Internationalisation of the Swedish higher education system: An Impact Analysis on student and employee satisfaction.

Masters in Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

Title: Internationalisation of the Swedish higher education system: An impact analysis on student and employee satisfaction.

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Internationalisation is a global phenomenon that is changing the way in which educational systems need to look at their education delivery in order to be competitive and meet the needs of the global economy. The Swedish education system currently has a competitive advantage because it is free from tuition fees. However, what is of particular interest in this research is the impact that the proposed introduction of fees to non EU students will have on the Swedish educational system ability to continue to attract non EU students. The number of international students choosing to study in Sweden is increasing by 14% each year. Part of the reason behind this is that Swedish higher education systems have an overcapacity for students in addition to a decline in the number of Swedish students’ choosing to study. The intention of this thesis is to address the following questions; How can Swedish higher education institutions meet the needs of its culturally diverse student base? What are the implications of this on the employees at the institutions? And What are the institutional measures that can be introduced to meet the needs of the culturally diverse student base and its employees?

To answer these questions an exploratory case study approach was taken with the intention being to maximise the variation and capture the true essence of the internationalisation situation in the Swedish higher education system. The case study area chosen was the BTH School of Management. Primary data was collected via Student programme evaluations, focus groups and field notes. Secondary data consisted of International and national education documents, EU documents and policies, Geert Hofstede and other relevant cultural and Educational documents.

The research identified that there was a link between addressing student’s needs and an institution’s attractiveness. Therefore, in addressing the needs of the international students their cultural needs and expectations must be considered. Some recommendations on what could be done to meet the cultural needs of the students have been derived from the research conducted in this thesis. These recommendations are also well utilised in other industries and other educational systems.
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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND & RESEARCH CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this thesis is on the impact of internationalisation on both students and employees in the Swedish higher education system. The assessment of the impact of internationalisation is coupled with the evaluation of the factors that create satisfaction and dissatisfaction for both groups.

Internationalisation of higher education is a global phenomenon. It has not only created competition between the education systems for students, either in quality or in quantity, but has emphasised the need for higher education systems to have a more international focus in the education they offer to meet the needs of the global economy. The current generation of international students are aware of what certain countries and their institutions have to offer and also have an ‘unprecedented number of opportunities available to them’, thus making international competition for students fierce (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007) and emphasising the need for institutions to look at ways of attracting students to their institutions in order to remain competitive.

Internationalisation of the Swedish higher education system has been accentuated because of its overcapacity for students coupled with the decreasing number of Swedish students’ choosing to study. This combination has lead to an increase in the number of international students coming to Sweden to study and has highlighted the significance of looking at internationalisation. It is important to mention, at this point, that the internationalisation push is not just a financial reaction by the Swedish higher education system to fill the vacant places. Rather, it is the Swedish government who is actively encouraging its institutions to adopt a mixture of Swedish and international students to support, in its own words, ‘internationalisation at home’ (Högskoleverket, 2005).

Sweden currently has a competitive advantage in the student market because its tuition is free of fees, which has made it relatively easy for them to attract international students (Deamsteader, 2006). The issue is that this may change in the next few years as the government is considering implementing fees for non European students. If this occurs then Sweden’s competitive advantage may disappear and thus they will need to look at other ways in which to continue to attract international students. The question is what makes an institution attractive to international students? And, what strategies will the Swedish institutions need to adopt to remain attractive to international students?

Since the consideration is attractiveness and the student market, the issue of student satisfaction becomes central. In this thesis, I am concerned with identifying and evaluating how we can ensure that the needs of the culturally diverse student population are being met. To do this, student satisfaction will be evaluated according to the student market and the question of whether the Swedish higher educational environment meets the needs of its heterogeneous student base. In order to meet these needs, the institutions are obliged to look at the allocation of their resources, the largest resource being their employees.

In relation to the employees, internationalisation has caused notable modifications to policies and practices within the institutions and has thus directly impacted on them and their work practices. Hence, I am also concerned with the impact of internationalisation on the employees within Swedish higher education institutions.

In this thesis, chapter 1 will discuss the motivation behind the research topic and identify the research questions that will be investigated. Chapter 2 will highlight the methodology used whilst chapter 3 will review internationalisation in the education system in more depth. This is followed by an analysis of the case study area in chapter 4 and conclusions and recommendations in chapter 5.
1.1 WHAT DOES INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM MEAN?

“Internationalisation is not a new term. For over 20 years now the definition of internationalisation has been the subject of much discussion. The term has been used for centuries in political science and governmental relations, but its popularity in the education sector has really only soared since the early 1980s” (Knight, 2003, p.2). One of the driving forces behind this is that industries are now much more global and thus employers are expecting graduates to have some previous international experience or education. The perception is that by having contact or an understanding of foreign countries and cultures it will ‘give birth’ to new ideas and knowledge and assist employees with their business endeavours (Regeringskansliet, 2001). Therefore, in order to ensure that graduates are competitive in the global employment market, higher education has had to meet this need and become more internationalised.

‘Internationalisation’ within higher education has many different meanings (Stier, 2002). Policy makers focus on the ideological aims of internationalisation, teachers concentrate on pedagogic issues (e.g.) course content, language problems etc., and administrators are concerned with practical issues; including standardisation of awards, student visas etc (Stier, 2002).

‘The challenge of developing a generic definition of internationalisation in relation to education is taking into account how it applies to many different countries, cultures, and education systems’ (Knight, 2003). The definition must be “appropriate for a broad range of contexts and can not specify the rationales, benefits, outcomes, actors, activities, or stakeholders of internationalisation as these elements vary across nations and from institution to institution. Thus the definition must relate to all aspects of education and the role that it plays in society” (Knight, 2003, p.2). With this in mind the following definition will be used.

“Internationalisation at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p.2).

