levels of depth (Hofstede et al. 2010, 8).

All in all, after taking into consideration different definitions, it is possible to conclude that every culture possesses such characteristics as – it is shared amongst its representatives, it is learnt and transmitted from one generation to the other, it strongly affects one’s behavior, it has a system of values and norms, and thus, it is not random, but organized, and a large part of culture, including values and assumptions, remains invisible (ibid., 4-11). Alongside with it, it is essential to mention that the scale of cultures differs a lot: they could be big as nations, e.g. Finnish national culture, and on the other hand, relatively small as different subcultures, for instance, youth movements.

3 MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE CULTURES

Cross-cultural, intercultural or multicultural management is viewed as a comparatively new phenomenon in modern business world. There was relatively no need in such kind of managerial practices before the appearance of transnational companies and corporations, continuing globalization of the world and, thus, increasing the openness of countries. Nevertheless, nowadays, more and more companies face with the problems not only in such traditional spheres as budgeting or marketing, but also in cultural issues affecting the business and the success of organizations. (Caganova and Luptakova 2010, 51-52; Бунина [Bunina] 2008, 4-5.)

Among all the definitions that exist , one of the most complete was given by Dr. Nancy J. Adler in her book “International dimensions of organizational

behavior”. She states that cross-cultural management is dedicated for studying organizational behavior of people in different parts of the world, as well as for training those people to work in organizations with employers, co-workers, and clients. Moreover, it also aims at understanding and improving cooperation and communication between the employees, employers, clients, partners, as well as suppliers from different countries and with various cultural backgrounds. (Adler 2002, 11.)

Due to the large number of the various definitions, it seems to be rather difficult to define the exact place of cross-cultural management in the organization’s business. Quite many researchers correlate it with human resources management, insisting on such aspect, as cross-cultural anyhow is dealing with management of exactly workforce or human resources, even if they have different nationalities or cultural background (Ganapathi and Panchanatham 2014, 2-7). From another point of view, keeping in mind the definition made by Nancy J. Adler, such a traditionalist view has a little to deal with the outside relationship of the company, e.g. with the customers or suppliers. Nevertheless, while talking about multicultural management practices, it is important to keep in mind the national and country’s features, the level of development of different countries, the presence and state of multicultural companies in that country . Probably, it is senseless to require the companies in quite homogenous countries to pay a lot of attention to the management of people from other nationalities, especially, if those companies themselves do not see cross-cultural management as an issue and a competitive advantage. On the other hand, in countries with already existing or / and growing diverse ethnic composition, it is important to keep in mind also cultural issues while running the business. Therefore, each company should not just follow the trends but consider different aspects while implementing different practices, from the perspective of this thesis, particularly, ones which are dedicated to multicultural management.

To sum up, cross-cultural management is not only about knowing the habits, features, similarities, and more often, differences of various cultures, but also about the ability to apply this knowledge to a real working environment, use this knowledge to benefit the companies, increase and develop communication between the cultures and nationalities, so that all these activities may lead to

improvement and prosperity of the whole companies' businesses (Chanlat, Davel, & Dupuis 2013, 224-250). And since the manager is exactly this person who is in charge of implementation of different sort of practices, in particular, cross-cultural ones, it is important for the whole success of a company that he / she should be aware of the vital basis of cross-cultural management.

3.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Plenty of models and figures dedicated to the subject of cross-cultural management exist, but the base of most of them is built on researches of Geert Hofstede. His most famous theory, which is based on a huge interview of 117 000 IBM employees (1967-1973) and developed after the researches of Michael Harris Bond and Michael Minkov, is the theory about the dimensions of the national cultures. According to Hofstede et al. (2010, 29-32) every national culture could be defined and measured in terms of the following aspects: power distance, individualism / collectivism, masculinity / femininity, uncertainty avoidance, indulgence / restraint, and time perspective (see Figure 3).

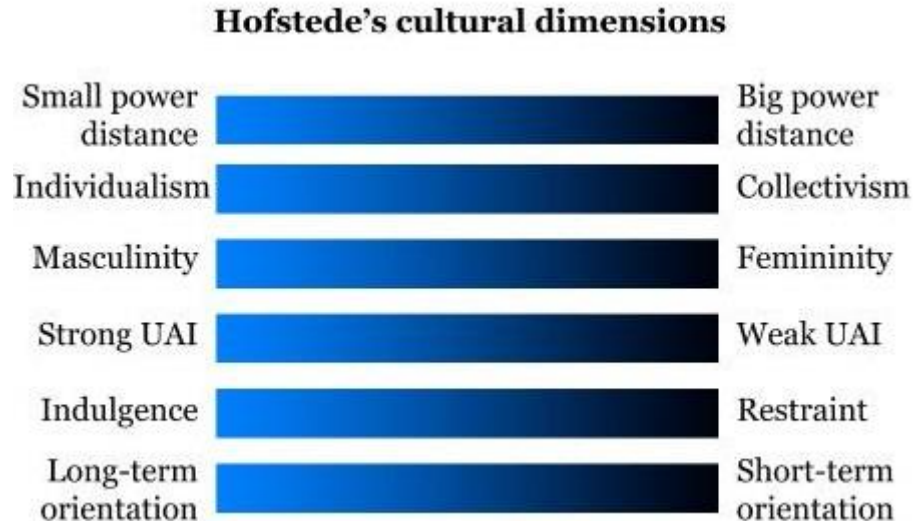


FIGURE 3. Hofstede's cultural dimensions (adopted from *Cultures and Organizations*)

3.1.1 Power distance

The meaning of the power distance dimension, basically, lays in the fact that people are unequal. While conducting his research regarding this dimension Hofstede asked three questions: 1) "How frequently, in your experience, does

the following problem occur: employees being afraid to express disagreement with their managers?” (Hofstede et al. 2010, 56); 2) according to the employees’ perception of their bosses’ decision-making style – paternalistic or autocratic; 3) according to the employees’ preference of their bosses’ decision-making style – how would you like your working environment to be. The results of the research show the dependence and nature of employee-employer relationships in researched countries. Thus, in small-power-distance countries, employees feel themselves equal with their bosses, and that is why they do not have serious issues making decision to argue with the employers. Contrary, in large-power-distance countries, employees highly depend on their bosses, and thus, not that easily contradict them.

In terms of Finland, it has PDI (power distance index) of 33, which is considered to be low, but the highest one amongst the Nordic countries – although the difference is almost invisible: Norway and Sweden have PDI of 31, but Denmark’s one is 18 (ibid., 59).

3.1.2 Individualism / collectivism

According to Hofstede et al. (2010, 90-91) the collectivist societies with prevalence of power of a group are more common in the world than the individualist ones. Hofstede compares collectivist societies with the extended family, consisted of children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc. and where people tend to consider themselves as a part of something big, while individualistic societies are more like nuclear families with only children and parents, where perception of each person is unique and individualistic.

Both individualists and collectivists have their most essential and significant elements of working environment. Therefore, for individualists they are personal time, freedom to express, and presence of challenging work, and for collectivists training opportunities, good physical conditions of the working places, as well as maximal use of skills are vital. (ibid., 92-93.)

Finland got 63 points for IDV (Individualism index), which is close to Estonian one (60), but a little bit far from the rates of other Nordic countries – 69 of Norway, 71 of Sweden, and 74 of Denmark (Finland 2014).

3.1.3 Masculinity / femininity

The next dimension describes the cultures from such a perspective as feminine or masculine behavior. In general, for feminine societies such attributes as concern for relationships and the living environment, as well as nurturance inherent, while competitiveness and assertiveness are common for the masculine cultures. Like with the dimension of individualism / collectivism, the employees defined the most important working life's aspects: for the masculine pole they are opportunity to earn much, have recognition and a challenging job, and advance to higher-level jobs, while for the feminine pole they are good employer-employee relationships and cooperation with colleagues, as well as the living area and employment security (Hofstede et al. 2010, 139).

Finland may be observed as a feminine country since it gets a low masculine index (MAS) – 26. Interestingly, but neighborhood countries (Baltic, Nordic and Russia) get quite close numbers – 36 (Russia), 30 (Estonia), Lithuania (19), Denmark (16), Norway (8) and Sweden (5; the lowest one in the whole rating) (ibid., 143).

3.1.4 Uncertainty avoidance

The dimension “uncertainty avoidance” is related to such subject as the ways and possibility to handle uncertainty, as well as according to Hofstede et al. (2010, 191) extent to which the representatives of culture are afraid of unknown and unforeseen circumstances. Such questions and statements as “How often do you feel nervous or tense at work?”, “Company rules should not be broken – even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest”, and “How long do you think you will continue working for IBM?” were included in survey.

In contradiction to the previous dimensions, there is no common situation for grouping countries, in particular, Nordic region: Finland gets uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) of 59 (completely the same as Iran's, and a bit lower than Estonia's, which of 60), Norway receives 50, while Sweden's rate is 29, and Denmark's – 23 (Finland 2014).

3.1.5 Long-term orientation / short-time orientation

The current dimension was added to the Hofstede's theory after conduction of the Chinese Value Survey by Michael Bond. The survey was dedicated to the assessment of forty Chinese values; amongst them two sets of Confucian values were represented. Four values used for one side were persistence, thrift, ordering relationships by status and observing this order, having a sense of shame. On the opposite side were reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts, respect for tradition, protecting one's "face", and personal steadiness and stability. (How does culture influence an organization's future-orientation? 2012.)

