Emerging Role of Teams in Multicultural Organizations

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EMERGING ROLE OF TEAMS IN MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

ABSTRACT

Role of multicultural teams (MCT) in multinational companies has significance in the present day globalized world. The utility of the multicultural teams is acknowledged not only by senior managers and executives but also by the employees. However certain associated dysfunctional conflicts hinder the performance of MCT’s.

This study revolves around the core issue of conflicts influenced by individual’s cultural values. To address the issue, couples of theories in the literature have been used to ascertain the practicality and the industry practices to identify the mentioned problem and its rectification. Theory of intercultural competence and theory of negotiating reality have been studied in this regard and their comparative analysis is done in the light of feedback obtained from the corporate sector. To obtain an unbiased response we decided to use the primary and secondary data, primary data was collected through personal interviews of managers, team leaders, team members and research study groups at Blekinge Institute of Technology. These interviews were of structured nature. We used articles and other published material as secondary resource to strengthen our argument.

Feedback from the respondents was gathered on a seven point table. They are Multicultural teams, Productive/non productive conflicts, Timing of conflict birth, Role of cultural value & its impact, Cultural awareness training, Conflict resolving strategies and MCT Benefits, These factors served as an analytical tool to derive the results which were then used in comparison. The basic concepts of team, multicultural teams, conflicts and its types, culture and values etc have been discussed in the literature review to provide reader a thorough understanding of the importance of topic.

The conclusion and analysis is based on the interview feedback from different companies in Blekinge region, Sweden. We have also used the likert scale to quantify the answers which we obtained in interviews. These results show the importance of cultural training and awareness about other cultures, it is believed that by applying the negotiating reality approach to intercultural competence, the ultimate objective of improving the efficiency of multicultural teams can be enhanced and it is not industry bounded rather it can be used across the board. We have also discussed the limitations and scope of the research study, as time and resource constraints prevented an in depth investigation but we maintained the bare minimum requirement for the completion of the study.

We have also given some suggestions/recommendations which can be helpful if practiced in the corporate sector.

**Key Words:** Teams, Multicultural Teams, Conflicts, Productive Conflicts, Non Productive Conflicts, Cultural Diversity, Intercultural Competence, Negotiating Reality, Cultural Dimensions.
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List of Abbreviations

MCT’s  
Multicultural Teams

BTH  
Blekinge Tekniska Hogskola

IC  
Intercultural

ICC  
Intercultural Competence
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND
With the inception of globalization transition is witnessed in almost all concerns of businesses. Organizations are addressing the challenges of globalization by undertaking a reconsideration of their traditional ways of functioning. Teams are designed to produce efficient and effective work. The traditional teamwork has undergone transformation through entry of people from diverse cultures. This development has a marked effect upon teams and their operations. Now these teams of the globalized era are not only entitled to manage traditional team tasks and their diversities involved thereof i.e. diversity with regard to demographics and functional background, but also to manage the added task of cultural diversity or multiculturalism in teams. Companies around the world are increasingly relying upon multicultural teams to build and run new production facilities, create new products, develop new marketing strategies and so forth. Appelbaum et al. (1998) argued that, with the globalization of trade and advancement of technology, multi cultural task groups will become more common. Individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds will need to work together in a local workplace, a multinational corporation or an international organization. Racial and ethnic cooperation will become a critical part of our daily existence. These changes will create a new environment in the workplace, which will require a radical change in management styles. Distefano and Maznevski (2000), also discussed in their argument that, “today’s economy increasingly requires people to collaborate in teams cross culturally and geographically. Sometimes team members are all located in the same physical setting. More and more frequently, they are scattered across a city, a country, or the globe. These teams should create significant competitive advantage by bringing together different ideas, pools of knowledge, and approaches to work”. Organizations usually pay more heed to characteristics with regard to demographic and job-related attributes in teams, whereas characteristics with regard to cultural values are often negated all together or restricted to a minor role. In reality the role that cultural values play in teams has more potential than attributes related to job and demographics because values are more strongly adhered to. According to Shapiro et al. (2005), multicultural team members’ deeply held cultural values will be more likely to affect
their behavior, and hence their team’s performance than their surface level-attitudes (demographic based stereotypes).

Multicultural Teams are expected to contribute towards the desired aim of enhancing team efficiency. Teams based upon multiculturalism have their associated advantages and disadvantages. Efficiency within teams can be realized by acknowledgement of both merits and demerits of multicultural teams. Some of the merits-demerits, according to Steers & Nardon, (2006) are as follows:

1.1.1 Merits & Demerits of Multicultural Teams

“Merits with respect to

- International marketing: Often increases understanding of global markets.
- Creativity and problem solving: Frequently more creative in developing ideas and solutions.
- Understanding foreign markets: Often increases understanding of global markets.
- Managing employees: Often better understanding of multinational employees” (Steers & Nardon, 2006).
- Conflicts (productive): These are based in disagreement over the means to an end or over the end themselves (Appelbaum et al. 1998).

“Demerits with respect to

- Group cohesiveness: Often more difficult to develop closely knit groups.
- Decision-making effectiveness: Frequently takes longer to make decisions or reach consensus, but resulting decisions are often more realistic and comprehensive.
- Time to implementation: Action plans can take longer to implement.
- Work habits: Different work habits can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings” (Steers & Nardon, 2006).
- Conflicts (Destructive): Members often become polarized and defend a non negotiable position rather working out a viable solution (Appelbaum et al. 1998).

Steers and Nardon have established the focal merits and demerits of multicultural teams in addition to this we have added an element of conflicts as per Appelbaum which has more significance in relation to this research study. The above mentioned merits and demerits cover the entire scope of multicultural teams however given the time limitation in this research study we have confined our area to the demerits and in
particular with conflicts (destructive conflicts). We have tried to get a feeler on the merits of MCT from our selected sample from different companies but we will not be discussing them as it sway away from the topic under discussion.

1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION

To compete in the globalized world companies need to adapt them to the ever evolving external environment. The ability to respond to changing scenarios determines the ability of a firm to compete in this era of uncertainty. Multicultural teams are formed to enhance the efficiency of an organization by making effective use of the diversity of viewpoints. But this opportunity also demands a thoughtful recognition of team members’ diverse cultural values. On the contrary negation of cultural values of team members exposes a team to a collection of disadvantages. Among some of the disadvantages mentioned above, the generation of a destructive conflict is a major obstacle which undermines the efficiency of a multicultural team. According to Appelbaum et al. (1998) “destructive conflicts are expression of aggression in which the sole end is to defeat or hurt the other. Participants in these conflicts serve their own interests by undercutting those of the other party”. Years ago Lewis Coser (1956) argued that “because non realistic conflicts are oriented towards the expression of aggression, force and coercion are the means for resolving these disputes”. Appelbaum et al. (1998) further describes that the parties in destructive conflicts are very less flexible because their main purpose is to defeat and led down each other. Destructive conflicts interactions are more likely to run for long periods and are likely to have uncontrolled escalation cycles or prolonged attempts to avoid issues. This may result in lack of cooperation among team members. In destructive conflicts the interaction among participants is premised on participants’ belief that one side must win and the other must lose, rather than generating a win-win situation. In other words animosity among participants in destructive conflicts badly affects the performance of the team.

Appelbaum et al. (1998) mentioned Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions model consisting of five factors which are Power distance, Individualism Vs Collectivism, Masculinity Vs Femininity, Uncertainty avoidance and Short term Vs Long term orientation. Members across different cultures vary in their degree of adherence to these dimensions. These dimensions provide the reasons as to why team members of a multicultural team interpret issues differently. Dorfman et al. (1997) stated that, “there are a number of broad cultural
orientations that influence how individuals from different cultures will interpret events around them—such dimensions are their time orientation, beliefs about humans’ relationship to nature, individualistic versus collectivistic societal patterns, and expectations about the proper “power distance” between high- and low-status persons.”. These differences in cultural values provide the source for disagreements among members of a multicultural team.

Cultural values are embedded in individual behaviors and when they collaborate in teams with other members from other cultural backgrounds; these values determine the level of comfort or anxiety in working toward a common object.

Appelbaum et al. (1998) discussed handling of conflicts in a traditional North American way such as compromising, forcing, persuading, problem solving, etc. will not be adequate, whereas Friedman et al. (2005) theory of negotiating reality entails the benefit that no one in the team has to compromise or undermine rather a learned approach will address the destructive conflict.

According to Friedman et al. (2005) “A useful metaphor for this approach to culture is an iceberg, whereby the assumptions about how the world works and the role of individuals, on which the culture is based, remain invisible. The deep cultural assumptions shape the norms and values that the members of a culture share and these, too, are predominantly tacit so they are part of the iceberg below the surface of the water (Berthoin Antal, 2002). Only a small part of culture is visible, such as behavior, rituals, symbols, material artefacts and written rules. These visible elements are an expression of the underlying cultural assumptions, norms and values”. According to Maznevski and Peterson (1997), “lack of the needed consensus to move from analysis to action can extend analysis to the point where no action is taken”. The focus of this study is to ascertain underlying cultural values inherent in individual behavior which shape the constructive conflicts in to dysfunctional at a later stage and the manager’s role in handling dysfunctional conflicts among Multicultural teams. It is an interesting area to study where the deeper level cultural values are ignored more often while forming multicultural teams which generates dysfunctional conflicts at a lateral stage and questioning the clarity of objective with an outcome of a win-win situation. By conducting interviews with managers and members of multicultural teams and focus study groups in Blekinge Institute of Technology we will analyze whether dysfunctional conflicts can be best handled with the
North American paradigm and/or theory of negotiating reality; action approach to intercultural competence is more applicable.