Key Definition Concepts (Knight, 2003, pp 2)

“Process - conveys that it is ongoing and continuing. It is an evolutionary or developmental quality to the concept”

“International, intercultural, and global dimension - The terms complement each other and together depict the richness in the breadth and depth of internationalisation”

“International - sense of relationships between and among nations, cultures or countries”

“Intercultural - relates to diversity of cultures that exist within countries, communities & institutions”

“Global - provides a sense of worldwide scope”

“Integration - process of infusing or embedding the international and intercultural dimension into policies and programs to ensure that the international dimension remains central, not marginal, and is sustainable”

“Purpose - overall role and objectives that higher education has for a country or the mission of an institution”

“Function - primary elements or tasks that characterise a national postsecondary system or individual institution, including teaching, research, and service to society”

“Delivery - offering of education courses and programs either domestically or in other countries”
Internationalisation has affected higher education systems in the following two ways:

1. **Internationalisation from abroad** – with the increase in student mobility, students now have the added advantage of being able to choose where and what they would like to study. Thus making it imperative for higher education systems to offer education packages\(^1\) that are attractive to international students, so as to encourage them to study at their institutions (Morey, 2000).

2. **Internationalisation at home** - institutions need to have educational packages that expose ‘local’\(^2\) students to internationalisation. This will ensure that these students also have insight into the global economy and are able to compete with other graduates in the increasingly competitive employment market (Högskoleverket, 2005).

Therefore, if students are to have their internationalisation needs met, programmes and courses must be offered that are international in content and of relevance to the entire student body. To do this, institutions need to look at the make up of their culturally diverse student base and assess the education delivery methods that will be needed (Morey, 2000).

### 1.2 WHAT IS CULTURE & CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

The meaning of ‘Culture’ is difficult to define because it is a broad term and has many different levels to it. The definition used by a researcher really depends on the research field and the researchers own perceptions of culture. There are three main levels of culture to which researchers align themselves and although they will be discussed briefly in 1.2.2, this research will focus on the National Culture level. It is because of this focus that the following definition will be used for culture as it is based on Hofstede, the founder of national culture research. Culture is defined as ‘a way of life for a group of people and it consists of traditional ideas and there attached values. It affects the way they think, feel and react and it often determines their actions and attitudes. It is based on behaviours, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that they pass along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next’ (Hofstede, 2001).

#### 1.2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

Although many researchers in the field of national culture often have different views on the definition of culture, they do agree that culture is characterized by two components: the visible and the hidden one (Duarte & Snyder, 2001).

The *visible component* consists of the practices and behaviours of an individual that are ‘visible’ to an external observer and are a direct result of the hidden component of culture. The *hidden component* is the ‘societal norms’ of that community that are instilled in a culture by the institutions and the individuals within that community. They are influenced by “history, geography, economy, technology and urbanisation” and they consist of values, symbols and the heroes of that particular community (Hofstede, 2001).

Bearing in mind these two components and there link to each other, it seems that in order to truly understand ones culture we must understand the hidden component of that culture. This means that we must look at the values, symbols, and the heroes of a particular culture and how they have

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\(^1\) Education packages refer to what is included within the education offered to the students (e.g.) programme structure, course structure, support structures etc.

\(^2\) Local refers to students that are residents of the country where the institutions resides.
ultimately been created. In doing this, it soon becomes obvious that there are a multitude of differing cultures throughout the world with differing views on ‘lifestyle, values, beliefs, ideals, practices, race, ethnicity, national origin, language and religion’ (Richardson, 2004). It is the coming together of these differing cultures that gives rise to the term ‘cultural diversity’.

1.2.2 LEVELS OF CULTURE

As mentioned previously, there are three main levels of culture;
1. Organisational or Corporate culture
2. Professional or Functional culture
3. National culture. (Hofstede, 2001; Schein, 1992)

Although all of these levels are present in the Swedish higher education system, the focus will be on National culture because in this thesis we are interested in investigating what makes an institution attractive to students and thus makes them choose it over another. The reasons for the exclusion of organisational and professional culture will be briefly outlined below.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational culture “comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organisation. It is defined as the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organisation and that control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organisation” (Black, 2003). Influences from organisational culture can be quite strong but can be consciously changed; however, this may be difficult to do.

Organisational culture is an important factor within any higher education system as it affects the way in which employees will interact and behave with each other within the organisation. On the surface, organisational culture appears to have relevance to this thesis because the case study is based on the BTH MAM, which has its own organisational culture. However, as the focus is not on the organisation, as such, but on the need to attract students to the institution this level does not directly align with this thesis and thus will not be the focus. However, it does leave leeway for further studies in this direction.

PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

Professional culture is present within any organisation and applies to the different sub group within an organisation and the people that work within them (e.g.) teachers, professors, administrators etc. The people in these sub groups usually have similar educational backgrounds, knowledge and skills which give rise to a common language and terminology within the group. These groups have also usually been exposed to the same problems and thus have common practices for dealing with them (Schein, 1992).

Professional culture is also present in the case study area but for the same reasons as for organisational culture, it will not be the focus of this thesis.

1.2.3 NATIONAL CULTURE

Geert Hofstede is considered to be the National culture ‘Guru’. He is the ‘founder of comparative intercultural research’ (Hofstede, 2006) with much of his research being used by other researchers as the basis for their national culture studies. It is because of this that his five dimensions will be utilised as the basis for the analysis in this thesis.

In 1967, Hofstede completed a cultural study that included IBM employees in 72 countries (Hofstede, 2001). From this study Hofstede derived four bipolar dimensions of national culture. A fifth dimension was added after further studies were completed by his colleague, M. Bond. These
five dimensions allow for predictions to be made on how a particular country operates in relation to its dominant value systems within its national culture. It “gives rise to a structured way of looking at the way people think, feel and act and how society can use this information to find the right solutions to problems that arise between national cultures” (Hofstede, 2001, p. xix).

The five dimensions are:-

1. **Power Distance (PD)**
   Power distance is a measure used to assess how much an individual or group accept and expect that there is an unequal distribution of power within their society (Hofstede, 2001; Martin, 2006).

   *High PD* cultures have inequality of power and wealth. “This condition is not necessarily subverted upon the population, but rather accepted by the population as a cultural norm” (Hofstede, 2003).

   *Low PD* cultures have minimal inequality. Everyone is usually interdependent and has equal rights (Hofstede, 2001).

2. **Uncertainty Avoidance (UA)**
   Uncertainty Avoidance is “the degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situation” (Hofstede, 1997, pp90).