Adopting the dimension for the theory, Hofstede defined that long-term orientations stand for the activities aiming to future, e.g. preservation and thrift, while short-term orientations look back to the past and present, e.g. fulfillment of social obligations and respect of traditions. The countries, which gain a high level of pragmatism, are, obviously, seen as pragmatic, and countries with a low index are normative, as Finland with its 38 points in this dimension (Finland 2014).

3.1.6 Indulgence / restraint

This was the last dimension added to theory in this form as we study it nowadays. The core of a new dimension consisted of such aspects as: happiness, life control, and importance of leisure. One of the pole of the dimension is characterized by freedom to satisfy basic and natural desires of enjoying life; the opposite stands for regulation of such freedom by the social norms.

In terms of Finland, it gets 57 of IVR (indulgence versus restraint index score), which seems to be quite close to the average of Nordic countries (65.4), and thus maybe considered as an indulgent country (Hofstede et al. 2010, 282-283).

3.1.7 Importance of Hofstede's theory

After amply describing the theory developed by Geert Hofstede and his colleagues, it is undoubtedly important to illustrate why it is important for the managers in multicultural companies to be aware of this theory.

While the theory is widely used in international marketing and consumer behavior in order to identify the special characteristics and features of different markets, it has also found a huge application in recruitment, human resources management and service management. Knowing the cultural and national aspects which make the human beings to be different and behave differently, and especially, in working environment, helps the managers and employees to develop the communication and cooperation, and thus, benefits the company's profit, not only in perspective of money gaining, but also as in terms of human resources (Applications of national culture 2014). Moreover, here it is one more time important to outline that only the manager possessing an ability to apply this knowledge to real life business could be named as successful in multicultural management terms. This aspect, i.e. the importance of the whole multicultural management, is discussed in the next subchapter.

3.2 Importance of cross-cultural management implementation

The basic answer for question "Why multicultural management is important?" is "Because it can be a big asset for the company's successful existence".

Firstly, it helps to prevent cultural discrepancies in the multicultural working environment and make employees working together for the success of the company. Implemented wisely, cross-cultural management may help to find the right ways to manage the employees of different cultural background and as the results to create harmonious cooperation and build strong relationships among them and employers (Moran, Abramson, & Moran 2014, 24-32).

Moreover, the cross-cultural management is a vital and integral part of business of those companies who tend to spread and open new markets, in particular, in other countries.

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that with all the possibilities successful implementation of cross-cultural management may give, it, at the same time, requires money and human labor investments, as well as time. Thus, every time while deciding to implement or not such management the manager should look at the problem from different angles and perspectives.

3.3 Finnish reality of multicultural management

The very first thing which needs to be admitted is that there are still only few companies in Finland which have the strategic HRM plans regarding management of foreign employees. Moreover, even among the implemented strategic programs, not all may be named as successful ones. Thus, some researchers make such a conclusion that, probably, the whole concept of such management is not applicable for Finnish reality. (Trux 2010, 143-147; Meriläinen, Tienari, Katila, & Benschop 2009, 235-240.)

Moreover, keeping in mind the different attitudes to defining the role of multicultural management, here it is important to mention that in Finland cross-cultural management is viewed in a rather traditional way, thus, not as an independent concept of the whole management, but as a part of human resources management, applying to the management of foreign employees. Nevertheless, taking into account the problems that the foreigners face with while applying for a position and working in the organizations (see Chapter 6), the author still believes that there is a big need in implementation of such management of employees from foreign cultures.

Alongside with it, it is more interestingly to know that the managers in the companies admit that there are challenges in communication with and leadership of the employees of non-Finnish origin. More than that, they also mentioned that the presence of such employees definitely changes the whole working environment (Louvrier 2013, 67-68). Thus, the need of cross-cultural or multicultural management becomes more obvious and clear.

As for the problems that the managers face while working with the foreign employees, the most common one is the lack of knowledge about the employees' cultural differences. And it concerns not only such things as habits and rituals, but as we speak about working environment, is more dedicated to the different approaches to authority and hierarchy, time management, negotiation styles, etc. In other words, the managers are, unfortunately, culturally unintelligent and thus it causes serious obstacles for the success of the organizations' businesses. In addition, the managers tend to divide and categorize themselves and foreign employees as "we" including here Finnish employees and "others" while speaking about the foreigners. Undoubtedly,

this makes a huge hurt for working environment, since it may cause unpredictable and unnecessary conflicts among employees and employers. What is more, sometimes the managers make their decisions on the base of their cultural background and stereotypes according the representatives of foreign cultures, which is not every time wise while talking of successful integration of the foreign employees into the companies' working environment. (ibid., 61-64.)

4 CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

As it is described in the previous chapter, the lack of cultural intelligence is seen as one of the most serious issues in Finnish cross-cultural management (Louvrier 2013, 75-78). Thus, in order to understand what exactly the managers miss, it is important to define the phenomena and describe the essential aspects of it.

According to Thomas and Inkson (2003, 62), cultural intelligence may be defined as an ability and possibility for effective communication and cooperation with people with different cultural backgrounds. Applying knowledge, mindfulness, and skills, a culturally intelligent person may recognize cultural differences, adapt new cultural settings, and act respectively and appropriately. By mindfulness, the authors mean such a feature as the ability to pay attention to the context, be empathetic, and view the situation from various perspectives (Thomas & Inkson 2003, 51-53). Mindfulness, they state, gives readiness for the interaction and communication with representatives of foreign cultures. Without any doubt, being culturally intelligent is essential for everyone living in globalized world, but it gets a new level of importance for the managers working in a multicultural company with employees with different cultural background. While becoming culturally intelligent, they should be ready to concern such aspects and develop such cultural competences as communication skills, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, emotional stability and others (see Figure 4).

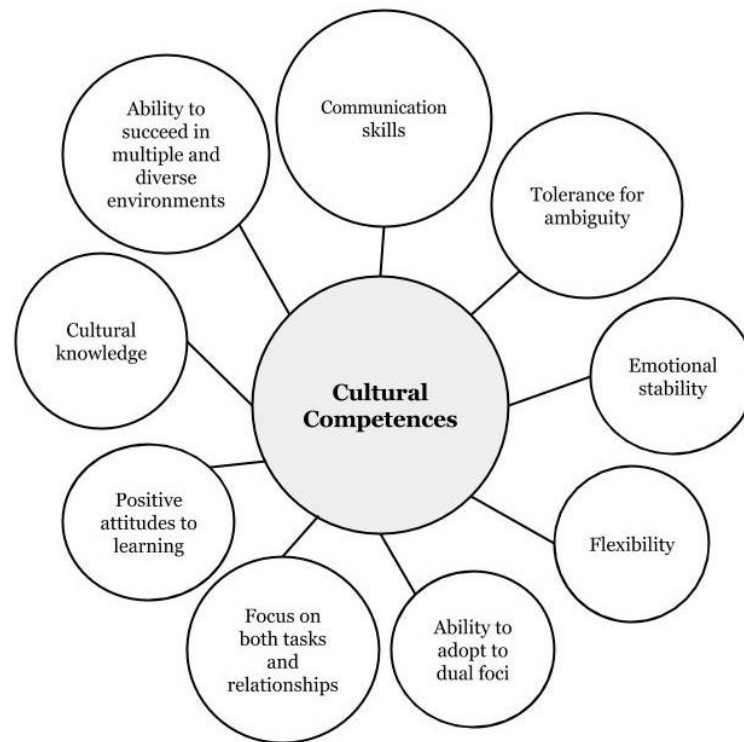


FIGURE 4. Inventory of Cross-Cultural Competences (adopted from Rowley & Poon 2009, 2)

As it is presented on Figure 5, obtaining cultural intelligence is time-consuming and not a linear, but iterative process. According to Thomas and Inkson (2003, 69), it requires a certain level of knowledge, openness for new experience and data, and the ability to adapt and assimilate this knowledge in order to use it in real life. The authors note that the development of cultural intelligence (CQ) consists of five stages (ibid., 66-68). At the very first stage, the person is mindless and not capable to distinguish the cultural norms of others or even not able to recognize the presence of cultural differences. At the second stage, the person becomes aware of other cultural norms and gets motivation to learn more about them. Next, the person begins to develop his / her understanding of foreign cultures and their features, and tries to accept the differences, although it goes not that smoothly. At the fourth stage, the process of assimilation of new cultural norms finally occurs, and the last stage could be described as – the person starts anticipating the changes in cultural context, sometimes even before the members of certain culture.