1.2.1 Research Question
The above reasoning will help us answer the basic question of “How to increase the performance/efficiency of multicultural teams? This includes both, ways to minimize destructive/unproductive conflicts and to make use of the benefits that multiculturalism entails.”

1.2.2 Research Sub-Questions
- What factors are involved in forming multicultural teams are considered and what not?
- How the dysfunctional/destructive conflicts are identified, analyzed and handled, how goals and objectives are translated into common interest for a multicultural team?
- What kinds of strategies/models are used to address the issues pertaining to cultural values in multicultural teams?

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- To ascertain the importance of theoretical concepts reviewed in the literature.
- To investigate if there are any other forms of conflict than those studied in the literature.
- To witness the conflict resolution techniques employed by Multicultural teams.
- To investigate how Multicultural teams settle their conflicts, especially in the absence of organizational guidelines for conformity.
1.4 THESIS REPORT STRUCTURE

Chapter I
Introduction

- Research Background
- Problem Discussion
- Research Questions
- Aims & Objectives

Chapter II
Research Methodology

- Data Collection
- Interviews
- Literature Review
- Limitations

Chapter III
Literature Review

Chapter IV
Data Analysis

Chapter V
Conclusions & Recommendations

Figure 1.1: Organization of the Thesis
1.5 SUMMARY
In the chapter we tried to highlight the role of teams especially in the wake of globalization. The teams are now composed of members belonging to diverse cultural backgrounds. This heterogeneity in teams has its associated advantages and disadvantages. In order to realize the potentials of a culturally diverse/multicultural team, a thoughtful consideration is desired on part of the organizations towards recognition of the diversity in cultural values of team members. On the contrary the intercultural relations among team members are likely to give birth to destructive-dysfunctional conflicts. Destructive conflict distorts the abilities of a multicultural team, thereby negating the basic idea for its creation i.e. to increase a team’s efficiency. We have tried to discuss the ways and measures by which organizations across the world have tried to address the emergence of dysfunctional conflicts. Apart from this we have selected a theory which has more application in a multicultural context. Through this discussion we have formulated our research questions aiming at identifying the theories in practice and the ways if any that can enhance our understanding of multiculturalism among teams.
CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 DATA COLLECTION
According to Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005), collection of data has significance in answering the research questions. This can be done in two ways, either using secondary data or primary data. Secondary data not only help answering the questions but also provide a better understanding in explaining the research objective. This type of data can be collected from sources like books, articles, journals, web information, government, semi-government organizations and catalogue. However when not enough data is available with respect to one’s research topic, researcher has to rely upon the empirical study which can be termed as primary data. Primary data can be collected in certain ways i.e. through experiment, observation and communication. As we are conducting a qualitative study and respondents’ behavior and attitude to certain scenarios can be only observed with face to face interviews, use of this approach will enable us to analyze the result from the respondents’ point of view. Both primary and secondary data (certain limitations apply) is used to validate theory with practice.

2.1.1 Primary Data
Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005) in their book Research Methods in Business Studies also emphasizes the importance of primary data and various ways of collection in the absence of secondary data. Some time the available secondary data may not completely fit into the scope of the research so one has to rely on the primary data. Below is the figure 1.1 showing the sources of primary data.
EMERGING ROLE OF TEAMS IN MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

2.1.2 Secondary Data
In research the first stop is secondary data, which not only provides a wider understanding of research topic but its relativity with the pre-published material. This can be gathered by journals, articles, research papers, magazines, statistics reports, catalogues and books (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

Certain benefits and advantages are embedded in secondary data; enormous saving in time and money, quality of data as collected by governments and international organizations is reliable due to experts’ involvement and rigorous use of methods. Comparison of primary data becomes possible in the presence of secondary data. Churchill (1999:215) mentioned “Do not bypass secondary data. Begin with secondary data, and only when the secondary data are exhausted or show diminishing returns, proceed to primary data”.

Secondary data can be classified into two main streams which are:

**Internal Data**
Internal data refers to the information available from the company/organizations internal resources which can be reports, analysis, studies etc.

**External Data**
Sources from outside, which are independent of organizations, are referred as external data and exist in copious ways. With the help of the figure 2.2 below it can be explained well.
2.2 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research questions have been the catalyst in forming the interview questions because only then we would be able to extract the desired outcome in order to answer the main research question stated in the first chapter.

2.2.1 Designing the Interview Questions

The interview questions have been categorized in three sections focusing the Managers, Team members and composition caters the research questions. We have used a mix approach in the interview questions, most of them are of descriptive nature and open ended, rationale behind the open ended and descriptive nature approach is, that respondent feel empowered and express the reality however the risk of biasness exists. To minimize the effect of biasness we have tried to summarize the discussion into three qualitative questions being asked from both managers and member of team.

This not only caters the organizational interviews but also the multicultural research groups at Blekinge Institute of Technology.

Interviews are fragmented into three sections:

**Section 1** focuses upon the structural foundation of multicultural team and their formation. Data about different kinds of teams will be gathered.
Section 2 addresses research question no 2, where we have tried to find out manager’s and team member’s perspective about multicultural teams formation and differences existing due to cultural values, it partially covers the research question no 3.

Section 3 has been designed to quantify the results of qualitative responses and to minimize the risk of biasness in the interview results due to its descriptive nature.

2.3 SELECTION CRITERIA
Respondents for this interview are selected on the basis of cultural backgrounds, nationalities, knowledge and active member of multicultural teams. As this study is about multicultural teams and issues related to the conflicts arising due to differences in cultural values, so the appropriate sample groups are multicultural teams, who have been working together for several months on some project in UIQ, Ericsson, Spidexa and research groups at BTH and understand the pros and cons of multicultural teams.

2.4 METHOD OF CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS
The organizations we have chosen are from the telecom technology sector and our respondents are quite busy in their jobs, so we have decided to take prior appointments for interviews, length of the interview will be 45-60 min approximately. Interviews will be taken individually as the interview questions are of structured nature.

2.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.5.1 Introduction of Theoretical Sources
This is a qualitative research and we are trying to develop an understanding of identifying and eliminating dysfunctional conflicts in multicultural teams. To gain an understanding about the topic authors selected theories related to diversity, cultural theories, theories of conflict in multicultural environment and theory of negotiating reality; An action approach to intercultural competence. In addition to the above we cited a number of related articles by renowned authors and theorists.

2.6 LIMITATIONS
In order to remain focused on our topic of research we have certain limitations as well with respect to data collection and interviews.
**Primary data:**
Experimental and observational aspects of primary research have been ignored as they require more specialized skills in psychology. We will conduct personal interviews only as they are a good way to record respondents viewpoint.

**Secondary data:**
For theoretical knowledge we will heavily rely upon the data available in external sources i.e. published and commercial but access to internal sources are discretion of the management however if it is approved in due course of time then it will be considered too.

**Applicability of the theory and practice:**
We may not be able to touch upon all the merits and demerits of multicultural teams but our focus would be to identify the role of cultural values in determining the dysfunctional conflicts and remedial measures to improve the efficiency based upon suggestions, recommendation and analysis.
CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 CULTURE
Every nation has its own distinct culture i.e. the shared set of beliefs, values and practices. Globalization has witnessed the entry of a work force from different cultures. Each worker strongly adheres to his/her culture. At the same time culture of one member differs significantly from member of another culture. To compete in the globalized world, recognition of culture of individual workers is of great significance for organizations. Several authors have provided their view of culture in their definitions. Tylor (1891) defined culture as, “The complex whole of knowledge, belief, art, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired as a member of society.” Culture is defined by Clyde Kluckhohn(1951), “Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values”. According to Geert Hofstede (1980), culture is defined as, “The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the member of one human group from another”. Schein (1985) summarizes culture as, “A pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems”. According to Christensen (1989) culture represents, “The commonalities around which people develop norms, family life-styles, social roles, and behaviors in response to historical, political, economic, and social realities”.

3.2 VALUES
According to Kluckhohn (1951/1967), “A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of actions.” Rockeach (1972) defines values as, “To say that a person ‘has a value’ is to say that he has an enduring belief that a specific
mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end states of existence.” According to Hofstede (2001), “Value is a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others.”

3.3 CULTURAL DIMENSIONS
Cultural dimensions provide an insight as to why individuals belonging to various cultures interpret actions, events differently. Differences in interpretations across cultures cause misunderstandings among members especially when they belong to a group/team. Several authors have provided their versions of cultural dimensions. These differences in cultural dimensions provide the necessary explanation as to why individuals belonging to one culture behave in a manner unique and distinct from another culture.

3.3.1 Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

- **Power Distance:** “Hofstede’s first dimension, power distance, refers to the beliefs that people have about the appropriateness of either large or small differences in power and authority among the members of a group or society” (Steers & Nardon, 2006). According to Steers and Nardon (2006), if a culture has a high power distance than the subordinates are told what to do i.e. the senior members exert more influence over the juniors. In a lower power distance the subordinates are involved in key issues that affect them. In other words in a low power distance culture the juniors are delegated with authority.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance:** “Hofstede’s second dimension i.e. uncertainty avoidance focuses on the extent to which people are comfortable with uncertainty or ambiguity in the workplace” (Steers & Nardon, 2006). According to Steers and Nardon (2006), people belonging to a culture with low uncertainty avoidance work more comfortably in a work environment without excessive rules. People of such cultures can work effectively with a lack of knowledge and awareness. In other words they are risk takers. On the other hand people of a culture with high uncertainty avoidance are uncomfortable with lack of knowledge. People of these cultures look for guidance from rules i.e. they prefer established patterns to follow. People of such cultures can also be termed as risk averters.