   *Strong UA* cultures tend to be more structured and are considered ‘uncertainty avoiding’. These countries have clear “rules and laws on how one should behave, safety and security measures, and at the philosophical and religious level a belief in absolute truth” (Martin, 2006, p.177). They also often appear to be less easy going (Hofstede, 1997).

   *Weak UA* cultures are more unstructured and are considered ‘uncertainty accepting’. “Uncertainty accepting cultures tend to be more tolerant of different opinions and new ideas, have fewer rules and value rule-makers less, and on the philosophical and religious level they are more relativist” (Martin, 2006, p.177). They are also seen as more easy going.

3. **Individualism (I)**
   Individualism is “the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of a group” (Hofstede, 1993, pp89). Individualists expect to look after themselves and not to be protected by their group throughout life. At the other end is Collectivism (C). Collectivism is a “tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups. The expectation is that their in-groups (relatives, clans, organisations) will look after them in exchange for absolute loyalty” (Martin, 2006, p.176).

4. **Masculinity (M)**
   The Masculinity dimension refers to the extent to which the values of assertiveness, competitiveness, achievement, winning and money are dominant. The opposite pole is Femininity (F). Femininity is more concerned with modesty, caring and the quality of life (Hofstede, 1997; Martin, 2006).

5. **Long term (LT) vs. Short term (ST) orientation**
   Long term orientation is related to the values directed at the future, like thrift and perseverance. Short term orientation on the other hand is directed at the past or present, such as, “tradition, preservation of ‘face’ and fulfilling social obligations” (Hofstede, 1997, p.359).

Worth mentioning is that there are some limitations to looking at national cultures in this way. These are two of the most significant:-
1. An individual’s beliefs and values can not be expected to fit exactly into the collective national samples above.
2. National culture is a static approach where the belief is that “national cultures change very slowly if at all” (Hofstede, 1997, p.92). They assume that regardless of the environment people will act according to their values and beliefs.

1.2.4 CULTURAL DIVERSITY OPPORTUNITIES AND DIFFICULTIES

Most of the relevant literature available on managing cultural diversity is based on the private sector and focuses on the advantages of minimising difficulties and maximising opportunities (e.g.) Laroche, 2003; Triandis, 2003; Archer, 2006; Lewis, 2000; Hofstede, 2001. The literature implies that by minimising difficulties and maximising opportunities an organisation can become less dissatisfying or more satisfying to the individuals involved and thus be more attractive to them. It is also mentioned that it may ‘provide a competitive edge’ for that organisation (Richardson, 2004). As this thesis is focusing on decreasing dissatisfaction and increasing satisfaction, it would not be unusual to assume that these opportunities and difficulties would be applicable to the educational environment as well.

The opportunities and difficulties listed below also link to a study by Verbik and Lasanowski (2007) on higher education systems. It identified that in order for institutions to remain competitive they must look at ways of attracting students by focusing on student satisfaction.

OPPORTUNITIES

Improved student services
Responsive student delivery and enhanced staff skills
Reduction in shortages
Access to international markets (Laroche, 2003; Triandis, 2003).

DIFFICULTIES

Note:- the link between Hofstede and these difficulties will be discussed in Chapter 4 & 5.

Communication

- **Language** - If the language used for communication is not the native tongue of the student or teacher or they are not fluent in it, it can lead to misinterpretations or difficulties expressing themselves and thus feelings of inadequacy or dissatisfaction. This often leads to individuals changing to their native tongue if they are given the opportunity (Laroche, 2003).

- **Form their own groups** - Cultural groups tend to form their own groups where the members are all similar and they can be easily understood. If there are a number of these sub groups within a whole group it can lead to poor communication and understanding which lead to conflicts between the sub groups, reducing the overall performance of the group as a whole (Laroche, 2003; Triandis, 2003).

- **Non verbal communication** – Literature suggests that nonverbal communication is more powerful than what people say and is more important in understanding human behaviour than words alone. It includes “tone of voice, body language (facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, expressive movement), spatial arrangements, patterns of touch, cultural differences and other "nonverbal" acts” (Archer, 2006). Individuals need to understand the non verbal communication of individuals or it can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Archer, 2006).
• **Different feedback scales** – feedback is the process where one individual offers their ‘observations, concerns and suggestions’ to another individual with the ‘intention of improving his/her performance as an individual’. Feedback has to be bi-directional so that continuous improvement is possible. (Laroche, 2003). Feedback can be negative (reduce output), positive (increase output), or bipolar (which can either increase or decrease output). In human systems feedback is usually bipolar (Fleming, Levie, & Fleming, 1993). The significance is that if the feedback given is understood differently by the parties involved it can lead to confusion, frustration and ultimately dissatisfaction.

• **Different spans of silence** – In different cultures when communicating there are differing acceptable spans of silence. This can cause problems as the person who has a shorter acceptable span of silence may dominate the conversation whilst the other individual with longer acceptable spans of silence may not get an opportunity to speak (Laroche, 2003).

**Leadership**

Differing cultures often have a different expectation of leadership; some require direct leadership and others more indirect. Hofstede highlights these differences with his Power Distance dimension. He states that there is a potential for clashes in opinions, negative attitudes towards each other and a decrease in satisfaction if leadership is misunderstood (Hofstede, 2001).

**Internal team (group) processes**

Individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds have differing opinions about how a group should be run. These differences, if misunderstood, can also lead to the same issues that Leadership faces above. The differences in opinion relate to:-

- **Problem solving approaches** - These differences can be seen using the Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) dimension by Hofstede. If there is high UA then additional planning or information is required at earlier stages. If there is a low UA they may insist on moving on and solving the problems on the spot (Hofstede, 2001; Laroche, 2003).

- **Division of responsibilities** – These differences can be seen using the Individualism dimension by Hofstede. If an individual comes from an individualistic culture, then they expect the task to be allocated to one person and that that person is responsible for its completion. The roles of each person in the group are clearly defined. The Collectivist culture however is less strictly defined by responsibility and the task is seen as the responsibility of the whole team. They are expected to offer help and support to each other (Hofstede, 2001; Laroche, 2003).