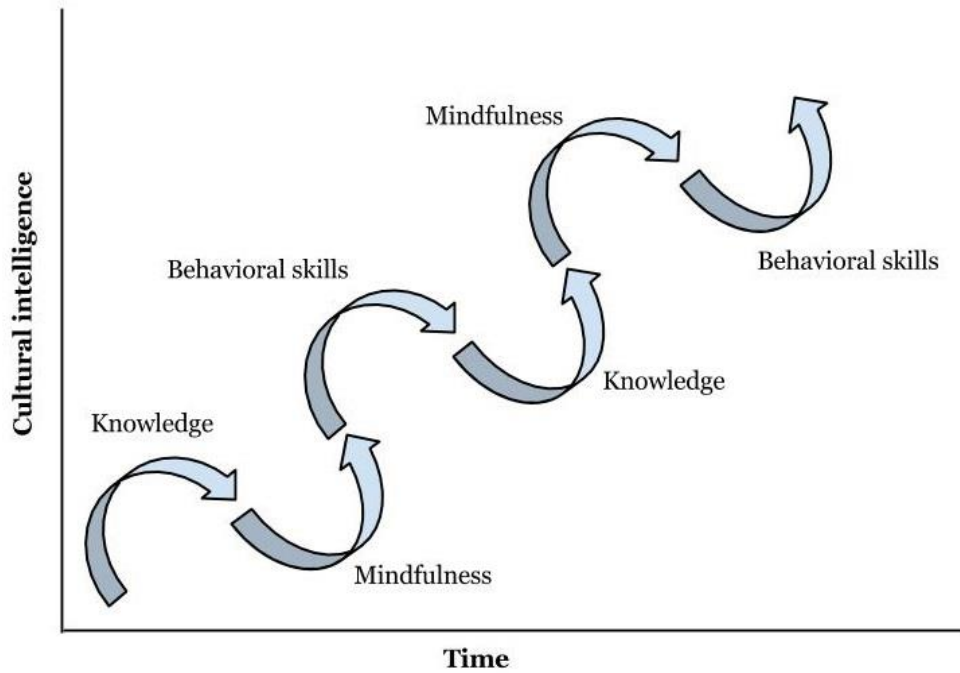


FIGURE 5. Gaining cultural intelligence (Thomas & Inkson 2003, 69)

5 LABOR MARKET IN FINLAND

In 2013 the whole population of Finland was over 5.4 million people, while labor force consisted of almost 2.5 million people. Among them 330 000 persons were self-employed and unpaid family workers (Employees and self-employed persons aged 15-74 2013), others were employed in different industries. According to the statistics (Employed persons and employees aged 15-74 and hours actually worked by employed persons and employees by industry 2013), the biggest industries in Finland at that certain time (whole 2013) were human health and social work activities (16%), manufacturing (14%), wholesale and retail trade (12%), construction (7%), education (7%), and professional, scientific and technical activities (6%). Obviously, the numbers did not change that much, and in the end of second quarter of 2014 the share was almost the same. Also, it is important to mention that the Finnish private sector is much more bigger than public – in 2013 1 781 000 people out of 2 457 000 of labor force were employed exactly in the private sector (72.5%) and only in such industries as human health and social work activities, education, public administration and defense the share of public sector was higher (Employed persons and employees aged 15-74 by employer sector and industry 2013). As for the occupations, amongst the most popular

ones are personal and protective services workers (12.5%), technician professionals (10%), physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals (7.5%), and sales and services elementary occupations (5%) (Employed persons aged 15-74 by occupation and sex 2013).

According to Global 2000 leading companies, a ranking of the largest companies in the world by such criteria as sales, profits, assets and market value, such Finnish companies as Sampo, Fortum, Nokia (which sold its mobile business to Microsoft in 2013), UPM-Kymmene, Kone, Pohjola Bank, Neste Oil, Stora Enso, Wärtsilä, Metso (which was demerged into two companies in October 2013), Outokumpu, and Kesko are included in this rating.

Such industries as hotel and restaurant services, machinery, transport, education, commerce, as well as health and social services are considered to be the fastest-grown ones, and thus, it is expected that they will continue their growth next years (Rifai 2012, 20-21). Moreover, healthcare and services specialists are one of the most wanted ones. In addition, due to the fact of quickly ageing Finnish population and the lack of specialists in that sphere, the need of the foreign employees in healthcare and services becomes obvious.

6 IMMIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGNERS IN FINLAND

6.1 Immigration in Finland

It is evident nowadays that immigration has more and more visible influence not only on the everyday life, but also on the working environment in Finland. The number of the foreign-language speakers in Finland, which was almost 289 068 in the end of 2013, is now almost equal to the number of the Swedish speakers (approximately 290 910 in 2013), and forms 5.3% of the whole population (Harala 2014).

Until the 1990-s Finland was quite a homogenous country (although, of course national minorities, as Saami, Swedes, and others were represented) and not the most popular destination for the immigrants, but such processes as dissolution of the Soviet Union, the civil war in former Yugoslavia, and “developments in Asia and Africa” (Koivukangas 2003, 4) caused a huge influx of immigrants. In 1990 the foreign population consisted of 24 783 persons and

formed only 0.5% of the population of Finland. According to Koivukangas (2003, 5) in 2002 approximately 100 000 foreign citizens formed 1.9%. During the next 10 years, the foreign population in Finland almost tripled and, as mentioned earlier, consisted of almost 290 000 persons in 2013. Moreover, as it could be concluded from Table 1 in 2013 in every region of Finland the foreign population grew and did it with the rate 1.8-10%, while Finnish population increased only in seven regions with maximal rate of 1.4% (see Table 2). The largest groups of foreign-language speakers in Finland came from Russia, Estonia, Somalia, Turkey, Iraq, India, Vietnam, and Thailand. It is essential to mention that the biggest part of the foreigners in Finland is formed by people aged 20-45 years, which undoubtedly should be taken into consideration since the main Finnish population is quickly ageing and now people born in 1940-50-s form the biggest group in the Finnish population. (Harala 2014.).

Table 1. Increase of foreign population (2012-2013) (adopted from Language according to age and sex by region)

Region	Foreigners 2012	Foreigners 2013	Increase
<i>Åland</i>	1 733	1 850	6,8%
<i>Central Finland</i>	6 615	7 034	6,3%
<i>Central Ostrobothnia</i>	1 381	1 516	9,8%
<i>Etelä-Savo</i>	3 567	3 818	7,0%
<i>Kainuu</i>	1 755	1 832	4,4%
<i>Kanta-Häme</i>	4 823	5 390	11,8%
<i>Kymeenlaakso</i>	8 468	9 080	7,2%
<i>Lapland</i>	3 681	3 971	7,9%
<i>North Ostrobothnia</i>	7 672	8 351	8,9%
<i>North Karelia</i>	4 683	5 107	9,1%
<i>Ostrobothnia</i>	8 666	9 348	7,9%
<i>Päijät-Häme</i>	7 559	7 972	5,5%
<i>Pirkanmaa</i>	17 987	19 424	8,0%
<i>Pohjois-Savo</i>	5 097	5 514	8,2%
<i>Satakunta</i>	4 575	5 144	12,4%
<i>South Karelia</i>	5 849	6 283	7,4%
<i>South Ostrobothnia</i>	3 076	3 460	12,5%
<i>Uusimaa</i>	145 894	158 496	8,6%
<i>Varsinais-Suomi</i>	23 868	25 478	6,7%

Whole country	266 949	289 068	8,3%
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Table 2. Change in Finnish population (2012-2013) (adopted from *Language according to age and sex by region*)

Region	Finns 2012	Finns 2013	Change
<i>Åland</i>	1 373	1 392	1,4%
<i>Central Finland</i>	268 066	267 811	-0,1%
<i>Central Ostrobothnia</i>	60 789	60 809	0,0%
<i>Etelä-Savo</i>	149 642	148 476	-0,8%
<i>Kainuu</i>	78 861	78 071	-1,0%
<i>Kanta-Häme</i>	170 014	169 451	-0,3%
<i>Kymeenlaakso</i>	171 531	170 371	-0,7%
<i>Lapland</i>	177 227	176 576	-0,4%
<i>North Ostrobothnia</i>	392 186	394 088	0,5%
<i>North Karelia</i>	160 928	160 203	-0,5%
<i>Ostrobothnia</i>	80 720	80 755	0,0%
<i>Päijät-Häme</i>	194 313	193 775	-0,3%
<i>Pirkanmaa</i>	476 709	478 880	0,5%
<i>Pohjois-Savo</i>	242 895	242 676	-0,1%
<i>Satakunta</i>	219 573	218 624	-0,4%
<i>South Karelia</i>	126 287	125 757	-0,4%
<i>South Ostrobothnia</i>	190 468	189 972	-0,3%
<i>Uusimaa</i>	1 287 069	1 293 255	0,5%
<i>Varsinais-Suomi</i>	418 197	418 420	0,1%
Whole country	4 866 848	4 869 362	0,1%

In Central Finland with population of 275 320 people, 7 034 persons are foreigners (2.6% of whole population there), 3 400 of whom are living in Jyväskylä (For immigrants 2014). It is essential to note that Central Finland itself could not be named as the most desirable region for the foreigners – the average percentage of foreign presence in Finland is 5.3% of whole population, while in Central Finland it is more twice lower (2.6%), and thus, this region takes 11th place (out of 19 regions) in terms of presence of the foreigners (see Table 3). Alongside with it, the rate of foreign population growth is comparatively medium – 6.3% in 2013, comparing with 2012, and 17th place in Finland, while the country average is 8.3% (see Table 1). Overall, taking into account the numbers representing the growth of Finnish population, we still

could assess all the changes concerning the foreign presence as quite rapid, as well as tended to grow further.