- **Individualism/Collectivism:** “The degree to which a society stresses individualism or collectivism” (Steers & Nardon, 2006). According to Steers and Nardon (2006),
members of an individualistic culture are more concerned with themselves than their fellows i.e. they prefer their own individual goals. Individualistic people prefer independence in decision making. On the other hand members belonging to a collectivistic culture emphasize the welfare of their fellows than themselves, according to them decision making should be a collective attempt.

- **Masculinity/Feminity:** Members of masculine cultures, “tend to exhibit aggressiveness in pursuing their goals and place a high value on achievement, decisiveness, and assertiveness” (Steers & Nardon, 2006). People of masculine culture are goal oriented i.e. they have strong inclination towards the achievement of their goals. On the other hand feminine cultures, “tend to stress communal goals and quality of life over individual achievement” (Steers & Nardon, 2006).

- **Long term vs. Short term orientation:** People of a culture with long-term orientation believe that, “that values hard work, personal sacrifice for future benefits, dedication to a cause, and personal thrift. The emphasis is on sacrifice so that future generations can prosper” (Steers & Nardon, 2006). These people think that the efforts they exert today will surely reap their benefits in the future. On the other hand people of a culture with short term orientation state that, “suggest that since no one can see into the future, attempts to change it border on being immoral. It is better to focus on today and let tomorrow happen as it will” (Steers & Nardon, 2006). People with this orientation only live for the present.

**Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions**

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<th>Cultural Dimensions</th>
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<td><strong>Power distance:</strong> Beliefs about the appropriate distribution of power in society.</td>
<td><strong>Low power distance:</strong> Belief that effective leaders need not have substantial amounts of power compared to their subordinates. Examples: Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Israel, Sweden</td>
<td><strong>High power distance:</strong> Belief that people in positions of authority should have considerable power compared to their subordinates. Examples: Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncertainty avoidance:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Low uncertainty avoidance:</strong></td>
<td><strong>High uncertainty avoidance:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which people feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations</td>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity; little need for rules to constrain uncertainty. Examples: Singapore, Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom</td>
<td>Intolerance for ambiguity; need for many rules to constrain uncertainty. Examples: Greece, Portugal, Uruguay, Japan, France, Spain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Individualism collectivism:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Collectivism:</strong> Precedence of group interests over individual interests. Examples: Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan, Latin America</th>
<th><strong>Individualism:</strong> Precedence of individual interests over group interests. Examples: United States, Australia, Netherlands, Italy, Scandinavia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relative importance of individual versus group interests in society</td>
<td>Most value placed on material possessions, money, and the pursuit of personal goals. Examples: Japan, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico</td>
<td>Most value placed on personal relationships, quality of life, and the welfare of others. Examples: Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Costa Rica</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Masculinity-femininity:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Masculinity:</strong> Most value placed on material possessions, money, and the pursuit of personal goals. Examples: Japan, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico</th>
<th><strong>Femininity:</strong> Most value placed on personal relationships, quality of life, and the welfare of others. Examples: Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Costa Rica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness versus passivity; material possessions versus quality of life</td>
<td>Most value placed on material possessions, money, and the pursuit of personal goals. Examples: Japan, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico</td>
<td>Most value placed on personal relationships, quality of life, and the welfare of others. Examples: Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Costa Rica</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Long-term orientation:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Short-term orientation:</strong> Past and present orientation; most value placed on traditions and social obligations. Examples: Pakistan, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia</th>
<th><strong>Long-term orientation:</strong> Future orientation; most value placed on dedication, hard work, and thrift. Examples: China, Korea, Japan, Brazil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-term versus short-term outlook on work, life, and relationships</td>
<td>Past and present orientation; most value placed on traditions and social obligations. Examples: Pakistan, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia</td>
<td>Future orientation; most value placed on dedication, hard work, and thrift. Examples: China, Korea, Japan, Brazil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions
Adapted From: Based on Geert Hofstede, Culture’s Consequence: International Differences in Work Related Values, rev. ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001). Hofstede’s fifth dimension, long-term orientation, is also referred to as Confucian dynamism.
3.3.2 Trompenaars Cultural Dimensions
Trompenaars presented seven cultural dimensions i.e. “the first five focuses on interpersonal relations whereas the last two deal with time orientation and relationship with nature” (Steers & Nardon).

- **Universalism-Particularism:** According to Trompenaars first cultural dimension, in cultures practicing Universalism, rules are applicable to all in the same manner. Everyone has to be treated by the same equal way. On the other hand cultures dominated by Particularism “there is no correct way of dealing with everyone. Thus, while members of particularistic cultures value the rule of law, they believe that its application must be flexible and tempered with considerations for the people and the circumstances involved” (Steers & Nardon).

- **Individualism-Collectivism:** According to Trompenaars second dimension, in individualistic cultures people think of themselves as individuals and only consider their own self interest. In collectivistic cultures people consider themselves as part of a group. People in collectivistic cultures also work towards the welfare of others.

- **Specific versus Diffuse:** The third dimension “focuses on the extent to which an individual’s various roles in life should be kept separate or integrated” (Steers & Nardon). In specific cultures, life is segmented into different roles which an individual plays are separate and independent from one another. On the other hand in diffuse cultures, various roles which an individual plays overlap each other.

- **Neutral versus Affective:** According to Trompenaars fourth dimension, in neutral cultures people often suppress their beliefs and emotions. People are hesitant in expressing their emotions. In affective culture emotional expressions are encouraged.

- **Achievement versus Ascription:** According to Trompenaars, “In achievement cultures, status and rewards are based on an individual or groups’ accomplishments, Achievement cultures use titles only when they are relevant, and their leaders typically earn respect through superior performance. While in ascription cultures such recognition is based largely on things such as seniority, inheritance, class, or gender. People in ascription cultures use titles routinely as a means of reinforcing a hierarchy and typically select their leaders based on age or background” (Steers & Nardon).

- **Time Orientation:** In this dimension Trompenaars argues that, in some cultures people are very precise about time i.e. its significance, whereas other cultures are not
EMERGING ROLE OF TEAMS IN MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

precise about it. Some cultures have a present or past orientation. In these cultures past events are thought to be of significance in providing and understanding the context for present and future. Such cultures believe in God’s will and respect their elderly people for their wisdom and prudence. On the other hand some cultures have a future orientation. These cultures respect a person on the basis of knowledge and accomplishments rather than seniority.

- **Relationship with environment:** The last dimension of Trompenaars suggests that, in some cultures people are inner-directed i.e. they believe that they control their own destinies. On the other hand there are some cultures which are outer directed people i.e. they believe that there are certain external forces that control them and their destinies.

**Trompenaars’s Cultural Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimensions</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Anchors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universalism-Particularism:</strong></td>
<td><em>Universalism:</em> Reliance on formal rules and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are rules or relationships more</td>
<td>policies that are applied equally to everyone.</td>
<td><em>Particularism:</em> Rules must be tempered by the nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important?</td>
<td>Examples: Austria, Germany, Switzerland,</td>
<td>of the situation and the people involved. Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>China, Venezuela, Indonesia, Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism-collectivism:</strong></td>
<td><em>Individualism:</em> Focus on individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do people drive their identity from</td>
<td>achievement and independence. Examples:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within themselves or their group?</td>
<td>United States, Nigeria, Mexico, Argentina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Collectivism:</em> Focus on group achievement and welfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Examples: Singapore, Thailand, Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific versus diffuse:</strong></td>
<td><em>Specific:</em> Clear separation of a person’s</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are an individual’s various roles</td>
<td>various roles. Examples: Sweden, Germany,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>compartmentalized or</td>
<td>Canada, United</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Diffuse:</em> Clear integration of a person’s various</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>roles. Examples: China, Venezuela,</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.2: Trompenaars’ Cultural Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship with the environment</th>
<th>Inner-directed: Focus on controlling the environment. Examples: Australia, United States, United Kingdom</th>
<th>Outer-directed: Focus on living in harmony with nature. Examples: China, India, Sweden, Egypt, Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral versus affective: Are people free to express their emotions or are they restrained?</td>
<td>Neutral: Refrain from showing emotions; hide feelings. Examples: Japan, Singapore, United Kingdom</td>
<td>Affective: Emotional expressions acceptable or encouraged. Examples: Mexico, Brazil, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement versus ascription: How are people accorded respect and social status?</td>
<td>Achievement: Respect for earned accomplishments. Examples: Austria, United States, Switzerland</td>
<td>Ascription: Respect for ascribed or inherited status. Examples: Egypt, Indonesia, Korea, Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time perspective: Do people focus on the past or the future?</td>
<td>Past/present-oriented: Emphasis on past events and glory. Examples: France, Spain, Portugal, Arab countries</td>
<td>Future-oriented: Emphasis on planning and future possibilities. Examples: China, Japan, Korea, Sweden, United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 3.3.3 Shortcomings of Cultural Dimensions

There is an important shortcoming of the cultural dimensions models suggested by Hofstede, Hall, Trompenaars, and Globe etc. since the cultural dimensions approach. According to Victor et al. (2005), "There are, however, significant conceptual and practical drawbacks to an approach that sees national culture as a distinct, overarching system for guiding behaviors. It tends to classify individuals and groups in terms of a single culture (Hong et al., 2000); failing to account for the fact that it is possible for individuals or groups to be members of different cultures at the same time". It is not possible that people can have an impact of only one
culture; people are influenced by a number of cultures. "Individuals, however, can be amazingly complex 'cultural composites' (Schneider and Barsoux, 1997: 176) who belong to several cultural entities (e.g. country, school, sports club, company) at a single point in time or over the course of a lifetime. For example, a particular person may be a member of the Sicilian culture, professionally trained in the engineering culture, and working in the corporate culture of Daimler-Chrysler in Stuttgart" (Friedman & Antal, 2005). This explanation provides an important understanding that it is not possible for the cultural dimensions approaches suggested by Hofstede, Hall, Trompenaars, and Globe etc to adequately explain the behavior of people. On the contrary we are well aware that a person can have influence of different cultures at the same time. This is indeed incapacity on the part of the models to qualify as a tool in modern day world dominated by multiculturalism in specific context.