- **Cohesiveness** – Is the amount of trust needed to work together. This can also be measured by Hofstede’s Individualism dimension. In a Collectivist culture it is expected that more time and effort is put into team building when trust is being built. This is not the case for Individualist cultures (Hofstede, 2001; Laroche, 2003).

- **Attitudes to time** – There are differing attitudes to time obligations and these are dependant on the culture of origin. These time differences include such items as keeping schedules, being on time for classes and meetings, deadlines for assignments and exams etc. This can cause problems and conflicts when one individual views time as strict and unchangeable and another as more flexible (Lewis, 2000).

### 1.2.5 CULTURAL AWARENESS

According to Kemp (2001), ones culture is seen as an important factor for the integration and unification of an institution’s actions and also a very powerful driver of this process. It is therefore important that the Swedish higher education system become more culturally aware and sensitive to the culturally diverse population that is driving their internationalisation shift. By doing this it will
ensure that the cultural diversity opportunities can be maximised and the difficulties can be minimised.

Becoming culturally aware is not necessarily an easy step but when it is achieved it does make the working environment much more attractive to everyone (Martin, 2006).

1.3 STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

1.3.1 SATISFACTION

Satisfaction links directly to this thesis because it is looking at finding ways of meeting the needs of the culturally diverse student base in order to remain attractive to them.

To find one definition of satisfaction is not as simple as the word itself. Satisfaction can and has been researched from a multitude of angles. For this thesis, however, the most relevant theory is the one founded by Frederick Herzberg. This is because in order to become more attractive to the students it does not necessarily mean that they are satisfied, they may simply be less dissatisfied.

Herzberg’s ‘hygiene-motivation’ theory proposes that there are two factors that contribute to one being either not dissatisfied (hygiene factors) or being satisfied (motivation factors). He also believed that there are dissatisfiers and satisfiers in any situation. The dissatisfiers are linked to the hygiene factors (policy, general management, student-superior relationship, working conditions) and the satisfiers are linked to the motivation factors (achievement, recognition, work/task satisfaction, responsibility, advancement and growth opportunities) (Gawal, 2003; Estrella, 2007; Prescott & Simpson, 2004). “An individual in the ‘zero midpoint’ of the dissatisfaction-satisfaction spectrum has no dissatisfaction due to good hygiene factors and no satisfaction due to lack of motivators” (Estrella, 2007, p. 15). It is the motivators that make an individual move up the spectrum towards being satisfied. In this thesis, the phrase ‘level of satisfaction’ will be utilised to reflect this dissatisfaction-satisfaction spectrum.

In the educational world, some of the hygiene factors that can be reviewed and adjusted to meet the basic needs and expectations of the students and lessen their dissatisfaction are; school policies, administration, supervision and classroom conditions (Estrella, 2007).

Student satisfaction can also be increased by incorporating motivation factors into the educational system (e.g.) “assigning challenging, meaningful tasks that students can take responsibility for; assigning tasks that necessitate the use of various skills and jobs; offering constructive feedback; recognition” (Estrella, 2007, p.15-16).

1.3.2 STUDENT SATISFACTION

To address student satisfaction, institutions need to look at the needs of their culturally diverse student base and make their education packages attractive to all the students that they wish to attract. In doing this, it will ensure that students firstly, choose to study at these institutions instead of another and secondly, enjoy their educational experience, complete their studies and subsequently act as an ambassador for the institution or programme.

If institutions can achieve this, their students will have an increased level of satisfaction and thus provide positive feedback to prospective students and potentially increase the number of students that may wish to participate in future programmes.

The decision and reason for a student to choose to study overseas instead of their home country is largely dependant on the student’s country of origin and its influences, along with the student’s
desire for a change and general career ambitions (Högskoleverket, 2005). A student that is interested in working abroad or in an international company can see the value of studying abroad, especially in relation to their ‘qualifications and the labour market benefits’ (Högskoleverket, 2005). According to Altbach (2004) and Verbik & Lasanowski (2007), when choosing ‘the right higher education institution’ for their studies most students identified the following as key items they look for in an institution. The student makes their choice based on two criteria; how many items on the list are met and, whether the items that are met are high on the students list of priorities.

1. Cost of studies and tuition fees
2. Cost of living
3. Immigration policies and visas – half working visa /half study visa
4. Social benefits (social infrastructure, professional education, social welfare, student scholarships)
5. Cultural and geographical proximity of the higher education institution to their home country.
6. Opportunity to work during studies (approx. 16 hours /week) and after graduation.
7. Programmes of exchange between the establishments
8. Transferability and recognition of the diploma between higher education facilities.
9. Quality of education
10. Teaching language, countries native language and opportunity to use language skills
11. Reputation of the institutions in the receiving country
12. Quality of life and cultural attraction
13. Presence of ethnic groups and existing network of support / foreign student associations
14. Gain international knowledge and experience and to create international networks

(Altbach, 2004; Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007)

In most of the items above there is a common thread, that being internationalisation or cultural attraction. It is here where the link between addressing a student’s cultural diversity needs to increase their level of satisfaction, and finding alternative ways of attracting them really stands out. If institutions can meet more of the needs identified on the list above they will attract more students to study at their institution instead of another.

According to the Högskoleverket (2005), the motive with the highest weighting is the ‘cost of studies’, which Swedish institutions currently have no issue meeting due to free tuition fees. However, in 2008 this advantage could be removed if fees are introduced to non EU students (Högskoleverket, 2005). Therefore institutions must look at how they can meet the other items listed. In this thesis, items 1- 6 will not be addressed as they are more national and thus regulated by the Högskoleverket and other governmental bodies. The focus will be on items 7-14, which are items that an institution can, to some degree, address or influence.

Högskoleverket (2005) identifies the next highest weightings as, the ‘value of their qualifications for future careers, language training and experience of other cultures and environments’. This also links directly to items 7-14 above.

This thesis will attempt to look at the different cultural groups present in the case study area to ascertain if this list is applicable to the different cultural groups and what is recommended to meet the needs that are applicable.
1.3.3 EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

The concept of employee satisfaction is important in this thesis because the employees are, in fact, the interface between the institution and the students. An employee’s level of satisfaction will be transferred into ‘how’ they deliver education and ‘how’ they interact with the students and is therefore significant. The relationship between employee and student satisfaction can be seen in Figure 1 below.