Table 3. The percentage of foreign population in Finland (adopted from Language according to age and sex by region)

Region	Whole population	Foreigners	Percentage of foreigners
<i>Åland</i>	28 666	1 850	6,5%
<i>Central Finland</i>	275 320	7 034	2,6%
<i>Central Ostrobothnia</i>	68 677	1 516	2,2%
<i>Etelä-Savo</i>	152 518	3 818	2,5%
<i>Kainuu</i>	79 975	1 832	2,3%
<i>Kanta-Häme</i>	175 481	5 390	3,1%
<i>Kymeenlaakso</i>	180 845	9 080	5,0%
<i>Lapland</i>	182 514	3 971	2,2%
<i>North Ostrobothnia</i>	403 287	8 351	2,1%
<i>Noth Karelia</i>	165 445	5 107	3,1%
<i>Ostrobothnia</i>	180 384	9 348	5,2%
<i>Päijät-Häme</i>	202 424	7 972	3,9%
<i>Pirkanmaa</i>	500 166	19 424	3,9%
<i>Pohjois-Savo</i>	248 430	5 514	2,2%
<i>Satakunta</i>	224 556	5 144	2,3%
<i>South Karelia</i>	132 252	6 283	4,8%
<i>South Ostrobothnia</i>	193 977	3 460	1,8%
<i>Uusimaa</i>	1 585 473	158 496	10,0%
<i>Varsinais-Suomi</i>	470 880	25 478	5,4%
Whole country	5 451 270	289 068	5,3%

6.2 Foreign employees in Finland

The best-known advantages of working in Finland are good working conditions, high employment security, free and high-quality education, as well as comparatively smooth public services, which make Finland to be a good destination for working immigrants. Foreigners coming to Finland because of employment generally go through the same bureaucratic steps as other native Finnish candidates. Nevertheless, they should provide accreditations and recognition of their qualifications and diploma (Saarikoski and Wolley 2014). Although, it is not required in the private sector, but usually used in the public

sector – here the decisions are made by the National Board of Education. As for the right to practice a profession on a basis on foreign qualification, it is granted by the authorities, which are responsible for making the decisions regarding exactly this certain profession in Finland (Working in Finland 2014, 17).

It is obvious that the country and municipalities should have the integration plans and programs for the immigrants to help them to be a part of Finnish society (Valtavaara and Wolley 2014). On the state level all the processes are regulated by the Finnish Integration Act, on municipal – such local services supporting the integration of foreigners are establishing as vocational training and language schools.

6.3 Unemployment and discrimination of the foreign employees

When in 1990-s the immigration increase happened, Finland was passing through one of the worst economic crises in its history. The national unemployment rate rose from 3.5% in 1990 to 19.9% in 1994. Among the immigrants the situation was even much worse – the average unemployment rate over 50%. (Koivukangas 2003, 5.)

Due to the actions made by the Finnish government and banks, the Finnish economy started to recover in the middle of 1990-s. The unemployment rate was slowly, but steadily decreasing. Nowadays, the national unemployment rate is fluctuating from 8 to 10% (Finland unemployment rate 2014), while the unemployment rate amongst the foreigners is approximately 22%, and moreover, among men this rate is lower (20%), while amongst women is higher – 24%.

It is significant to mention that the unemployment rate varies among different nationalities, for instance, only 7% of the labor force coming from India and Nepal are unemployed, while amongst Somalis and Iraqis the unemployment is over 50% (Łobodzińska 2011, 50-51; Major unemployment differences among immigrant groups 2010). Discrimination from the employers is called as one of the main reasons for such a high rate of unemployment from certain nationalities. From this point of view, it is essential to mention other issues affecting the employment of the foreigners.

At the very beginning, it is important to note that such aspects as the lack of professional competences are not taken into account, since they could be applicable not only for the foreigners, but also for the representatives of the titular nation, in the current case, Finnish one. Thus, according to Vehkakoski (2000) the lack of Finnish language skills is number one reason for rejecting the foreigners as the potential employees. He states that such an obstacle is often used by the employers to refuse the unwanted candidates with the lack of professional or other skills. Though, the dependence of the language skills is seen differently in distinctive sectors: for instance, IT and high-tech production, where English is supposed to be the main working language, is now more open for people coming outside Finland, while in some companies having a deal with the cleaning or customer services the Finnish language skills are of highest importance.

All in all, the lack of Finnish language skills stays a crucial issue for the immigrants and foreigners, due to the fact the most of the services, especially online ones, are provided mainly in Finnish (Kallunki 2014). That is why foreigners may miss or even are not aware of vital information, regarding taxation, health care, social and bank issues. Moreover, while the Finnish language is seen to be one of the biggest obstacles for the foreigners, more and more people, after giving up to find a position in a company, establish their own businesses. Usually, such enterprises include restaurants, stores, and retail due to the easiness of market entry. Nevertheless, with the increase of flow of Asian immigrants, high-tech sectors, as well as online businesses are becoming more and more popular amongst foreigners (Rifai 2012, 20).

The next big issue is different cultural background of foreign workers. Raised and living in the countries where culture, especially corporate one, and habits have not lots of similarities with the Finnish ones, those people will undoubtedly face some problems and misunderstandings while applying for a position and working in a Finnish company. That is why the process of integration, which generally means that while preserving the vital parts of the original or background culture, one becomes an integral part of the new host culture (Jandt 1998, 315), is highly important while talking about adoption of the foreigners not only to working environment, but also to the Finnish society. Although together with it, it is known that Finnish culture and society

are based on such aspects as equality, ordinary and homogeneity, and thus, all of these make a process of becoming of the foreigners, seen as outsiders, a part of Finnish society, where even the words “guest” and “stranger” have almost the same meaning, definitely hard and exhausting.

Quite close to the previous issue is the fact that there are not enough culturally intelligent managers working in the organizations. Often making decision to reject a foreign candidate, the manager is guided by stereotypes, beliefs, and myths, for instance, “I will not hire Romas [representatives of Romani minority], because they are known to be thieves and bummers”. In addition it is, definitely, not about the trustworthiness of such beliefs, but about inability of the managers to observe all dimensions and personal characteristics of the candidate and inaptitude to make the conclusions not from their own cultural background. Here it is vital to note that such attitude to the foreigners as one big group without taking into account distinctive cultural background and education of the certain persons is quite common, too . (Louvrier 2013, 60-92.)

The last but not the least issue that needs to be described in the theme of employment of the foreigners in Finland is the fact that sometimes the labor regulations are not respected by the employers, especially, in their relationship with foreign employees. Two main problems that need to be discussed are the number of the working hours and salary payment. Foreign employees occasionally are paid less than their Finnish colleagues for the same workload, or are neglected by the employers in terms of paying “compensation for working overtime” (Inspectors find that Finnish employers often violate basic rights of foreign employees 2006). Using the numbers, one earned euro of a Finnish man is equivalent to 75 cents of an immigrant man; the situation with women workers is even worse – an immigrant woman’s euro is 77 cents compared with immigrant man’s euro, 62 cents – with a Finnish man’s euro, and 84 cents – a Finnish woman’s euro (Elonen and Wolley 2014). Such situations happen more commonly in the hospitality, service, and construction industries, where the short-term contracts are widely used.

7 SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Using the theory of the economic sectors developed by Colin Clark and Jean Fourastié, it is possible to distinguish economy into three sectors: primary (extraction of raw materials), secondary (manufacturing), and tertiary (providing services) (Wolfe 1955, 402-406). Such industries involving provision of services as intangible products are included in the tertiary or service sector. According to Kotler, Armstrong, Wong, and Sanders (2004, 625-633), the service itself is characterized by intangibility, inseparability, perishability, variability, and lack of ownership. Intangibility means the absence of possibility to see or smell the services before purchase, perishability is for impossibility of storage for later use or sale, variability means dependence of the certain service's features of the exact provider, inseparability is simultaneous production and consumption of the service without separating from provider (Kotler et al. 2004, 625-633). Thus, taking into account these features, it is possible to define what industries are concluded into the service sector; they are hospitality, tourism, law, health care, financial and consulting services, etc.

Talking about Finland it is essential to mention that here the service sector is one of the strongest one. According to CIA statistics (GPD – Composition, by sector of origin 2014) in 2013 it provided 71.9% of national GDP (in CIA's characteristics, service sectors includes "government activities, communications, transportation, finance, and all other private economic activities that do not produce material goods"). In 2010, health care and social services took the biggest share of the sector. Together with it the public sector was one of the biggest providers of the jobs in the service sector (37.3%) (Service sector provides 72.9% of all jobs in Finland 2012). Women formed the biggest part of all service employees, while in certain industries, such as transportation, information and communication men were the majority of workforce. While talking about accommodation, tourism, catering, and health care, here women traditionally were represented the "main body".

7.1 SOL

SOL is a Finnish multiservice company established in 1990-s as a stemmed organization of Lindström Oy. Nowadays, the company operates in Finland,

Estonia, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden and has more than 11 000 employees in its staff, 3 000 of whom are working outside Finland. According to Saarikoski and Wooley (2014), the fifth of the company's employees in Finland are foreigners and immigrants. The company's vision is aiming in provision of the outstanding services to the customers and becoming the best operator in terms of environmental issues. SOL possesses such values as creativity, reliability, entrepreneurship, employees' fulfillment, and customer satisfaction. (Skillful multiservice with a big heart 2014.)

SOL provides such services as security, property, cleaning, and laundry ones. While it is quite obvious what kind of services are meant by cleaning and laundry, it is essential to mention the services characterized by security and property. The security services are implemented in the headquarters, production facilities, airports, business companies and include guarding, lobby services, monitoring room services, stewarding, security check, consultancy and safety auditing, as well as remote safety services (Security services 2014). Property services consist of energy services, property and outdoor areas maintenance, technical maintenance, and property management (Property services 2014.)

In Jyväskylä the subdivision of SOL, among the big variety of services, provides mainly laundry and cleaning services. The company has two offices – one in Jyväskylä, and another one in Laukaa. 350 employees, both Finns and of foreign origin, are working here, and managed by seven supervisors and managers, three of whom are responsible for cleaning services, and four – for other services. Among the company's clients, Technopolis, the city of Jyväskylä, as well as most of the city hotels can be named. (Manninen and Tapio 2014.)