The cultural dimensions despite providing an awareness regarding how individuals interpret in different cultures are plagued with a short coming i.e. an individual can belong to different cultures at one point of time. These cultural dimensions provide an insight regarding a particular culture especially in homogeneous teams only i.e. when the members of the team belong to the same culture.

3.4 MULTICULTURALISM/CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

"During the 21st century, one of the most important trends affecting the workforce is be that of increasing diversity" (Lavaty and Kleiner, 2001). Due to globalization the national boundaries have blurred, this development has witnessed a huge influx of workers towards developed countries in search of economic opportunities. “As the world is shrinking through globalization, more and more people live and work in foreign countries and thus they continually come into contact with the people coming from very diversified cultural origins, involving language, norms, lifestyle, etc” (Zakaria, 2000; Montagliani). This new development i.e. entry of a work force from different national cultures is also accompanied by its associated problems. This way to manage this work force i.e. a multicultural workforce is different from the traditional way of managing a homogenous work force. “Improvement and management of the people on a global scale inevitably requires dealing with cultural diversity and the problems regarding this –matters of motivation, leadership, productivity, authority, etc” (Higgs, 1996; Selmer, 2002:1/16). Tayeb (1997) “stresses that national culture as a set of
values, attitudes and behaviors includes everything related to work and organization”. “In other words, individuals express their cultures and their normative qualities through the values that they hold about all aspects of human life and the world around them. These values in turn have influence on their attitudes about the form of behavior considered most appropriate and effective in any given situation (Miroshnik, 2002; Parkhe, 2001:1/5)”. When workers from a diverse cultural background enter the organization’s workforce they are from different national cultures. Each national culture of a country differs from the culture of the other country. Since the members of the work force belongs to different cultures. Each member of the culture has his unique perceptions, values and attitudes. “Members belonging to a particular culture’s perception and their ideas about the world, human beings and their attitudes are very different from each other” (Daneman, 2000; Ozkalp and Kirel, 2000, Spector et al., 2001). Cultural diversity is a twin edged sword i.e. if managed properly it can help an organization to enhance its performance, on the contrary if neglected cultural diversity can decrease the performance of the team. Dadfar and Gustavsson (1992) suggest that, “there seems to be a general agreement that if cultural diversity is managed well, it can be an asset to performance, and if it is overlooked or mismanaged, it may diminish the performance”. In multicultural organizations the understanding and awareness of culture and its values are of great significance. Awareness of culture and its values enables members of the organization to understand each other in a better way. The building of understanding among organizational members is very crucial for an organization and its success. “When inexperience or unwillingness towards understanding of different cultures occurs, managerial tools or methods used to award motivate and direct those people are not effective, and the satisfaction of employees becomes a considerably complicated and unsolvable matter” (Lee and Chon, 2000; Jackson and Bak, 1998; D’iribarne, 2002; Uysal, 1994). One of the problems with cultural diversity management theories is that they adopt a universalistic point of view. According to the proponents of universalism management theories are universally applicable i.e. it assumes what is applicable in USA is equally applicable in other areas of the world. The universalistic view totally disregards the significance of context. According to Seymen (2006), “most of the organizational behavior models have been developed in the USA, and they tackle with members independently from their national culture. This perspective means that organizational behavior models are adapted properly to the principle of Universalism, in other words it assumes that models developed in one country are, in the same way, valid in other countries”.

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3.5 MULTICULTURAL TEAMS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Traditionally, the organizations employed teams which were homogenous i.e. they comprised members from one national culture. In past organizations only catered to the demands of the home markets as a result homogenous teams were adequate but as the phenomenon of globalization emerged, organizations could no longer rely upon the traditional teams. “Success in the global marketplace increasingly requires people from very different cultures to work together to make global enterprises succeed” (Steers & Nordon, 2006).

Multicultural team: “A Multicultural team is a group of employees selected from two or more countries who are brought together to coordinate, develop, or manage some aspect of a firm’s global operations” (Steers & Nordon, 2006).

Multicultural teams enable organizations to reach at quality decisions through the variety of viewpoints available. Since due to globalization organizations are in a continuous quest to tap the opportunities inherent in the different areas of the world, multicultural teams enable organizations to address the needs and demands of specific markets. Being composed of individuals from different cultures the multicultural teams provide solutions to problems which homogenous teams are unable to device. “Multicultural teams provide an opportunity to integrate widely differing social, cultural, and business perspectives into key decisions affecting the success of international operations” (Steers & Nordon, 2006).

3.5.1 Merits and Demerits of Multicultural Teams

- **International marketing:** Often increases understanding of global markets.
  Multicultural teams can provide their significance for organizations in international marketing activities. Since international marketing demands understanding the likes and dislikes of international customers, the use of multicultural teams in international marketing can enable organizations to better understand the needs and demands of international customers. Multicultural teams can help organizations develop better relationship with the international customers. “Diversity in the work place helps organizations develop their skills to understand clients’ needs and to have relations with them (Wright and Noe, 1996). Multicultural teams bring international expertise to decision making and managerial actions that are otherwise missing in less diverse teams.
- **Creativity and problem solving: Frequently more creative in developing ideas and solutions.**
  Multicultural teams provide organizations with a variety and collection of viewpoints. Since members of a multicultural team belong to different cultures, each member of the multicultural team brings along with him a unique viewpoint and approach to the problem. Hoffman (1961) suggested that “diverse group of individuals should be expected to have a broad range of knowledge, expertise, and perspectives than homogenous groups of individuals do”. Traditional teams belonged to a homogenous culture, so the skills possessed by them were also limited. On the other hand multicultural teams comprise members from different cultures they provide variety and creativity with regard to solutions to problems. According to Triandis and colleagues, who specifically argued that “heterogeneity was most beneficial for tasks requiring creativity” (Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965). Heterogeneous/multicultural groups’ performance is also better than homogenous groups because they have with them at their disposal a collection of different perspectives, as a result groups are exposed to new ways and methods and ways to deal with problems or situations. As a result the performance of heterogeneous groups is better than the homogenous groups. “Empirically, heterogeneous groups have been shown to outperform homogeneous groups, as the expression of alternative perspectives can lead to novel insights and solutions” (Nemeth, 1986).

- **Understanding foreign markets: Often increases understanding of global markets**
  Multiculturalism in the companies often enhances global knowledge of markets as a number of people from different origin collaborate and perform in teams. Lianxi Zhou (2007) mentions “A firm's exposure to culturally diversified business environments enhances its knowledge stock through learning based on interactions with local knowledge bases—new and diverse ideas from multiple markets and cultural perspectives” (Zahra et al., 2000). Furthermore cultural diversity or multiculturalism offers enormous growth opportunities that are much more attractive than those available in the domestic markets.
Managing employees: Often better understanding of multinational employees

From manager’s perspective, when people from diverse cultural backgrounds work in teams, they often provide a reasonable understanding about individual cultures and norms. However experience with diversity leads to a better control in managing employees. Companies competing in the global markets need to globally introduce innovative products, services and processes rapidly and effectively. As in the emerging knowledge economies many companies are forced to access globally dispersed technological and market knowledge to maintain their competitive advantage by developing an expert team of different cultures and this will also enhance the team’s performance (Thomas G. Lechler, 2008).

Conflicts (productive): These are based in disagreement over the means to an end or over the end themselves.

According to Lewis Coser (1956), these are conflicts based in disagreements over the means to an end or over the end themselves. In these conflicts, the interaction focuses on the substantive issues the participants must address to resolve their underlying incompatibilities. These conflicts, provide a wide range of resolution techniques – force, negotiation, persuasion, even voting – because they are oriented towards the resolution of some substantive problems. According to Folger et al. (1997) “short cycles of escalation, de-escalation, avoidance, and constructive work on the issue are likely to occur as the participant attempt to manage conflict”. “In productive conflicts, interaction is guided by the belief that all factions can attain important goals”. (Deutsch, 1973). The interaction reflects a sustained effort to bridge the apparent incompatibility of positions. Productive conflict interaction results in a solution satisfactory to all and produces a general feeling that parties has gained something (for example, a new idea, greater clarity of others’ positions, or a strong sense of solidarity). Productive conflict interaction is sometimes competitive; both parties stand up for their own positions and strive for perceived understanding if a representative outcome to be attained. A great deal of tension and hostility may result as people struggle with the conflict. Although parties in productive conflicts hold to their positions, they are also open to movement when convinced that such movement will result in the best decision. The need to preserve power, save face, or make opponent look bad does not stand in the way of change.
- **Group cohesiveness: Often more difficult to develop closely knit groups.**

“Studies have shown that diverse groups compared to homogeneous groups suffer more from poor cohesion and social integration” (Hambrick, 1994). Pelled (1996) argued that diversity attributes such as functional, educational, or industry background capture experiences and perspectives relevant to the tasks performed by most workgroups and these factors play vital role in undermining the team’s performance, as all the members are from different culture and everyone wants to perform the tasks in one’s own way.