This model shows that there is a direct link between the level of satisfaction of an employee and the level of satisfaction of student. If an employee feels an increased level of satisfaction their “positive attitude will spill over into everything they do and everyone they come into contact with from the start of the day to the end, including the students, no matter what may happen” (National Business Research Institute, 2006). It shows that an employee’s satisfaction and ultimately their behaviour is driven and influenced by the root causes for it (i.e.) individual’s personal beliefs and value systems. This then impacts on the student’s satisfaction which ultimately drives the financial performance of that institution (Reed, 2007).

![Figure 1 – Employee satisfaction & student satisfaction link](Adapted from: Reed, 2007)

However, in order for the employees to have an increased level of satisfaction, the Swedish institutions need to be sensitive to the needs of the employees in relation to the rapid internationalisation changes that have directly affected them. These changes have meant that employee practices have had to be adapted and modified very rapidly to meet the needs of the new culturally diverse student base. The impact of these changes has not necessarily been a bad thing for the employees but whether the change is accepted or resisted by them has been dependant on how the employee processes the change. This has ultimately been reflected in their work practices and their interaction with students (Reed, 2007).

1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the Swedish higher education system can continue to attract culturally diverse students in an increasingly competitive global student market, and what is the impact of this on the students and employees.

To do this we need to question what makes an institution attractive to students and how institutions can meet these needs and become more culturally sensitive in their education delivery. We also
need to look at the role employees have in this and the institutions management practices. It is therefore the intention of this thesis to identify and evaluate what makes one higher education institute more attractive to students than another in relation to cultural diversity differences. This intention has given rise to the following Research Questions.

1. How can higher education institutions meet the needs of their culturally diverse student base?

2. What are the implications of this on the employees at the higher education institutions?

3. What are the institutional measures that can be introduced to meet the needs of the culturally diverse student base and its employees?
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

This thesis is an exploratory case study which will investigate how Swedish higher education institutions can continue to attract culturally diverse students in an increasingly competitive global student market by reviewing what makes a student choose one institution over another, that is, what makes an institution attractive to students.

To investigate this I have chosen the case study area of the Blekinge Tekniska Högskola (BTH), a technical university in the south of Sweden. The information will be collected from the School of Management (MAM). The reason behind this is two fold. Firstly, the students and employees are actually part of a real working environment and thus the data collected is more relevant to the question at hand. Secondly, as the author is a ‘native’ within MAM, that is both an international student and an employee, it gives the author a pre-understanding of the area in question. This allows for an informed assessment to be made as to the ‘best sources’ for information in order to enhance the chances of gaining the most varied and detailed information about internationalisation. It also exposes the author to information that may otherwise be unavailable to an outsider. Although this is of benefit it does not come without its risks. A potential disadvantage is that because the author is integrated into the area, it may be difficult to maintain a neutral view. However, in this thesis this will be controlled because the field notes, discussed further, will only be utilised as additional argumentation in relation to the other data collected.

As this case study is limited to only one department it is difficult to use it to make generalisations about the Swedish higher education system, however, it is possible that the information may be of interest and have some relevance to other Swedish higher education environments as well.

POPULATION

The target population is the BTH MAM Masters of Science in Business Administration (MScBA) students and the employees that have been directly impacted by internationalisation.

DATA COLLECTION

The data will be collected from primary and secondary sources. The sources will be varied and numerous, as the intention of this case study is to maximise the variation and capture the true essence of the internationalisation situation in the Swedish higher education system and at the BTH.

The primary data will be obtained from the following:-

- **2007 MScBA programme evaluation** - The evaluation contained both multiple choice questions and comments. This design was chosen to allow the students to answer freely and thus ensure maximum variety in the internationalisation information gathered (see Appendix # 4 for more detailed information).
- **Focus groups** - The focus groups were relatively unstructured with the only focus being to obtain internationalisation insight. Redirection was utilised if needed to keep the group focused. The focus groups were divided into female and male groups, so as to encourage more in depth and open discussion (see Appendix # 5 for more detailed information).
- **Field notes** - The field notes were undertaken at the BTH from January 2007 to October 2007. They consisted of observing and making notes on internationalisation issues that were raised by employees and students and therefore will remain anonymous. The field notes will be incorporated into the thesis as additional argumentation for the data presented via other forms. They will not stand alone.
The secondary data will be a multitude of literature and research collected from:

- International and national education documents.
- EU documents and policies.
- Geert Hofstede and other relevant cultural.
- Educational documents.

The data collected above will be utilised to answer the research questions identified in Chapter 1.

1. How can higher education institutions meet the needs of their culturally diverse student base?
   a. Determine what students are looking for when choosing the institution they wish to study at (their needs) by reviewing current relevant literature.
   b. Identify the majority contributors of the culturally diverse student base at the BTH by collating data from the Student databases (e.g.) VEGA and Ladok.
   c. Determine what the major contributors are looking for when choosing the institution they wish to study at (their needs) by reviewing current relevant literature and collating information collected via student evaluations and focus groups.
   d. Compare and analyse the information above to determine what needs need to be met by higher education institutions in relation to the majority contributors in the case study area.

2. What are the implications of this on the employees at the higher education institutions?
   a. Identify the link between the student’s needs being met and the implications on employees by reviewing current relevant literature.
   b. Identify what the possible implications of meeting the needs of the students are on the employees by reviewing current relevant literature and collecting field notes.