8 RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

In the very beginning of the current paragraph , it is necessary to mention that choosing the right research approach is of extreme importance, since it influences the whole way of doing research, searching for information, and analyzing the results and outcomes. Generally, while thinking about the right research method to use, one makes a choice between the quantitative and qualitative approaches; nevertheless, the situations when the researcher combines both methods exist also. According to Hammond and Wellington

(2013, 9 and 107) the quantitative method is used when the researcher wants to trace the relationship between variables, and thus is more common in researches that deal with the measurements of the data in countable forms. The qualitative method, in its turn, has a deal with non-numeric data and, in general, covers all other types of the researches non-touched by the quantitative method (Kananen 2011, 37).

In terms of the current thesis, the qualitative research method is used. While making this choice, the author has been guided by the facts that the main aim for conducting the research and writing the thesis is acquisition of deeper understanding and precise description of the phenomenon (Kananen 2011, 41), i.e. in the case of this thesis – cross-cultural management in the Finnish service companies. It is important to note that cross-cultural or multicultural management as a phenomenon is broadly studied, but still there are quite a few researches dedicated to the exact aforementioned narrower theme (namely, the implication of multicultural management to the Finnish service companies' business) and research problem of the thesis. That is why, in order to better understand, describe and analyze the case inducted to the research, the qualitative research method is used.

Case study as one of the form of the qualitative research method is the main practical base of the thesis. Taking into account specificity of the main theme of the thesis and the lack of information available concerning implementation of cross-cultural management exactly in Finland's, and in particular, Central Finland's service organizations, the case study seems to be the best possible option for conducting research, since it helps to test and observe how scientific theories and models work in the reality (Shuttleworth 2012). While choosing the company served as the case, the researcher keeps in mind such things as the presence of the foreign employees in the company and the role of the company in local environment. That is why, due to these criteria and after thorough searching, SOL, which is the Finnish multiservice company operating in such countries as Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, and Russia and having 11 000 employees in its staff, was chosen (Skillful multiservice with a big heart 2014).

As for the data collection method, the author uses such a type as focused or thematic interview (Kananen 2011, 51). While conducting focused interview

one's main goal is to create such an environment where a participant / the participants (interviewees) would feel comfortable to share their opinions and discuss the theme and questions designed by the interviewer. The interviewer uses open-end questions in order to make the interviewee really talk and think about the main theme; moreover, it is quite common that the other unprepared questions arise during the interviews.

In the current research, the focused interviews are held with the individuals, as well as with the groups. As for the groups, the managers / supervisors are chosen, since exactly they are aware of all the business process in the companies, including cross-cultural management. The foreign employees working in the company are chosen to participate in the individual interviews, since one of the main goals is to describe how multicultural management practices are seen from their points of view. The decision to use the group interviews for interviewing the managers and individual – for employees is affected by impossibility to gather the employees in the same place at the same time and the opportunity to talk with the managers right in their office.

Since it is obvious how the participants for the group interviews are chosen, the author believes that it is essential to describe the process of choosing the interviewees for the individual interviews. There are several important criteria for the eligibility for the interview. The first one and the most important is the nationality or the country of origin - since the research is dedicated to the multicultural management accordingly the foreigners, it is vital that the interviewee should be of non-Finnish origin. The second criteria is the presence of the interviewee in the staff of the company: ideally, all the candidates should be currently working in the SOL Jyväskylä. The third criteria for the individual interviews is the presence of the representatives of different foreign nationalities, ideally of as much as possible nationalities, since it helps to see the situation from different angles. The last criteria is, so to say, “routine” origin, which in reality affects the most the process of choosing the interviewees, – availability of the participants.

As for the secondary data, information from literature and books, articles, specialized newspapers and journals, and web pages is used in order to create the theoretical framework not only for the interviews, but for the whole Thesis as well.

Information acquired from the interviews with the managers and foreign employees, including those ones who are currently working at SOL or already finished their work for the company, is the practical and integral basis for the current thesis and list of recommendations for improvement prepared for the case company.

The author conducted one group interview with the SOL's supervisors Marja Manninen and Theo Kaipio on 30th of September, 2014. The decision to interview exactly those persons stemmed from the suitable position of interviewees in the company (managers and supervisors, in some ways, occupy quite the same positions in the regional subdivisions of SOL), their readiness to be interviewed in English, and their availability. During the interview the supervisors provided the author with the list of the foreign employees' e-mail addresses, which included seven names.

The author contacted all the employees from the list: two of them did not reply back, other five agreed to be interviewed. The first interviewee with one of the foreign employee from the list was conducted on 3rd of October, 2014; the second one – on 5th of October, 2014. Other two employees, who had agreed to be interviewed, due to some reasons did not show at the agreed time and place, neither did come to the extra interviews arranged by the author in order to replace the missed ones. The last employee could not come to the interview, but asked to answer the question in written form; the questions and answers from this virtual interview, which were received on 15th of October, 2014, were also taken into consideration.

Apart from those employees, the author interviewed two more persons, one of whom was working for SOL Jyväskylä for more than one year, and another one was working for SOL Uusimaa, but also had some affairs with the Jyväskylä subdivision. The interviews were organized on 2nd of October, 2014 and 7th of October, 2014. After some reflections, the author decided to consider those interviews, despite the fact that they did not correspond to criteria discussed in the previous chapter (i.e. the employee should currently work in SOL Jyväskylä), but taking into account the quality, importance, and fruitfulness of provided information.

Altogether, the researcher interviewed two supervisors, four foreign employees, and received one written form with the answers.

All the interviews were conducted in English, since this language is shared by all interviewees and the author, and took from 30 minutes to one hour. The interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and later decrypted and transcribed into written form. It is important to mention that the supervisors gave their permission to use their names in the thesis. However,, personal information concerning the foreign employees, i.e. their full names, is purposely missed due to the ethical principles.

9 RESULTS

In order to properly analyze information gained during the interviews, it is important firstly to consider the supervisors' and employees' interviews separately, and then make a synthesis of the conclusions made from available data using the theoretical basis described in the previous chapters. After these steps it is possible to formulate the suggestions for improvement for the case company.

9.1 Analyzing the supervisors' interviews

Marja Manninen, who has been working in SOL already for 17.5 years, and Theo Kaipio, who possesses 10 years of working experience in SOL, were interviewed together in the very end of September, 2014. Both of them called their positions in SOL as supervisors and described their responsibilities "almost doing everything" from recruitment and supervision to calculation of salaries. (Manninen and Taipio 2014)

They both have approximately 50 employees, among whom 10-11 are foreigners including ones from China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Russia, and African countries. While talking about the typical foreign employee in SOL, they mentioned several common characteristics:

A: And could you describe some typical employee in SOL? Like what is the age... especially, foreigners.

T: Most of them are students. Twenty to thirty (*years old*).

A: Okay. And do they have some experience in cleaning? Or they are just different...

M: Some of them have, yes. And mostly, in Finland. But maybe in some other places, for example, in Helsinki. But mostly, they are coming from... Yeah, they were doing just something else in their own countries.

A: And they are part-time, or also full-time workers?

M: Both.

In addition, one of the common features shared by the foreign employees is how they apply for the job. Most foreigners do it while coming to the office, while the company states that it would preferably be done via online.

The interviewees admit that nowadays there are more and more foreigners coming to SOL and asking for a job:

M: When I came almost 18 years ago, we had only Finnish workers, but now... now we have many (*foreign employees*). But it's normal now. It's normal to have Finnish and foreign employees.

At the same time, SOL does not have jobs for each and every one, and the employees definitely try to do their best and keep the job.

M: Yes, it's true. Because we don't have places for everybody. And those who are working for us, they are working for years, they don't leave their places very often. Because it's not that easy to get the new job.

T: There are some foreign students who have been working in our company about five years or something. And they are still here.

Previous experience, motivation, as well as preferable knowledge of the Finnish language are those characteristics that the possible candidate ideally should possess. Nevertheless, most of the foreign employees use English as their working language, which decrease their chances to get the workplaces in several companies, for instance in the hotels or in that companies where the client requires cleaners to speak Finnish.

As far as it was seen from the interview, the supervisors think about cross-cultural management exactly as management of people with different nationalities. Moreover, SOL Jyväskylä sees intercultural management practices as not a pure managerial tool, but probably just a source of additional information of other cultures' features.

M: Yes, but in our company we get lots of information about how to... we get information about many kind of cultures. How to manage them. [...] Maybe, few years, we have, for example... foreign people have trainings also in their native language, not in all languages but in English, Swedish, Russian. Before it was only in Finnish, but now we do it also in other languages.

A: So it's for the employees... [...] So they better understand the company. Is there something for managers and supervisors?

M: Ehm, we have some... maybe two or three year ago we got some book that told about other cultures. [...] Maybe, it's a bit easier to understand how people do in other cultures, because they don't know... because in some cultures, I know, when somebody doesn't understand something, they don't tell it, they just say "Yes, yes, yes" and then you can see that "No, she didn't understand".

Moreover, in terms of management of the foreigners, the supervisors think of those employees as one big group without distinguishing them into nationalities. This fact is supported by the theoretical knowledge gained from the Jonna Louvrier's study in which Finnish concept of "We and Others" is described.

In terms of problems of managing the foreigners, the language barrier is considered as one of the biggest issues. Interestingly, the barrier could be seen from two sides: firstly, most of foreign employees do not speak Finnish, which is the main working language in SOL Jyväskylä, and secondly, not all managers understand English, the language that is shared by most foreigners.

A: Aha, so it is the main problem. The language problem.

M: Yes.

A: Here is the next question. Not all the managers speak English?

M: No.

A: And those foreign employees who are going to work to SOL, they don't speak Finnish. Or do they speak Finnish?