- **Decision-making effectiveness: Frequently takes longer to make decisions or reach consensus, but resulting decisions are often more realistic and comprehensive.**

“The larger number of alternative solutions to problems can be detrimental if no consensus can be reached on which is the optimal” (C.R. Shephard, 1964). It is imperative to understand swiftness in decision making lacks in the absence of consensus. When working in teams the members have different point of view about problems and they suggest different solutions to them using their knowledge, experience and skills however not everyone is convinced and this brings the team effort to a halt. Miller et al., also says that if the goal of the project is not clearly understood by all members, the commonality of purpose will be absent and decision making will become agonizingly slow and inefficient.
Time to implementation: Action plans can take longer to implement.

When working in the teams there is a greater possibility to implement the decision in a timely manner, “there is limited empirical evidence that decision consensus actually leads to decision implementation speed or success” (Preim, Harrison, & Munir, 1995). Teams in some cases overcome conflicts to reach a consensus on a decision but when it comes to implementation they still face problems, “Alternatively when groups “smooth over” task related disagreements decision consensus suffers because of the remaining latent conflicts among the group members” (Preim et al., 1995; Schweiger, Sandburg, & Ragan, 1986).

Work habits: Different work habits can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings:

Multicultural teams are composed of members belonging to different cultures. The working style of each culture is significantly different from other culture. As a result the difference in working styles and habits i.e. the way they approach a task can also provide a source for conflicts among members of a multicultural team. “The way they approach even simple tasks at work not only can differ significantly across cultures but can lead to considerable misunderstandings, conflict, and mistrust” (Steers & Nardon, 2006). For example if a team consists of members coming from high power distance and low power distance, then their work habits tend to create conflicts among themselves due to difference in working styles or habits.

Conflicts (Destructive): Members often become polarized and defend a non negotiable position rather working out a viable solution.

Destructive conflicts are expressions of aggressions in which the sole end is to defeat or hurt the other. Participants in these conflicts serve their own interests by undercutting those of the other party. Lewis Coser (1956) argued that, “because non realistic conflicts are oriented towards the expression of aggression, force and coercion are the means for resolving these disputes”. “Parties in destructive conflicts are likely to be much flexible because their goal is more narrowly defined: they are trying to defeat each other” Appelbaum et al, (1998). “Destructive conflict interaction is likely to have protracted, uncontrolled escalation cycles or prolonged attempts to avoid issues” (Folger et al., 1997). In destructive conflicts the interaction among participants is premised on participants’ belief that one side must win and the other
must lose. People attempt to defeat alternative proposals because they believe that if their positions are not accepted they will lose resources, self esteem, or the respect of others. In destructive conflict, parties often become polarized and the defense of a non negotiable position becomes more important than working out a viable solution.

3.6 REASONS FOR CONFLICT
People from different cultures hold different cultural values. There are significant differences in these cultural values and assumptions across countries. As a result this causes people from different countries to interpret situations or events also in a different way, thus providing the most possible source for conflicts. “Conflicts occur because people from different countries, for example, hold different basic fundamental values and assumptions, so they see, interpret, evaluate and act on events differently” (Adler, 2002: 77).
3.7 CULTURAL ICEBERG
The notion of iceberg can provide a considerable insight as to how misunderstanding causes conflicts among people from different cultures i.e. in our case conflicts among members of a multicultural team. As we are very well acquainted with an iceberg but most of us pay less attention to iceberg as a whole, by considering only the tip of the iceberg which lies above the surface of water as “iceberg” and disregarding the root or base of the iceberg which is submerged deep below the surface of the water. We can apply the example of iceberg in order to explain the conflicts arising due to ignorance of deeply held assumptions and values of one’s culture i.e. the base of the cultural iceberg and considering only the tip of the cultural iceberg i.e. surface level differences e.g. dress language and etiquettes (Berthoin Antal, 2002).

The cultural iceberg in Figure 3.1 explains the basic reason for conflicts/misunderstandings to rise in teams. The lower part or the base of the cultural iceberg refers to individual (person’s) values, behavioral norms and beliefs i.e. (basic assumptions) which lie beneath the surface of the water. In intercultural interactions these individual values, beliefs and behavioral norms are of much significance. Most of the misunderstandings among team members arise because these individual values, beliefs and behavioral norms are ignored.
3.8 INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural misunderstandings result in conflicts which not only are threats to the achievement of the goals but are also detrimental for the competence, self respect and self identity of the people involved in it (Rothman, 1997). Multicultural teams are exposed to a variety of problems originating due to the differences that exist among the cultures of the members of the team. “The most common causes of the challenges facing multicultural teams are cultural diversity and relational, communication and cultural orientation differences” (Young, 1998). “An effective member of a multicultural team is able to establish an interpersonal relationship with a foreign national via exchange of verbal and non verbal levels of behavior-exhibit intercultural competence” (Dinges, 1983; Mac Croskey, 1982; Spitzberg, 1983). Intercultural competence is the ability to explore one’s repertoire and actively construct an appropriate strategy. Intercultural competence involves overcoming the constraints embedded in an individual’s culturally shaped repertoire, creating new responses, and thereby expanding the repertoire of potential interpretations and behaviors available in future intercultural interactions.
Matveev and Milter have suggested using the Intercultural model (IC) to explain concept. IC model advocates three components Cultural Knowledge, Skills and Personality orientation.

![Inter Cultural Competence Model]


### 3.8.1 Cultural knowledge
According to the authors the first component of IC model is having cultural knowledge. It includes general information about culture, i.e. culture specific information about a particular culture, cultural practices, and information about one’s own cultural system. The team members must adhere to differences in communication and interaction styles of managers from different cultures, must have flexibility in resolving communication misunderstandings, and feel comfortable when communicating with team members of other cultures.

### 3.8.2 Skills
The team member should possess those abilities and behaviors which can be useful in different cultures. The team member should clearly understand the roles, goals and norms of the team and should try to communicate them effectively to other members of the team.

### 3.8.3 Personality Orientation
It refers to the degree to which the team members are interested to engage in cultural interactions with team members of other cultures. It also involves how the members of the
team behave emotionally and physiologically towards members of team belonging to different/foreign cultures. Member of the team should display cultural empathy i.e. to act in a way to show that one knows the world in a way as others do (Koester and Olebe, 1988; Kim, 1986). According to the ICC model, these three components are useful in establishing intercultural competence among team members. These three components are beneficial for team members to adapt and understand with regard to the cultural values of other team members. The study of cultural differences is of importance when dealing with people from different cultures. In this regard Bennett (1998) presented a model to perceive and study cultural differences. This model comprised of six stages. i.e. denial of difference (isolation), defense(perceiving cultural difference as a threat to their world view), minimization (accepting the superficial differences while maintaining the assumption that people are basically the same), acceptance(recognizing the viability of different cultural norms), adaptation (knowing enough about another culture to intentionally shift frame of reference and modify behavior to fit its norms), integration( reconciling cultural differences a forging a multicultural identity)”. According to Friedman and Antal (2005), the first three strategies adhere to ethnocentrism and are incapable to address the demands of a multicultural team because these strategies prefer ones culture over other. A strategy should cater to the demands of other cultures. The fourth strategy i.e. ‘acceptance’ takes into account the cultural norms of other cultures, but simply taking consideration of cultural norms of other cultures is not sufficient and equals paralysis especially in case of joint decisions and when feedback is required. The sixth strategy i.e. integration is not adequate because integration requires extensive experience in culture over time, so integration will not be relevant especially for members whose responsible include to work with members from different cultures and for short period of time (Barham and Berthoin Antal, 1994). Most of the international management literature has recommended “adaptation” as the most preferable strategy (e.g. Chaney and Martin, 2000; Mead, 1998; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997)

3.9 SHORTCOMINGS/DRAWBACKS OF THE ADAPTATION APPROACH

According to Friedman & Antal (2005), adaptation has the following shortcomings:

- One of the flaws of the adaptation approach is that it suggests that the dominating influence of cultures upon people is quite deterministic or the behavior which one
should adapt to is predictable. In simpler words, it means that knowledge held by an individual about different cultures enables an individual to intentionally modify or shift his/her behavior to a different culture accordingly.

- Another drawback of adaption based on superficial knowledge is that it results in the promotion of stereotypical thinking. This stereotypically thinking is handicapped to address the need and demands of a specific cultural interaction.

- Adaptation equals manipulation. This means that due to adaptation individuals’ start believing that gaining mastery of cultural codes of another culture can enable them to control people of that particular culture, hence making them to do things in accordance to their desires. Gaining mastery over cultural codes may be sufficient in adapting to the trivial activities of a culture for e.g. eating, meeting practices and other rituals. “However they are inadequate for dealing with the dynamics of interactions between culturally complex human beings who want to make and implement decisions in different contexts” (Osland and Bird, 2000).

In our study we attempted to analyze the fifth stage of the Bennett’s (1998) model i.e. adaptation. The adaptation stage is in line with the intercultural competence theory which suggests that skills, cultural knowledge and personality orientation are the requisites for understanding people from different cultures. But in reality the adaptation as advocated by intercultural competence theory is only adequate in understanding what lays above the surface of the water i.e. the visible tip of the iceberg only. In other words the adaptation stage is marked with an inability to study what lies below the surface of the water or the submerged part of the cultural iceberg. According to Friedman & Antal (2005), Negotiating reality on the other hand caters to what lies below the visible tip of the cultural iceberg. Negotiating reality approach aids in surfacing the deeply held assumptions and values of individuals belonging to different cultural backgrounds and adhering to non unique cultural values through discussion i.e. high advocacy/high inquiry, thus enabling a thorough understanding of team members belonging to different cultures, thereby helping in better management of multicultural teams.
3.10 NEGOTIATING REALITY

The adaptation approach is plagued with an inability to grasp the dynamics of complex intercultural interactions involving people from different cultures. Adaptation only takes into consideration what lies above the surface of the water i.e. the visible tip of the cultural iceberg. What is needed is to gain a thorough understanding of what lies beneath the visible tip of the cultural iceberg.