3. What are the institutional measures that can be introduced to meet the needs of the culturally diverse student base and its employees?
   a. Utilise the information from question 1 to complete a further literature review so as to determine if the needs identified by the students are well known and what, if anything, has been documented as being effective in meeting these needs.
   b. Utilise the information from question 2 to complete a further literature review to determine if the implications to the employees are well known and what, if anything, has been documented as being effective in management of these implications.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

- The research will not focus on every individual culture, as the scope for this would be too large, it will focus on the overall cultural differences. It will be refined according to the majority international student groups identified within the BTH MAM.
- The study will be confined to those individuals dealing directly with international students; this will include MAM employees and a mixture of Swedish and international students.
- The BTH MAM currently has two programmes that the international students can participate in, they are the campus based MScBA and the online Masters in Business Administration (MBA). For this thesis the MScBA has been chosen because it is campus based and thus the students and employees involved in the programme are easily accessible for data collection and the impacts from internationalisation can be observed directly as the students are actually present in Sweden and not studying via the internet in another country.
CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION

3.1 EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE

Educational systems differ from country to country for many different reasons. However, the most influential reason is how it is regulated by country’s own governmental bodies. These bodies make decisions about the type of educational system to be offered and how this should be done. This regulation impacts educational systems in the following ways:

- The way they are set up and run (e.g.) completely public, private or a mixture of the two.
- Their structural, organisational and institutional management.
- The way they are broken down into differing levels of education within the education systems themselves (e.g.) pre-school, lower school, higher education, post-graduate etc.

Although institutions have no control over these governmental regulations, they do have some control over how the education is to be delivered within those regulations. This is where the second significant difference comes into play. This difference is created by where the institutions are located in the different parts of the world. The way educational institutions choose to teach their students is based on how teachers expect their students to learn effectively, which is influenced by their national, organisational and professional culture. The list below highlights some of the key elements that can differ in education delivery throughout the world. These will all be integrated into the analysis and recommendations of this thesis, as each element fits into every Hofstede dimension (see 1.2.3) and also has a direct linkage with the difficulties identified in relation to cultural diversity (see 1.2.4).

- Extent to which they stress critical thinking vs. memorising facts *(c)
- How far they encourage students to be outspoken *(a)(b)(c)
- Swearing *(a)
- Time keeping *(c)
- Formality *(b)
- Eye contact *(a)
- Teamwork *(c)
- Degree of deference *(b)(c)
- Attitudes towards assessment and grading *(a)(b)

* Basic linkage to - Cultural diversity difficulties

(a) Communication
(b) Leadership
(c) Internal team (group) processes

3.2 HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Higher education systems were chosen for this thesis because they are particularly unique. At this level the students already have a certain level of qualifications and for the first time in their education, consciously make a choice whether or not to continue their studies. They also have the choice between an unprecedented number of local and international institutions in which to study. It is because of this that there has been an increasing global interest in investigating and controlling the impacts of internationalisation in higher education systems.

In 2005, the International Association of Universities (IAU) undertook a study on internationalisation, which was the ‘largest internationalisation study of its kind’ (Knight, 2006). They surveyed ‘Higher education facilities and national university associations from 95 countries’. This study identified that Universities pursue internationalisation for various reasons:

- Furthering cultural awareness.
- Improving academic quality.
- Enhancing an international reputation.
- Expanding the international knowledge of its students and faculty.
- Boosting their research capacity.

Other key points that came out of the study were:
- ‘International competitiveness is a higher priority for universities worldwide than international co-operation’ (Knight, 2006).
- ‘44% of those surveyed cited international competitiveness as the primary rationale for internationalisation and half of those surveyed listed competitively or strategic alliances as the prime mover of internationalisation’ (Knight, 2006).

3.3 **HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SWEDEN**

Higher education institutions in Sweden are regulated by the parliament and the government and as such, are considered a public authority. Higher education is currently provided by ‘14 universities, 22 state university colleges and 3 independent private institutions’ (Högskoleverket, 2005).

Over the last 15 years, because of some major structural, organisational and institutional changes within the Swedish higher education system, institutions have become relatively decentralised and autonomous and thus more accountable for their practices. They make decisions in regards to the allocation of their resources, how and what programmes/courses they will offer and their student admission process. These changes will be highlighted in 3.3.1.

Swedish higher institutions, as public authorities, receive the majority of their funding from the state. In 2005 the State provided 87% of the funding, 8% came from alternative public funding, and the last 5% came from non public funding sources (Högskoleverket, 2006). This funding is allocated based on a certain number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions for students within each programme. Figure 2 shows that in 2005, 31% of FTE was made up of the Social Sciences and within that, Business studies was seen to be the ‘largest single subject’ (Högskoleverket, 2006). This is important for this thesis as the case study falls within this realm.

![Figure 2 –2005 FTE allocation by field of study](Högskoleverket, 2006)

The FTE funding received by the institutions is based on the number of students registered and how the students have performed (Högskoleverket, 2005; Regeringskansliet, 2001). It is with these funds that the institutions pay for the services and facilities that they provide. If the Higher education institution does not fill the positions allocated they do not receive the funding and thus may not have enough to cover all the resources they currently have and need to acquire. This could
lead to employees being laid off, programmes and courses being dropped and in the worst case, closing of higher education institutions. Therefore it is extremely important that the funded positions are filled. To date, this has not been too hard for most institutions because of Sweden’s ability to use its competitive advantage to fill the unfilled places with international students. However, this may change when the competitive advantage is removed (Högskoleverket, 2005).

Swedish higher education does have other strengths in relation to internationalisation (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006). It is also attractive to foreign students because; 1) it is internationalised and 2) English is becoming a more common language of instruction. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), of all the ‘non native English OECD speaking countries’, there are only 4 countries that have many education programmes offered in English, and Sweden is one of them (Deamsteader, 2006). However, Sweden is not the only country that has both of these strengths, so they need to look at what else students are looking for when choosing a higher education institution to study at, as identified in 1.3.2.

Incoming students acknowledge that Sweden already meets some of their needs identified in 1.3.2. They feel that Sweden offers a high quality of living which is safe and clean, high quality courses and a community which they can communicate in English with (Demsteader, 2006). However, some of the demands that Sweden could look at addressing are: quality of education and reputation, the teaching language of the courses and establishing better networks and support which enhance the presence of ethnic groups (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006).

According to the Högskoleverket (2005), internationalisation is a medium to high priority (Knight, 2006). It is this priority that has lead to the many internationalisation changes outlined below.

### 3.3.1 INTERNATIONALISATION CHANGES TO SWEDISH HIGHER EDUCATION

#### 1993- DECENTRALISATION OF SWEDISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Swedish educational system was changed from being fully regulated by the Swedish Government to being some what less regulated. In this new approach the government ‘laid down certain goals and guidelines, predominantly of a financial nature’ for the institutions to follow but it encouraged decentralisation of some of the decision making processes to the institutions. As mentioned above these were: 1) allocation of their resources, 2) how and what programmes/courses will be offered 3) their student admission process. This made the higher education institutions more autonomous in the hope of encouraging increased efficiency by flexibility (Högskoleverket, 2006; Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006).