M: Yes, they do. But mostly they speak English [laughing]. But they can. Some of them can. But we have told them if you really want to ... for those people who want to work for us we tell them it's much better to ... chance to get job when they can speak more Finnish. Because... it's not because of us. It's what our clients say.

The different cultural backgrounds cause another big problem. The attitude to the same situation differs a lot among the representatives of different nationalities:

T: When you see some kind of area and you think “It looks so clean”, and other person comes and “It is so dirty and there are a lot dust”. And how they handle it...

M: Yes, it’s about language and culture. Because, in the first, they don’t understand what Finnish people want. [...] And Finnish clients are very... they really want that our people do a really good job. And sometimes foreign people don’t understand what Finnish people mean.

While assessing the situation from their cultural background, the foreigners sometimes forget about Finnish working environment’s features, and it may result in a lower quality and productivity of work, as well as clients’ dissatisfaction. On the other hand, without having any knowledge and experience in working in this environment, as well as without being guided, supervised and motivated, it is undoubtedly extremely difficult to adjust to the requirements made by the SOL and workplace companies. Nevertheless, this particular statement it is not generally applying to SOL, since they are definitely interested in keeping their employees to be motivated by providing guidance and feedback (Manninen and Taipio 2014).

One of the problems the supervisors described is unwillingness of the employees to wear the uniform.

M: Mostly, they don’t want to wear it, and I don’t know why. It just was yesterday when I was talking about that clothes, how important is to wear clothes, SOL clothes. When you do some cleaning job, and some our clients... it’s really important to wear. Because I told them yesterday, if you clean, for example, Prisma, with your own clothes, then it looks so unprofessional.

Despite the fact that the problem was not seen to be of cultural differences’ origin, the author decided to ask the employees about their attitude to the company’s uniform.

Another problem that influences the relationship between SOL and its clients is the employees’ time management:

M: And sometimes they should be at some places at certain time and they don't go there. And they don't inform and call, don't inform why. Somebody's waiting for them and they don't go. They maybe come many hours later.

As the solutions for aforementioned problems, the supervisors mentioned the systematical trainings provided for all employees before the exact start of the work, where the supervisors describe the rules of using equipment and liquids, and special trainings for those who work in trains and deal with risky situations, thus, need to have a deeper knowledge of safety and security principles. Moreover, feedback is provided and meetings with the supervisors, accordingly different issues, are organized often. More than that, the supervisors state that the employees often provide their own ideas, which are taken into consideration.

Overall, the foreign employees, despite the fact of the cultural and language differences, stay just the employees in SOL:

T: Yeah, just foreigners. And just workers for our company.

A: So it's not that big issue in company?

M and T: Yes, yes, it's not.

Alongside with several problems of foreign employees' management, there are always positive things of having such employees in the staff. Among them is the possibility to practice English, quality of foreign employees' ideas for improvement SOL business, as well as their ability to help the customers at their workplaces.

M: Of course, [...] it's good when some of our clients come and ask you (*in foreign language other than Finnish*) where could I find something... and it's good for the hotel if our people, persons (*foreign employees speaking the same language*) could tell their client where you can find something. And of course, there are lots of foreign clients.

[...]

T: Yes, yes. And, in general, our workers have very good ideas (*of improvement SOL business*).

[...]

T: I learn a lot of English from our foreigners.

The supervisors agreed that implementation of cross-cultural management practices may help to improve relationship with the foreign employees, as well as mutual understanding. On the other hand, it would be time-consuming and definitely require preparation in order to design the suitable activities and timetable for all the foreign employees.

9.2. Understanding foreign employees' national cultures

The foreign employees, who have given their permission to be interviewed, are the representatives of four countries – China, Vietnam, Tanzania, and Nepal. In order to understand better in which ways their cultural backgrounds differ from the Finnish supervisors' ones, it is important to analyze them using the Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (see Table 4).

Table 4. SOL supervisors' and foreign employees' origin countries' values for the six cultural dimension from the Hofstede's theory (adopted from Country comparison)

	Finland	China	Vietnam	Tanzania	Nepal
Power distance	33	80	70	70	65
Individualism	63	20	20	25	30
Masculinity	26	66	40	40	40
Uncertainty avoidance	59	30	30	50	40
Pragmatism	38	87	57	34	-
Indulgence	57	24	35	38	-

As it is possible to conclude from the table, most of the foreign countries' cultural dimensions' values are quite similar to each other, but differ a lot from the Finnish indexes. The biggest differences are in such dimensions as power distance and individualism, which means that the national culture of four foreign countries may be characterized as rather collectivistic and polarized in societal terms, where the inequalities between people are widely accepted. Finland, on the other hand, could be characterized by such terms as equal rights, decentralized power, independence and individualism.

As for the dimension of masculinity / femininity, all the countries, except for China, are considered to be feminine, which means solidarity, support, care for each other, well-being are of high importance for the representatives of their

national cultures. In its turn, China is a masculine society, which means that success is one of the most significant elements for the whole country, as well as for each person.

In terms of the next dimension, Finland scores the highest points, which makes it to have a high preference to avoid uncertainty. Other countries, except for Tanzania, which has no preference in this dimension, are rather relaxed in terms of avoiding uncertain situations.

In the last two dimensions almost all the countries show completely different values (taking into account that there is no available data for that dimensions for Nepal). Thus, Finland and Tanzania score the least in pragmatism, which makes them to be normative countries, where short-term orientation is more common. China and Vietnam possess pragmatic cultures, but it is important to mention that the extent to which they are pragmatic differs a lot between them. In terms of the dimension of indulgence, only Finland could be characterized as indulgent, which means that people here have positive attitude and enjoy life. Nevertheless, the rate is not high, so it is still possible that the country stays on the borderline. In comparison, other countries are supposed to be restrained.

9.3 Analyzing foreign employees' interviews

The foreign employees, who were interviewed, are currently living in Jyväskylä and studying in Bachelor's or Master's degree programmes in the city universities (one of the interviewee is studying in Lappeenranta). The age range of the participants is from 21 to 38; two of them were males, and four – females. Three interviewees are currently working for SOL, two others have already finished their work there; all of them are or were cleaners and housekeepers. All the employees are or were working part-time, among whom two persons also completed their practical trainings there. Their working experience in SOL ranges from 4 months to 5 years.

The reasons for choosing SOL as a workplace are various, but still are shared by the interviewees. Thus, the motives are need in money, a suitable place for practical training, rather easy procedure of application, flexible job timetable, and possessing suitable professional skills.

The ways of applying for a job differ a lot. One of the interviewee just made a phone call asking for an available position; the other person did it right in the office:

I3: I was just entering the office. Then filled the application there. Then the bosses see do they the jobs with corresponds with my needs and characteristics. I was lucky, because they were looking for some kind of person like me.

Only one applicant applied straight via SOL's website. The fourth one made almost all the possible actions in order to apply for a job:

I2: Firstly, I checked online are there any free jobs, and then I found this information giving by my supervisor, and I wrote an e-mail to him, and then after several days I just contacted him by phone call. I was lucky, because he was just really looking for someone.

One of the interviewees described that the main problem with application via online was that the receiving side did not respond to the applications, so that is why the candidates needed to call or even come to the office.

Among the characteristics, which the interviewees believe make them suitable for SOL, which includes such as experience, one of the interviewee noted that his self-motivation and attitude played a huge role:

I2: Actually, I think I'm a person full of energy, I'm always optimistic, happy-thinking, and bright-mind, and have healthy constitute. I have very happy mood, kind of social person [laughing]. Friendly, kindly, can deal well with people coming from different cultures. Can take high value of responsibility for everything I do. Kind of trustable.

This factor was admitted also by other interviewees, but not in a direct way. That means that SOL definitely tries to follow its vision and mission in order to create trustable relationship within the company, as well as with company and its clients, and moreover, to keep their employees satisfied and motivated, and pays attention to the possible candidates' profiles and personal characteristics.

Everyone told about the trainings they were provided with. Those trainings last from several days to several weeks. All the employees were satisfied by the trainings. The language of trainings was English.

All interviewees described their relationships with the supervisor as good and fruitful.

I2: Let me see. Very nice person. We can be like friends. He is nice and happy old man.

I3: Absolutely good. Very good. He also speaks good English.

I4: Moreover, my supervisor... she was really good person and friendly and we didn't have any problems in communication.

I5: They are very co-operative and teach me what to do and how to do regularly.

The employees also admitted that the supervisors are supportive and try to provide possible feedback . Nevertheless, some of the interviewees indirectly say that the most of the times they received the feedback, it was, basically, about the problems. It does not mean that those people do so miserable work, but just the fact that they do not receive positive feedback, even if there was such. On the other hand, positive feedback, definitely, motivates the employees, makes them to be proud of their job, makes them to be a part of a team.

While describing the things that they liked in their job, the employees were referring to the possibility to gain money, have a reason for residence permit, opportunity to receive new working experience and practice Finnish language with the clients and inside the company. Moreover, the reasons of pure social and emotional origin were described:

I2: And also it keeps my health, because everyday I need to ride my bicycle to work. And also, it removes the loneliness of life here, when it's dark and quite few people around here. And everyday you could see people and talk to them, and it makes you happy.

Talking about the issues which may influence their level of satisfaction by the job, several interviewees said that other people's attitude for the work of cleaner sometimes demotivates them:

I1: Other thing I don't like is that it's really hard work consuming a lot of time and efforts. But sometimes, people do not recognize how much efforts I put, and it really demotivates you at that point.

I3: I would say sometimes people from outside, not from inside, how they see the working us. It's kind of disrespect.