“Negotiating reality is a strategy for effectively engaging intercultural interactions and generating a richer repertoire of action strategies” (Friedman & Antal, 2005). Negotiating reality enables to help surface the tacit knowledge of people to cater to the requirements and demands of a problematic event or situation (Friedman & Antal, 2005). Friedman and Antal (2005) further describes that negotiating reality not only includes bringing to the surface the tacit knowledge of other people which lies below their cultural iceberg but also involves a thorough exploration of what lies below one's own cultural iceberg. Negotiating reality is based upon the personal mastery of skills as advocated by the intercultural competence approach, it not only includes how a person’s cultural background influences his behavior but also provides an awareness regarding the assumptions held by other members.

According to (Friedman & Antal, 2005) the theory of negotiating reality is based on the following three beliefs:

- The theory of negotiating reality adheres to the belief that all individuals are of equal significance and worthy of equal respect.
- As cultural being people differ because they possess different repertoires of ways of seeing and doing things.
- The repertoire of no individual or group merits a priori superiority or right to dominance.

A cultural repertoire is effective in a specific context. All cultural repertoires are shaped by the specific contexts within which they proved effective in the past. It’s not necessary that a cultural repertoire which is effective in one context is effective in the other. New contexts call for testing the relevance of existing repertoires. The relevance of the existing repertoires in the new context can be determined by making the existing cultural repertoires explicit and testable. Negotiating reality caters to the uncertainty which lies in the intercultural interactions.
among complex being in changing contexts. The negotiating reality can help individuals to improve the quality of the strategies they make in intercultural interactions. This approach discourages the ethnocentrism and paralysis which arises by only accepting the cultural differences. On the contrary this approach is an interactive approach which does not asks individuals to shed-off their cultural repertoires. Negotiating reality asks all individuals in an intercultural interaction to explore and test underlying assumptions as a basis of learning new ways of seeing and doing things more effectively with other people from different cultural backgrounds in a specific context.

3.10.1 Cultural Repertoires as Theories of Action

According to Friedman & Antal (2005), the theories of action approach or action science provide a framework for the conversion of tacit culturally generated repertoires explicit and adjusting them to the demands of the situation. Theories of action predict behaviors as well as they guide action. Theories of action are available in the mind of the actor and these theories can be retrieved during everyday life.

3.10.2 Awareness Regarding Theories of Action

The negotiating reality reflects on the theories of actions of all the participants in an intercultural interaction to guide their actions. During negotiating reality, all the parties in an intercultural action ask themselves the following questions:

- How the situation is perceived by them.
- What the party seeks to achieve in the particular situation.
- Which action strategies the parties are employing to achieve their goals.

Through making these elements clear the parties becomes aware as to how cultural repertoires affect their perceptions and behavior. To explore one’s theory of action does not happen naturally (Argyris and Schon, 1974). Asking such question is not an easy thing especially when one is in the midst of an interaction. In intercultural interactions unawareness regarding one’s intercultural interaction is very detrimental as it locks an individual into one’s own psychic prison. Interlocking oneself into one’s own theory of action is counterproductive. One of the most critical skills in negotiating reality is that an individual should be aware as to
when he should interrupt the automatic functioning and bring individual and other aggregate theories into action.

### 3.10.3 Testing one’s Perception & Interpretation of the Situation against Others

According to Friedman & Antal (2005), this step involves testing one’s perception and interpretation of the situation against the perception and interpretation of the situation by others. The perception and interpretation of the situation by an individual is called the ‘reality image’ which is self-constructed by the individual (Friedman and Lipshitz, 1992; Hong et al., 2000; Searle, 1995). This reality image is constructed through the selective perception of the data individuals get through large number of sources of external and internal stimuli. Culture plays an important role in the interpretation of the data individuals possess (Argyris, 1982; Hong et al., 2000). Each individual in an intercultural interaction make their own choices for the construction of their reality images. The role of the cultural frames of individuals is significant in making their choices. This is due to the cultural frames of individuals that they select certain data and prefer one interpretation over another. Since individuals make different reality images, this difference may provide the reason or source for conflicts or misunderstandings among individuals. In intercultural interactions an individual receives many unexpected responses from other individuals, these responses are important because they enable an individual useful insight to an individual to reconsider his construction of reality image. This feature of negotiating reality is very critical because it provides an individual with a wide array of alternatives which aid an individual to embrace the important aspects which an individual might have overlooked. This testing process offers no guarantee that the individuals will arrive at the right interpretation but it can aid in realizing that some reality images are more reasonable than others (Weick, 1979)

### 3.10.4 Gaps in Intercultural Interactions:

In intercultural interactions two types of gaps are witnessed.

#### 3.10.5 Gap 1

“The gap between strategy and outcome” (Argyris and Schon, 1974). In intercultural interactions strategies may result in different outcomes. A strategy may produce a certain type of outcome in one situation may produce a very different outcome in another situation. “This gap is really straight forward: strategies that are effective for achieving goals in one context may have unintended consequences in a different cultural context” (Friedman & Antal, 2005).
3.10.6 Gap 2
“The gap between ‘espoused theories’ (what people intend to say or do in a situation) and ‘theories-in-use’ (theories inferred from actual behavior)” (Argyris and Schon, 1974). In intercultural interactions an individual may start with open appreciation of the cultural differences that exist between them and other individuals but with the passage of time will start imposing his reality image over other individuals. Individuals can gain an understanding as to what caused them to deviate from acting in the accordance with their espoused theories through inquiry. By inquiry individuals will be careful in future as to what deviates them from the preferable or intended courses of action in the future.

3.11 COMBINING ADVOCACY WITH INQUIRY

3.11.1 Advocacy
“Advocacy means clearly expressing and standing up for what one thinks and desires” (Dewey, 1938). It is through advocacy an individual adheres to his/her stance.

3.11.2 INQUIRY
Inquiry often requires a conscious effort to suspend judgment, experience doubt and accept a degree of uncertainty until a new understanding is achieved (Dewey, 1938).

Through combing advocacy with inquiry individuals get awareness and understanding regarding the perception and behaviors of individuals in the light of their different cultural icebergs. According to Friedman & Antal, (2005), combining the two behaviors results in the following four combinations:

- **HIGH ADVOCACY AND LOW INQUIRY**
  This combination an individual demonstrates firm adherence to his own point of view and tries to impose it on other individuals. This generally happens when an individual exercises greater power over other individuals in a group. This combination is unlikely to reap the desired benefits because an individual will not be able to find the flaws and errors with his/her own point of view. This strategy is unlikely to result in learning.
- **HIGH INQUIRY LOW ADVOCACY**
  In this strategy an individual is willing to explore the point of view of others but may withhold his own point of views. This strategy may result in some insights. The suppression of information by an individual may be detrimental in this strategy because the information with held by the individual may be of great significance during that intercultural interaction.

- **LOW ADVOCACY AND LOW INQUIRY**
  This strategy is a diplomatic approach in intercultural interactions to work with cultural differences. This strategy aims to get one’s point of view across without an eagerness to learn about other individuals’ point of view. This theory doesn’t work because other people in an intercultural interaction view this strategy as manipulation. Resultantly this strategy is not instrumental in generating the desired levels of trust. This strategy very rarely creates learning in intercultural interactions.

- **HIGH ADVOCACY AND HIGH INQUIRY**
  The strategy is the integral part of negotiating reality. This strategy involves exploring and tests one’s own reality image against the reality images of other individuals in an in a collaborative way in an intercultural interaction. This strategy allows for understanding the behavior and perceptions of individuals in the light of their cultural icebergs. This strategy facilitates individuals an individual in an intercultural interaction to know the reasoning of others, at the same time this strategy also enables individuals to understand the inconsistencies and gaps in their own reasoning. Resultantly individuals get to learn from each other. “In an intercultural interaction, this approach enables people to explore and understand each other’s intentions and behaviors in light of their different cultural icebergs. When people combine high advocacy with high inquiry, they state clearly what they think/want and explain the reasoning behind their view. At the same time they strive to understand the reasoning of others and invite others to question their own reasoning. This strategy involves openness to seeing the logic in other ways of thinking and to discovering inconsistencies or gaps in one’s own reasoning” (Friedman & Antal, 2005).
CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS
As per title of our Master Thesis and research background, we have planned to conduct interviews of the Managers and team members involved in the multicultural organizations. To cater to this objective we opted for face to face interviews in order to gain a pragmatic insight regarding multiculturalism in organizational teams. In these organizations the team participants had to rely upon the formal policies and guidelines for dealing with issues in multicultural teams e.g. conflicts (productive or destructive). Apart from this we also conducted interviews of research groups studying at BTH in different programs comprising of members from different national cultures. The study of these research groups enabled us to gain understanding as to how multicultural teams solve their issues i.e. conflicts especially when operating without the domain or umbrella of a formal organizational network.

We wished to conduct as much interviews to be more specific but due to limitations of time, geographic location and resources we contacted human resource managers of three telecom companies, they routed us to different managers and members of multicultural teams. In total we conducted fifteen (15) interviews i.e. five (5) managers and ten (10) members.. The selection criteria of participants was that participants should be members/managers of multicultural teams, must have been member for one (1) year at least, majority should belong to different foreign cultures.