#### 1995 – SWEDEN JOINED THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

On the 1st January 1995, Sweden joined the EU. This opened up the doors to all of the EU countries and made Sweden a much easier place to enter to work and study. This was a significant turning point in the internationalisation of Sweden. It is also because of this that Sweden participated in the Bologna process, which has directly impacted on the Swedish higher education system.

#### 2001 – SWEDISH GOVERNMENT ANNUAL DIRECTIVE ISSUED ON MOBILITY

The Annual Directive issued by the Swedish Government (Regeringskansliet) in 2001 was directed at mobility. It stated that “the higher education institutions are to undertake active measures for internationalisation. These include both measures to raise international mobility and to increase the internationalisation of programmes offered to students on their own campuses” (Högskoleverket, 2005).
2003/2004 – HÖGSKOLEVERKET “INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SWEDEN” THEMATIC EVALUATION

Thematic Evaluations are carried out by the Högskoleverket ‘to provide a perspective on and information about how the higher education institutions work with certain aspects of quality’ (Högskoleverket, 2005). In 2003-2004 the Högskoleverket carried out an internationalisation review that ‘comprised of all the 36 state universities and university colleges and the three major independent higher education institutions.’ This thematic evaluation was released in 2005. In this evaluation the Högskoleverket (2005) acknowledges that the ‘Swedish Higher Education institutions are making impressive efforts to internationalise but also states that it hopes the work on internationalisation will have developed even further by the time they do their follow up evaluation in 3 years’. The evaluation also contained recommendations on how to improve higher education to maximise the benefits of internationalisation. An overview of the complete list can be seen in Appendix # 6.

2004 - BOLOGNA PROCESS

The Bologna process is an EU initiative whose aim is to standardise the EU educational system. Its intention is to have a ‘European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010, which will promote the European system of higher education worldwide’ (The Europe Unit, 2007). The process has been widespread and has involved higher education institutions and students throughout the EU in its development. According to the Europe Unit (2007), the main objectives of the Bologna process are to:

- “Remove obstacles to students and create academic mobility within Europe and from outside the EU. This increased mobility will bring with it increased career opportunities for students and teachers in the European employment market.”
- “Adopt a system based initially on two cycles, a Bachelor and a Master’s level. The third cycle will focus beyond these two cycles to include doctoral level qualifications. This will enable the promotion of closer links between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA).”
- “Develop a system of easily readable and comparable degrees for ease of qualification comparison across Europe. This flexibility and transparency will enable students and teachers to have their qualifications recognised more widely and facilitate movement throughout the EHEA.”
- “The establishment of a system of credits in the form of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the adoption of the Diploma Supplement by all countries involved aids the qualification comparison within the EU.”
- “Improve the quality of the Higher education in EU by agreeing on a set of guidelines that ensure a high standard of higher education across Europe. This will make the EHEA attractive on the international stage.”
- “Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning in Europe. Essential to help meet the challenges of increased competition in the global workplace, and the increased use of new technologies.”
- “Encourage institutions to develop courses and curricula with significant European content, increasing the European dimension of higher education. Institutions are encouraged to partake in partnership activities for curriculum development and to establish joint degrees between institutions in Europe.” (The Europe Unit, 2007)

These objectives were formalised into 10 action lines over three summits; Bologna (1999), Prague (2001) and Berlin (2003). (See Appendix #1)

The Bologna process was implemented at the BTH MAM in September 2007.
3.4 CASE STUDY: BLEKINGE TEKNISKA HÖGSKOLA SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

3.4.1 BLEKINGE TEKNISKA HÖGSKOLA (BTH)

The BTH opened in 1989 and is an institution that has been given the “right to award postgraduate degrees” (Högskoleverket, 2006). It is located in the South of Sweden, in a region called Blekinge, and it consists of 3 campuses; Karlskrona, Karlshamn and Ronneby. The School of Management is based at the Ronneby Campus.

The BTH collaborates with its community, which has been a mandatory requirement from the Högskolverket since 1997 (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006). This has influenced some of the operational measures that are in place and the dynamics of the work environment (Högskoleverket, 2005).

In 2005:-
- There were approximately 6900 individual students (3330FTE).
- 549 (8%) of the individual students were non Swedish.
- 21% of all students chose to study Social Sciences or Management.
- There were 491 employees.
- Over 30 nationalities were represented. (Persson, 2006; Persson, 2007)

In 2007:-
- There were 3200 FTE students at the BTH.
- 900 FTE were non Swedish students.
- Over 45 nationalities and all 5 continents were represented. (Engelmark, 2007b)

A more detailed representation of the growth in non Swedish students can be seen in Figure 3. It shows that there has been a steady increase in the number of international students studying at the BTH since 2005.

A more detailed representation of the growth in non Swedish students can be seen in Figure 3. It shows that there has been a steady increase in the number of international students studying at the BTH since 2005.

![Non Swedish students admitted to BTH](image)

Figure 3 – Non Swedish students admitted to BTH (Vega, 2007)

Listed below are a number of strategies and supports that the BTH currently has in place to manage the growing number of international students. These address some of the items identified by the students as ‘what they look for’ in 1.3.2, however, whether the level in which these are met is adequate is not specified and thus some of these may still need further development.

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• Free tuition fees.
• Guaranteed accommodation.
• Trains between the 3 campus cities are free during the academic year.
• 50 Erasmus agreements.
• Other exchange programmes (e.g.) Linnaeus – Palme, Nordtek
• Bilateral agreements with other universities in 7 countries.
• Transferability and recognition of diplomas between higher education facilities, created by the implementation of the Bologna process in Autumn 2007.
• 11 post-graduate programmes within Technology.
• 17 master’s programmes in English.
• International office and Student Union.
• Social activities for international students.
• Some information available in English.
• Prayer rooms.  