Language barrier is one of the most common problems the employees faced with during the work. It may influence the quality of their work:

I1: And it was sometimes a problem for me, because I use academic English in very accurate way. And they English just to make something clear, but it's not enough for me, and I still misunderstood them. So it was problematic.

I3: Language, for sure (*is a problem*). Also, we have different people from Asia, Africa, Europe, and they are really different. And it's very challenging

I4: Yeah, sometimes, because their working language was not English, so they were not really used to communicate in English. So they just said "Clean this. Clean that". So, yeah, sometimes, I didn't understand them at all.

Nevertheless, to make it clear, those employees who were complaining of poor English language skills of their supervisors, are not supervised by those people who were interviewed as the representatives of SOL Jyväskylä. However, the language problem may cause some other consequences, for instance the employees not every time understand what is written in their contracts, since they are provided only in Finnish. Moreover, while talking about extracurricular activities provided in the company, one interviewee admit that because the e-mails which he was receiving from the company were in Finnish, so it was hard to be aware about events organized in SOL.

On the other hand, those employees who are working for more than one year in SOL, definitely encourage themselves to start speaking Finnish inside the company and with the clients, and, moreover, may say that it helps them in language studies:

I3: My Finnish started to increase slowly after I started the job, because I interact with some Finnish, the bosses who don't speak English. And these technologies, like Google Translator, they help me a lot. So I could somehow understand some Finnish.

The problems on the operational level, e.g. with procedures and equipment, are not seen as crucial by the employees; they told that even when they made some mistakes, the supervisors tried to explain them how to do work better next time. Also, time management is seen as a problem only by one participant, while others told that the timetable is definitely flexible, and this is one of the things they like in their job. One person is even able to travel between Lappeenranta and Jyväskylä for working and studies without overlapping in his schedule.

After interviewing the managers, the author decided to ask the employees about the uniform in order to understand what is the problem that somebody

does not want to wear it. Overall, the responses were quite same and resulted in the statement “Quality of whole uniform is excellent, but trousers are very hard to wear because of the material they made from”:

I2: Actually, I don't always wear it, because in summer trousers are very hot and not breathable. But, in generally, quality is very good. I've been wearing them for several years and T-shirt and trousers are still look like new.

I4: Yeah, I didn't experience serious problems (with uniform). Only trousers were quite inconvenient.

Different cultural backgrounds were sometimes the main reason for the problems and misunderstandings.

I1: But I think the boss might have some problems understanding every employee, the needs, and their relationship with other co-workers, as well.

I2: Let me see. There were some minor problems, because of these cultural differences. In Finland, when they say to you to clean the sauna, it means only the sauna room, but in China it means the whole unit, including steaming room, shower. And one day when I was cleaning the living building, the customer... after I clean the whole units, I close and lock the door, but I didn't close the steaming room, and the client called my supervisor, and my supervisor told me to close the door. And after several times, the customer still found that I didn't close it, and she talked to me, and then I found out that we have different understandings of sauna, and then I realized.

I3: Well, only this I described that when you are calling your boss, you call him/her by the first name. Another one is greetings. In my culture (*Tanzanian*) you should say “hi” very often, even for strangers, but here it's not necessary. [...] But it wasn't a real problem, since when I was leaving my home country, I was trying to adopt to Finnish culture as much as possible.

I3: And also it about how we behave. The one thing I experience is that in Finland everyone is equal, and you hardly see how is the boss. So in my and other cultures it is not so. But it was much easier for me to communicate with bosses. In other cultures, there is a gap between you and boss, but in Finland it's not so. And honestly, it is good, but challenging. The same is at school. In my culture it is impossible to call your boss or teacher just by name as here in Finland.

I4: For instance, in my culture (*Vietnamese*) there is a very high hierarchy, and here it is not so. And in my country they don't see cleaning as some kind of good job, really low job, and here they work more professional and you feel comfortable to work.

Thus, the cultural differences resulted in the problems at the operational level, e.g. different understandings of the same situation, as well at socio-

emotional stage, e.g. different attitudes to hierarchy and role of managers and supervisors. Here, it is possible to track the application of the Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions and use knowledge gained through the analysis of the interviewed employees' national cultures in comparison with the Finnish culture of their supervisors. Nevertheless, due to good communication between employees and their supervisors, as well as mutual ability to solve the problems in a compromising way and adjust to each other's differences, these problems did not have crucial consequences, but were challenging for the employees in positive ways. That all corresponds with the stages or factors influencing development of cultural intelligence both of supervisors and employees. Trying to be flexible, tolerant, focus both on operations and relationships, they both improve their knowledge about themselves which helps them in the working environment and everyday operations.

More than that, talking about communication and sharing ideas, most of the employees admit that they try to propose their ideas, and some of these ideas were taken into account:

I3: For instance, when customer wants something, I contact my supervisor, and he is taking into account my advices. So many times. And always we need to do it in order to make some improvements.

I5: Yes. Of course, I have freedom to share ideas and they always listen also. I am using it.

Also, the employees try to maintain good relationship not only concerning the operational issues, but also in terms of personal communication:

I3: Also, the manager often talked to me, and one day she said that her daughter was sick, after 3 days or one week it still didn't turn any better, so I provide some Chinese medicine or Chinese way how to lower the temperature with some plants or food, and she took it. So, I'm always trying to act as a friend, and they are happy with me, and happy with our company.

All interviewees think about SOL as a multicultural company, although making the remark that this cultural diversity concerns mostly low-level employees, and the middle and top management stays quite homogenous. Moreover, they admit that the managerial practices according foreigners should pay an important role in SOL. However,, they conclude that supervisors in SOL are doing their best, they still need to take some more

things into account, especially those concerning communication within the company and between the co-workers:

I1: I think, it's always good to have this kind of thing (*intercultural management*). Always. Because SOL includes so many immigrants and people from different countries, so they should see some kind of benefits when they have a strategy. In practice, to make all employees to be happier. And in my work there weren't that much conflicts, but I bet there are some. Maybe the strategy could help to minimize the conflicts, to make the co-workers to collaborate with each other. More productive at work.

I2: And it would be great if we have a training with more people from different countries.

I3: I don't think that I know everyone here at SOL, I know my supervisors and co-workers, but I also would like to meet with other as well, to understand others' cultures.

I4: I think if they can manage, it would be really good for communication flow, since it may help to decrease cultural conflicts and miscommunication.

I5: There will be good understanding and both side communication between the people.

Moreover, the interviewees propose very good advice for improvement of managerial practices regarding the foreign employees. Based on these suggestions, as well as the author's own conclusions made on the basis of theoretical knowledge and information acquired during the interviews with supervisors and employees, the list of recommendations is made for SOL subdivision in Jyväskylä.

9.4 Synthesis of analysis

Using information provided by the interviewees it is possible to conclude what kind of problems regarding management of foreign employees SOL in Jyväskylä has from supervisors' and foreign employees' perspectives.

Thus, the main issues that supervisors described are:

- language problem, which applies both to employees and supervisors,
- misunderstandings caused by cultural differences,
- unwillingness to wear the uniform.

The foreign employees apply to:

- weak English skills of some supervisors,
- different attitudes to the same situation caused by cultural differences,
- lack of communication between colleagues,
- lack of information available about the company events and activities,
- reprehensible attitude of people outside the company towards the job of a cleaner.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CASE COMPANY

All in all, based on the information gained from the interviews with the foreign employees, it is possible to conclude that SOL's subdivision in Jyväskylä is doing rather well in terms of management of foreign employees, mostly because of good communication and the personal skills of the supervisors and managers. The company does not possess a special person who is responsible for the intercultural management practices and does not have a clear strategic plan regarding such actions. Taking into consideration the theoretical basis, and especially studies of Hofstede, Adler, Holden and Jandt, it is possible to conclude that at this precise moment the company does not possess cross-cultural management as exactly a managerial tool. Nevertheless, the researcher may conclude that on this exact stage the company does not have a big need to have to change itself in radical way, also because the supervisors, managers, and employees do not see any urgency in it. Instead of it, the company needs to hear its employees' ideas regarding some improvements in the company, make several processes to be clearer for everyone, Finns and foreigners. If this was done done, in long-time perspective the company may start thinking about bigger steps to strategic intercultural management. From this perspective, the researcher creates the list of recommendations, which combine the ideas of the supervisors, foreign employees, and author's own knowledge. The principle of this list is such: the problem goes first, and then possible solutions for it are described.

1. Language problem is called the number one problem by both supervisors and foreign employees. It is not surprising, but quite obvious, especially taking into account the aspect that this fact is supported by various studies and articles described and presented in the previous chapters of the current thesis. Unfortunately, it is exactly this kind of problem that could not be solved by

one single company. Even on the state level, there are still issues existing which hinder successful implementation of the integration programmes regarding the immigrants, in particular, language courses. That is why, only with cooperation between local and state companies and educational institutions the problem could be solved or at least would not be that wide and crucial as it is nowadays.

Nevertheless, while talking about the actions SOL could make, it is important to mention that availability of official documents, like working agreement, in two languages – Finnish and English – could definitely increase the awareness of the foreign employees about their responsibilities, rights and company's rules. Moreover, all the e-mails with information describing the company's events could be duplicated also in English, so that would not make the foreigners to feel unimportant for the company.

Overall, personal motivation to study new languages and practice them in working life, undoubtedly, plays one of the most important roles. Without it, not matter how good the language courses offered in city educational institutions are, the smooth process of obtaining the new language skills, Finnish or English, is almost impossible.