4.2 INTERVIEWING PROCEDURE
All the interviews are performed by the authors of this Master Thesis. Prior to every interview all the interviewees have been explained the goal and purpose of this research project. We have also informed all interviewees that they will get the transcript of the interview before it is concluded in our Thesis. According to the companies’ policy the names of the interviewees is not mentioned here to keep their secrecy. The average length of an interview was about sixty (60) minutes. In our interviews we got two perspectives about multiculturalism in organizations, one from the manager or team leader managing a multicultural team and the
second is from the team members from different national cultures working in a multicultural environment. The questions which we asked during these interviews can be found in the Appendix.

As these interviews helped us to get the practical insight of the multicultural team working and practices they are following to achieve their ultimate objectives, this will also help us to conclude our study in relation to the management techniques and theories described in the literature review. In these interviews we also tried to get the information that is there any other techniques being in practice other than defined in the literature.

4.3 GENERAL COMPANY AND TEAM INFORMATION
Interviews have been conducted in the three chosen telecom support companies in Karlskrona and Ronneby i.e. Ericsson, UIQ and Spidexa along with research study groups at BTH. We have interviewed five (5) managers and ten (10) members of the multicultural teams.

4.4 ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS
Interviews will be analyzed on the basis of below mentioned criterion; we will compare the industry practice and the theories in literature in order to establish an understanding of what is done and what has to be? In addition to the theoretical framework the outcomes from these interviews will be analyzed with the help of Likert Scale and quantified.

The questions and assessment of the interview are designed in the light of Steers and Nordon (2006) and Appelbaum (1998), which makes it easier to interpret and assess in relation to the study objective for improving Multicultural team’s efficiency. Here we tried to get a glimpse of the benefits of MCTs and the demerits in detail to identify the underlying reasons for inefficiency prevalent in MCTs. This further suggests corrective measures to rectify the core issue of cultural values as the root cause.
An assessment criterion of interviews is based on the following two major sections with certain sub-analyzing factors.

**Manager’s/Team Leader’s View**
- Multicultural teams
- Productive/non productive Conflicts
- Timing of conflict birth
- Role of Cultural value & its impact
- Cultural awareness Training
- Conflict resolving Strategies
- MCT Benefits

**Team Member’s view**
- Multicultural teams
- Productive/non productive Conflicts
- Timing of conflict birth
- Role of Cultural value & its impact
- Cultural awareness Training
- Conflict resolving Strategies
- MCT Benefits

### 4.5 MANAGERS PERSPECTIVE

We have conducted five interviews with senior managers and an executive as well. For these interviews, structured approach was used in order to get diverse feedback based on the same questions but from different angles and perspective. Initially these interview questions were designed to understand the companies view point on the issue of cultural aspect but during the interview certain sub-questions were asked to understand the multicultural impact on organization in its entirety.

#### 4.5.1 Multicultural Teams

It was clear from the interview that every manager is aware of the importance of multicultural benefits and its imperative role in the organizations. They also advocated the presence of such teams a good sign for the growth of organization and development of its own culture. Almost 90% of the managers agreed that multicultural teams are effective in improving organizational performance and 10% said that homogenous teams are better performer, given the required Human resource is available in one place or country.
4.5.2 Conflicts
Regarding Conflicts, all the respondents agreed that they are of high importance and open doors for creativity and innovation however the fact that the selected organizations are technical in nature, so their understanding of conflicts was more of technical nature rather cultural. Managers from these organizations agreed that these conflicts are healthy and productive in nature and when they turn out to be a real headache, they themselves take hold of the situation and fix it. About the nature of the conflicts in the organizations respondents were of the opinion that around 75% of the conflicts are of technical nature and they are productive whereas 25% of the conflicts arise due to cultural differences, for which they believe they are handled at an initial stage.

4.5.3 Timing of Conflicts
Occurrence of the conflicts has been observed by respondents after the beginning of the task related activities in multicultural teams. Managers termed these conflicts of technical nature and give less importance to the cultural conflicts; they also mentioned that these types of conflicts are manageable. As far as the cultural role is concerned around 65% agreed that the employees from different backgrounds bring new ideas and are considered productive however 35% of the respondents said, it is task dependant and the size of the organization decide their input role.

4.5.4 Role of Cultural Values & its impact
According to the managers in the selected group of companies acknowledge the importance of cultural training however they claim that large organizations have their own unique culture so the new employees from different countries are encouraged to adapt to the new environment. Respondents also mentioned that once new people are hired or new multicultural teams are formed, they are instructed to adhere to certain buzz words in the organization as they truly depict the cultural strength of the organization. About 34% managers also mentioned that they are dealing with multicultural teams virtually so they have less or no contact when it comes to personal interaction whereas if it is related to work they provide a complete sketch of job/assignment leaving very little room for misunderstandings. In such scenario they seem less need for training.
4.5.5 Conflict Resolving Strategies
66% of respondents said that whenever there is a conflict they use pro-active approach in order to address the issue. While the nature of the conflicts are mostly technical so they said they empower the team members to decide themselves and where inevitable, they intervene and take charge of the situation and decide, additionally they mentioned that whenever they made decisions the employees took it as it is and showed no resentment or discontent. 34% managers said that when they take decisions, their team members either show trust in them or they step back and show no notion, this might be misleading whereas almost 70% managers are convinced, the best way to resolve the conflicts, is compromise. 30% managers are optimistic and say, they use compromise when required and when required they use their authority.

4.5.6 Benefits of Multiculturalism
Around 60% of managers have said that multiculturalism is good for the organization and also the multicultural teams have an important role in the growth of organizations. Despite the fact that multicultural teams and multiculturalism are acknowledged as an important element of change in today’s competitive world by the remaining 40% managers, they also point out the disadvantages embedded in multiculturalism.

Figure (4.1) shows the trend of different aspects of multicultural teams in organizations. Figure (4.1) is drawn from the responses of the Managers/Team Leaders managing or supervising multicultural teams in organizations. Figure (4.1) shows most of the managers realized the existence of multicultural teams in organizations and the ratio of task or productive conflict occurrence is relatively high than the non productive conflicts.
4.6 TEAM MEMBERS’ PERSPECTIVE
The second most important part of our interviews conducted at several telecom companies in Blekinge region, Sweden, we have noted down viewpoints of the members of multicultural teams also. In the light of set criteria set in the question interview, following are the answers we were replied with.

4.6.1 Multicultural Teams
Around 75% respondents showed their awareness of multiculturalism in organizations, the major supportive argument has been given was the cultural diversity and varied knowledge with experience that such individuals bring along with them. They tend to articulate their skills and knowledge with experience and cultural diversity leading to a refined decision. In terms of personal grooming they see multiculturalism as a positive sign which provides them an opportunity to learn about other cultures and their values. 25% members were skeptical about the growing role of multiculturalism, and showed concerns related to diversity.
4.6.2 Conflicts
Conflicts are viewed as a healthy sign among multicultural teams, what type of scenarios or issues can be termed as conflicts are defined in advanced, a unanimous response was given when the conflicts issue was asked. Every one said the issues were of technical nature and required an expert or technical skill to resolve the issues. To their understanding they termed conflict with technical issues only and paid almost no consideration to the cultural conflicts or remained silent.

4.6.3 Timing of Conflicts
Mostly answers to the timing of conflicts are same, as discussed above that they are considered as technical in nature, they can arise at any time but in the beginning they are more likely to occur. About the role of multiculturalism and cultural value 33% have a viewpoint that yes, values matter and its related to perception and they respect cultural values of their peers while on job and even afterwards. Rest of the respondents either negated or showed very little openness to the question.

4.6.4 Role of Cultural Values & Cultural Awareness Training
Cultural training is an important aspect in multicultural teams and 70% respondents gave high importance to it but they mentioned that no such official training has been imparted and they are not aware of such an activity from the employers rather they tried themselves out to know more about other members’ culture and by informing about their own. 30% respondents say that their organizational culture is too strong that it caters the need for training and organizations demanded adherence to their own culture and focus on their own buzz words. This kind of environment was seen in large organizations and related to more authoritative style of management which stresses on the implementation rather discussion.

4.6.5 Conflicts Resolving Strategies
Conflict resolution has been graded acceptable by the majority and as they are technical in nature, they required immediate action and response which the management took care, team members show less resentment on their decision, whether this shows trust or compromise. We have seen hardly any respondent mentioning the conflict referring to values; neither had they mentioned any resolution which had any link with cultural value. Half of the sample replied, say 50%, they have been empowered to resolve such conflicts by themselves and management intervenes only when the conflict is escalated to them or it becomes a stall point for productivity.
4.6.6 Benefits of Multiculturalism
Views on multicultural teams and its benefits are mixed as 67% are in favor of the multicultural teams and see it a strength for their organizational performance however 33% rate it differently, in technical organizations they think it’s the skill that count more as compared to the diversity and if it is available in the home country then they do not see any need for making multicultural teams. They also advocate that it is difficult to manage multicultural teams.

Figure 4.2 Responses of Team Members
Apart from the above interview questions, we also asked three questions from both, managers/team leaders and team members. The results of these three questions are based on Likert scale method presented through the figure 4.3.

![Multiculturalism in Organizations](image)

**Figure 4.3 Multicultural Practices in Organizations**

### 4.7 RESPONSES OF STUDY GROUPS AT BTH ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM

The research groups provided their feedback also which showed results somewhat around with those of the employed people but in case of conflicts, conflict resolution strategies and cultural value have more significance, these are considered major factors in dissolution of the groups and halt situation affecting the performance of teams. People who have rated these elements can be quoted as slightly more than half of the respondents in study groups. Conflicts are rated 56% and adverse affect. Role of cultural values and its impact on the work efficiency was rated also high up to 62% affecting negatively and the strategies to handle the
EMERGING ROLE OF TEAMS IN MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

conflicts was 60% positive as most agree to compromise in such difficult situations where as 40% say, it is better to find a more suitable group. About occurrence/timing of conflicts there are different opinions like 30% recognize in the beginning, 53% in the middle and 17% acknowledge in the end.

In addition to the structured questions we have asked several other sub-questions related to the discussion in process, objective was to make them comfortable so that they do not hesitate to answer the questions and provide us with the true experience and feedback, this was done to ensure the minimization of biasness. In the discussion we have asked them to give their own independent point of view and we were surprised that the answers were very much different to what they said being a member of the team. We have asked them questions about compromise and most of the respondents agreed that compromise is the best solution, this goes for managers and members and research groups. There are certain other questions related to conflict identification and conflicts related to cultural values, we have received the more or less similar answers as what they mentioned earlier being team members. Here we have noticed that despite the fact we tried to make them comfortable during the interview and assured secrecy of their identities, they seemed reluctant in answering. We urged them to speak their previous experiences and articulate it with the present working environment.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 ANSWERING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION

From the discussion in the previous chapter it has become evident that both managers and multicultural team members are aware of the growing importance of multicultural teams, their role and impact on efficiency. However there are certain reservations as well. We will sum up the discussion in this chapter keeping in view the literature review and the theoretical aspects, which we have learnt in the earlier chapters and developed an understanding to articulate the theory with practice and its practicality in the final parts of this research study with the help of interviews which were conducted at several Telecom companies in Blekinge region, Sweden.

We have tried to gather multiple perspectives about role of multicultural teams and issues related with them keeping in view the seven points mentioned above. Referring to the respondents consisting of managers, team members and research study groups, hereinafter called as respondents, have agreed upon the importance of multicultural teams and their growing role in the organization. Our analysis is based on the input and responses gathered in the personal interviews with certain individuals. It has been noticed that a large number of employees recognize multiculturalism beneficial for the organization and for their own grooming. However there are number of people opposing the concept as it is more difficult to cope up with other nationalities, religion and cultural values.

About conflicts their understanding was like conflicts occur due to technicalities and they have not paid a notable consideration to the cultural conflicts. Our understanding of their stance is that they are convinced that in technical organizations such cultural conflicts hardly arise as everyone in the team is busy in their work and hardly communicate with each other, other than the technical discussions where as we have seen members complaining that such cultural awareness is necessary for the team members of multicultural teams. Respondents agree on the timing of conflict due to its technical nature.

Respondents have not answered the question related to cultural value differences fully and few have spoken but with utmost caution and hardly expressed any notion. They have hardly
mentioned any personal difference but we smelled that either they are reluctant or they fear of getting exposed if they mention this problem. To our understanding that seemed to be the major reason for compromising on majority of the issues as they do not want to get into any trouble and accept whatever is conveyed to them. Respondents seek hide in compromise as they weigh it more and see a better tool to avoid conflict or difference in opinion. Our questions about the role of cultural values and their impact on the individual behavior also revealed the dodging attitude as they termed it with technical conflicts and resolution but either they were not willing to separate the two or again trying to avoid coming in the lime light, of which we assured them of the secrecy.

Respondents view of the cultural training advocates the need of cultural training, which in other words shows that majority recognize conflicts due to cultural differences but seemed afraid to speak about it, where as they highly felt excited when asked about cultural training weeks and other activities associated with it. We found our answer, when majority of respondents identified that they share their cultural knowledge and ask their colleagues about their cultures whenever there is an opportunity to better understand the persons, their work styles and adjust themselves in line with the acquired knowledge. This also addresses the compromise approach which was described as Adaptation in literature. This supports our argument that by sharing knowledge and asking others view will definitely help in a better performance by multicultural teams. In favor of this the authors of “Negotiating reality” also say, alternative to the adaptation to intercultural competence is negotiating reality, as adaptation approach focuses on the surface level repertoires and misses the underlying cultural values which dictate the terms of action, authors have described this finding with the iceberg model, which depicts the true picture that ⅓ of the iceberg lies under the water which is not visible to the majority and has more significance as compared to the upper part which is visible and have little proportion of ¼. Negotiating reality enables the members to learn by doing and understanding by expressing and asking one another, which opens door for creativity rather compromise, acceptance, adjustments and avoidance of differences which are propagated by the adaptation approach.

We have seen around 30 % of the respondents actually practicing the negotiating reality concept but they are not aware of its terminology, as they ask and express their point of view with their colleagues. We have seen the same number of managers practicing the same approach as well to make a learned decision without compromising quality and creativity.
5.2 CONCLUSION
Answering to the question in the literature review that “How to increase the performance/efficiency of multicultural teams? This includes both, ways to minimize destructive/unproductive conflicts and to make use of the benefits that multiculturalism entails.”

Conclusion on which we have arrived is that the major hindrance in the performance of multicultural teams is multiculturalism itself. This invokes cultural differences and built-in action strategies under the influence of cultural values which individuals bring along from different parts of the world; this includes the culture of home, university, work place, social, regional and national level or the places in the world where s/he lived. These differences lead to conflicts which are productive some time and destructive some time, casting the way for triumph or failure. Productive conflicts are considered positive and healthy while destructive can be minimized if the cultural value awareness is addressed in due course, which is prior to start of the task. So far from the theoretical study and the practice in the industry shows that the adaptation approach supported by the intercultural competence theory is widely recognized and organization having multicultural teams are exercising it however there are a reasonable percentage that also exercise the negotiating reality but they are not fully aware of it, as it is comparatively a new way of handling issues by learning approach.

5.3 LIMITATIONS
When we started the research study we were very much optimistic that we would be able to gather enough information to architect a thorough answer but that was an illusion to an extent. We had the limited time as an adversary and the limited exposure to the organizations in this region. We tried our best to contact as many companies but due the unfortunate timing at the end of our academic year and the approaching summer holidays have restricted our plan to curtail to three companies in Blekinge region. We wanted to have more interviews with managers and members of different multicultural teams, again the time shortage and the busy schedule of the participants have forced us to complete with bare minimum requirements for this research study. However we see room for improvement yet as authors of negotiating reality said and we agree this is not the final verdict or solution to improving performance and in fact there is no universal model, theory or practice which can entertain the topic under discussion in its entirety indeed the proposed approach can be termed as more appropriate in today's environment.
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Negotiating reality, an action approach to intercultural competence; might not be very easy because it needs the skills required for high advocacy/high inquiry, but on the other hand it does not propagate that this cannot be achieved by ordinary people. Negotiating reality is not for high talented people only however by improving the skills in interpreting other’s point of view through doing courses, seminars, training sessions.

We recommend in the light of theory of negotiating reality that instead of adaptation approach to competence, this is better and advocate learning which is a two way process, thus enabling optimal output.

The high advocacy/high inquiry approach in an interaction between team members can trigger more openness which will generate more options and alternatives to one problem, which is definitely a healthy outcome.

No matter if an organization is technical in nature or fast moving consumer goods company, adaptation may hinder creativity and innovation however using the proposed approach they can get benefit out of that. That goes for organizations of any size and does not restrict only to large organizations.
5.5 FURTHER STUDY
This research study was conducted to learn and articulate the ongoing industry practice with multiculturalism, its effects, benefits and issues with theories in literature. Our objective was to assess whether the theories have any significance when practiced in real. The results were hopeful and provided a platform to widen the scope of study in service and production sector and see how measures to improve productivity in multicultural teams can be achieved. We were time, geographic and resource bounded which leaves enough room to find out what related practices exist in other sectors of the corporate world. This study can be extended to production and service industry in order to get a better glimpse of multicultural teams which would be a more thorough and rigorous representation of this research study. A more comprehensive and a bigger sample of the participants from multiple industrial backgrounds will definitely contribute to validate the findings derived from the current selected sample.

We are optimistic that the theories we learnt in literature have a broad and wider implementation capability in answering issues of multiculturalism and cultural values in particular.
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Appendix

Interview Questions

SECTION I

- Introduction of the interviewer and interviewee.
- Company Information:
  - Please tell us about your company, your position at the company?
  - Information about teams i.e. homogeneous or heterogeneous.

SECTION II

- Manager’s Perspective:
  - Does the organization acknowledge the differences among team members arising due to cultural values?
  - Do you encourage the formulation of multicultural teams or it is recruitment dependent?
  - How do you identify the conflicts among team members of a multicultural team?
  - What types of conflicts are commonly witnessed in a multicultural team?
  - At what points of time conflicts are more likely to occur in a team due to multiculturalism?
  - Do you see conflicts in multicultural teams at your organization as productive or non productive?
  - Are there any specific conflicts related to multiculturalism?

Conflict handling:

- How do you deal with the task related conflicts?
- What strategies do you employ to deal with conflicts related to multiculturalism?
- Is it difficult to manage multicultural teams than homogeneous teams?
EMERGING ROLE OF TEAMS IN MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

➢ **Team members Perspective:**
  - Are you provided with any training to enhance your understanding regarding cultural values of other team members?
  - To what extent are you involved to deal with issues pertaining to multiculturalism?

**SECTION III**

➢ Do you think that multiculturalism is benefitting your organization? (Rate 1-5)
➢ How do you rate conflicts handling due to multiculturalism/cultural value diversity in the company? (Rate 1-5)
➢ Does the company encourage team members to learn differences in cultural values i.e. cultural week? (Rate 1-5)