2. Cultural differences that are the causes of problems both on operational and communicational level. There are several steps existing how to overcome those difficulties. First of all, it is always important to increase knowledge about other cultures, their differences and similarities, in other words trying to become more culturally intelligent. Furthermore, it is vital to be able to use this knowledge in real working environment. Thus, such an option as meeting the other employees, supervisors, and managers could be of great importance for SOL. Communication is playing a huge role while establishing strong and long-lasting relationship within the company. Without talking, listening, and sharing ideas, it is impossible to prevent or solve the existing conflicts, in particular, those ones caused by cultural differences. It is in the human nature to assess the situation from his / her point of view and background, that is why it is often difficult to understand why other person is dissatisfied by the work one did.

Becoming culturally intelligent, including such aspects as being tolerant and positive and trying to adjust to another culture, is long-lasting and challenging process, but, for sure, vital for everyone who is living and working in multicultural environment. From this point of view, it is essential to add that another option – free-time activities – could be implemented by SOL. While offering for the employees such a possibility to spend time together not only during the work, but also during free time, doing sports, camping or hiking, the company definitely establishes this feeling of belonging and trust which is vital for SOL, especially in the perspective of company's vision and mission.

3. The employees do not want to wear uniform. Even if the problem is not of cultural origin, it is interesting to listen what the employees and supervisors think about it, and after it make conclusions and recommendations for SOL. The quality and appearance of the uniform is not a problem, contrarywise, the employees think about these criteria as definitely good ones. The main problem is caused by the material of which only one element of the whole uniform – trousers – is made. The employees described it as inconvenient and unbreathable. Thus, if SOL tries to hear its employees' wishes regarding the uniform, makes respective conclusions, and cooperates with its uniforms' supplier, the problem could be solved.

4. Irrespective attitude of outside the company's people. In the ideal world every job should be respected and treated accordingly, in the reality the huge gap between different kinds of jobs exists and often influences the motivation and perception of the employees. The company cannot change the outside world' perspective and relationship towards its employees' job in one minute. Instead of it, SOL can increase motivation of its Finnish and foreign employees. Establishing and maintaining good communication and relationship, systematically providing positive feedback, as well as creating the sense of importance of the work the employees do are essential steps for the company.

5. The lack of knowledge about the company's events and activities. It was one of the most challenging problems to solve for the author. After thorough applying to the previous theoretical knowledge, the researcher has to admit that she does not possess enough information and attainments for solving exactly this problem. Nevertheless, the interviewees gave to the author lots of

useful and meaningful ideas that lead to the new concept which has not been discussed before in the thesis. This concept is knowledge management. According to Holden (2002, 66-76) knowledge management is the mix of the actions directed to identify, collect, share, and manage the intellectual resources, including both written and mental forms, in the company.

According to Ruppel and Harrington (2001, 37) such electronic communication tools as the intranets are one of the most useful methods for processing and sharing knowledge, as well internal communication within a company. Thus, in terms of SOL, the company may create a special website for in-company use, where all the information about it and its supervisors and employees' achievements, upcoming events, feedback from the clients, and any other essential information is presented. It is of high importance that the website should have two language versions – Finnish and English, in order to offer the possibility to use it for both Finnish and foreign employees. Moreover, creation of this kind of website may help to solve also the problem of misunderstanding and miscommunication.

11 CONCLUSIONS

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, 48) validity in qualitative research is the process of correctly reflecting the theoretical basis formed by the previous researchers in the specific field and providing the reader with suitable and strong arguments to the current research. Reliability in its turn the extent to which the organized research applies to the previous studies and knowledge, as well as possibility to carry out the study by other researchers and reach the respective results, i.e. generalization (ibid., 52-53). According to Kananen (2011, 69) the reliability and validity criteria in the qualitative research include documentation, consistency of interpretation, and saturation.

All steps made during the process of writing the thesis and acquiring knowledge are accurately documented in the form of the current thesis.

The consistency of interpretation is reached in two ways: firstly, by using different sources dedicated to the same problem, for instance, unemployment and discrimination of the foreigners and immigrants in Finland, which provide respective attitude to the problem; secondly, by connection of the

knowledge gained from these sources to the practical information acquired through the interviews with the supervisors and employees. Moreover, it is important to mention that the research in most elements has the same or similar conclusions as those ones provided by the analyzing the theoretical materials and previous studies.

Saturation means the exact state when the researcher could not take anything new from, in perspective of this thesis, the interviewees (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2011, 47). Despite the fact that the number of interviewed foreign employees and supervisors was not huge, it still was enough, since especially with the interviews of the employees, the each next interview was not new in all aspects, and just added some details to the previous data.

Thus, after analyzing all the criteria, it is possible to conclude that reliability and validity of the study can be guaranteed.

By implementing the research the author tried to answer the main research question “What is the state of cross-cultural management in the SOL in Jyväskylä?” by trying to find the answers for the sub-questions “What are the problems of multicultural management and its implementation from the case company’s managers’ point of view?”, “What do the foreign employees think about the cross-cultural practices in the company?”, and “How do managers and foreign employees see the future of cross-cultural management practices?” and analyze those answers. The main aim was, based on acquired knowledge, to formulate the list of recommendations regarding the management of the foreign employees.

The answers for all sub-questions, as well as the main question are represented in the different forms in the “Results” section of the thesis. The “Recommendations for the case company” chapter fulfills the main goal of the thesis, as well as details the answer for the main research question. Overall, the research show that alongside with the all possibilities implementation of cross-cultural management could give to the company, there is no need to implement it right now in SOL, instead of it, it is important to improve some aspects related to management of foreign employees and communication inside the company, in order to be prepared for bigger changes in future.

While doing the research, the author used several models and concepts, such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, as well as Inventory of cross-cultural competences model.

Talking about the challenges that the researcher might face during the thesis process, it is important to note that even if that happened, they were successfully solved, thus, they did not influence the overall research. Although, it is significant to mention about the limitations of the study. Since the number of foreign employees was satisfactory, but not big, it can somehow influence the research. The problems and ideas shared by the interviewees were quite similar, nevertheless, in case of possibility to interview more people, probably other issues would arise.

In the end, the researcher should admit the current theme could be an interesting basis for the future researches and studies. Each topic connected with foreigners, immigrants, management of foreign employees and communication between cultures becomes more and more relevant in modern Finland, its society and business world. The researchers could consider different aspects of the subject. Moreover, it is important to add that even the case with SOL Jyväskylä could be developed and researched more, for instance, it would be interesting to analyze the inside the company communication and relationship between foreigners and Finns.

All in all, the topic was definitely interesting and challenging for the author herself, so she hopes that the next studies will arise the same interest in the future researchers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Interview guide: supervisors

1. General information about SOL in Jyväskylä

Offered services

Main clients

Hierarchy and management

Number of managers and employees

Language skills abilities of managers and supervisors

2. Background

Current position and responsibilities in SOL

Educational background

Previous working experience

How many foreign employees do you have? What countries they are from?

3. Cross-cultural management in company

Your understanding of concept of cross-cultural or intercultural management

What do you think of SOL's implementation of CCM?

What are the main obstacles / problems while managing the foreigners?

In your opinion, what kind of opportunities could foreign employees give to SOL?

How does the process of management of Finns and foreigners differ?

How can the employees, in particular, foreigners influence SOL's business?

How could implementation of CCM practices to the company's success?

What kind of trainings SOL provides in terms of CCM?

4. Personal experience

Have you faced the problems (also, pure cultural ones) while managing foreign employees? What kind of?

What are the main misunderstandings between you and employee?

Have you solved them? How?

Have you felt like you do not have enough proficiency in management of foreigners?

Would you like to have more trainings dedicated to improvement of your intercultural skills? E.g. language courses?

Appendix 2 Interview guide: foreign employees

1. Background

Age
Country of origin
Educational background
Previous working experience

2. Working in SOL

Current position and responsibilities in SOL
Could you describe your recruitment process?
What kind of trainings you was provided with before you started the work? Did they satisfy you? Why / why not?
Are you now satisfied with your job? Why / why not?
What do you like / dislike in your job?
How could you describe your relationship with the supervisor?
Have you experienced any problems in your job?
Do you feel like you can influence SOL's business?

3. Cross-cultural management section

In your opinion, is SOL as multicultural company? To what extent?
Have you experienced some misunderstandings of cultural origin, for instance?
How do you assess your supervisors' language and cultural skills?
Could you call yourself empathetic? Do you try to adjust to Finnish working environment?
Have you ever felt like you don't have enough proficiency in cultural and language issues at your work?
Have you ever been provided by the cultural trainings at SOL? What do you think about them?
In your opinion, how could cross-cultural management benefit the company?
In your opinion, how could SOL improve its cross-cultural management practices? Suggestions?

Appendix 3 E-mail request sample for the foreign employees

Hello!

My name is Maria, I'm a student at JAMK University of Applied Sciences currently writing Bachelor's Thesis. The topic of my thesis is "Multicultural management in service organizations. Case: SOL Palvelut in Jyväskylä". For my research I need to interview the managers and foreign employees of SOL in order to recognize their attitude to this subject. As the result of my research, I am going to create a list of recommendations for improvement the management practices regarding the foreign employees.

Thus, could I ask you to be interviewed by me in terms of the theme of my thesis? The interview won't take much time, and would be anonymous (I won't provide any information of your name in my Thesis).

Your agreement would definitely be of great help for me! Also, you will have a good opportunity to influence and develop your own working environment.

About time for interview: what do you think about this or next week before October, 10th? I could come to every place you feel comfortable at to be interviewed.

Thanks a lot in advance!

Best regards, Maria Fedina.