Although the information above is useful it is very general in relation to the effects of internationalisation at the BTH. In order to have a more detailed idea of how internationalisation has affected the BTH we will use the mobility index created by the Högskoleverket. The mobility index is the percentage of incoming students (number of students coming to Sweden to study) or outgoing students (Swedish students going abroad to study) studying in Sweden (Högskoleverket, 2007). Incoming and outgoing students each contain the following two groups, 1) exchange students and 2) free movers. Exchange students have their study at an international university arranged for them by the university, made possible because of partnership agreements between the universities. On the other hand, Free movers are students that arrange their own studies at international universities.


• The BTH had a mobility index of 14.6%, which was 6.3% above the Swedish average and the 5th highest in Sweden.
• The percentage of Incoming Students for Sweden was 6.5% and for the BTH 13.8%, 7.3% above the average and the 3rd highest incoming students in Sweden.
• The percentage of Outgoing Students for Sweden was 1.8% and for the BTH 0.9%, 0.9% below the average and 8th lowest outgoing students in Sweden.

3.4.2 BTH SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

BTH MAM offers Bachelor programmes, Masters programmes and free standing courses, however, currently only the Masters programmes and some free standing courses from within the Masters programmes are offered to international students. Thus, the Bachelor programmes will not be considered in this thesis and the free standing courses will be considered within the programmes themselves.

Within the School of Management there are two Masters level programmes offered to international students. The two programmes are the:-

1. Master of Science in Business Administration (MScBA) - Campus programme.
2. Masters in Business Administration (MBA) – Online programme

For this thesis the MScBA has been chosen for the reasons outlined previously in the Methodology chapter.

3 Free standing courses are courses that are also offered to students outside of the programme they are designed for.
3.5 INTERNATIONALISATION IMPACT ON STUDENTS IN SWEDEN AND THE BTH

3.5.1 STUDENT BASE CHANGES IN SWEDEN

Figure 4 below shows that there has been a ‘steady’ increase in the number of students in undergraduate studies (Autumn terms) from 1945 until the 1990’s, after which point there was a fairly rapid increase in the total numbers of students until 2005 (Högskoleverket, 2006).

The possible reasons behind the peaks and troughs in Figure 4 are outlined below:-

- **1965 - 1970’s** - There was a peak in the number of students. This can be linked to the democratisation of the education system that occurred at this time.
- **1989** - The BTH was founded.
- **1990’s** - The number of places available at Institutes was increased by the government, thus leading to an increase in student numbers by 80% (Regeringskansliet, 2001; Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006).
- **1993** - There was a steep increase in the number of students. This can be linked to the decentralisation of higher education.
- **1995** – On the 1st January Sweden joined the EU, followed by another peak in student numbers in 1996.
- **1997 - 2003** - resources were added to higher education to provide for another 100,000 places (Regeringskansliet, 2001).
- **1999** – Three new universities were established; Karlstad, Örebro and Växjö. The BTH was also “allocated a specific area of research, which gave them the right to run postgraduate studies within a limited field. This area was engineering” (Regeringskansliet, 2001, pp9).
- **2001** - BTH is granted the right to award MSc degrees (Persson, 2006).

According to the Högskoleverket annual universities and university colleges report (2006), along with this overall increase in student numbers over the past few years, there has been a decreasing number of Swedish students entering the Higher Education system. There are many possible reasons for this but the most frequently stated are that students are changing their preferences to study, deciding to partake in studies later in life or choosing to study abroad, either as an exchange student or as a free mover (Högskoleverket, 2006).
Since the 1990’s, Swedish students have been taking advantage of the opportunity to travel abroad in exchange programmes, placements, projects, study visits or for thesis work etc. The reasons behind this are twofold. Firstly, travel has been made viable because student financial assistance can now be used for this. Secondly, the introduction of exchange programmes, such as the Erasmus programme in 1992. From 1992 – 1997, the number of outgoing students has increased threefold through the Erasmus programme (Regeringskansliet, 2001).

“As the number of places in higher education rises and the number of Swedish students entering decreases, the recruitment of students from outside the traditional social groups to fill the vacant places has become more important (e.g.) from international students. This broader recruitment also places greater demands on the development of the staff” (Regeringskansliet, 2001, p. 12), which will be discussed in 3.6.

### 3.5.2 INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE STUDENT BASE IN SWEDEN

The Swedish higher education system is now much more heterogeneous, being made up of both Swedish and an increasing number of foreign students from both the EU and non-EU, as can be seen in figure 5.

![Outgoing and Incoming Students in Sweden](Högskoleverket, 2007)

Figure 5 shows that from 1997 to 2006 the number of outgoing students has remained relatively steady, while the incoming students have steadily increased. Over the last 8 years the number of incoming students has increased annually by 14%, nearly doubling the number of incoming students since 1997. More specifically, between the years of ‘2004/05, 23,000 people from abroad studied at Swedish institutions, accounting for 1 in 17 students (Högskoleverket, 2006).

According to the Högskoleverket (2006), since the 1990’s there has been a worldwide increase in interest to study in Sweden, especially from the Asian countries (e.g.) in 1997 there were only 14 students from India studying in Sweden but in 2004/05 there were 926 students. Indian students are now being classed as the second largest group of international students within the Swedish higher education system (Högskoleverket, 2006).

**Incoming students:**

- *Exchange students* - In 2004/05, there were 10,000 exchange students studying in Sweden. Of these, 8/10 were from Europe and 1/10 were from North America. The main
contributing countries were Germany, Spain, France, Finland and the US (Högskoleverket, 2006).

- **Free movers** - In 2004/05 there were 13,000 free movers who were studying a course or programme in Sweden. The main contributing countries were Finland, India, China, Norway and Pakistan (Högskoleverket, 2006).

Thus in relation to the *incoming students* for Sweden the major contributors are:- Germany, Spain, France, Finland, US, India, China, Norway and Pakistan.

According to Högskoleverket (2006), of those incoming students studying in Sweden, 34.8% chose to study social sciences, business or law. The next largest area was the technology field.

This highlights a significant change to the student base, created by internationalisation, and the need for it to be included in long term planning.

### 3.5.3 INTERNATIONALISATION OF MScBA STUDENT BASE

The major contributors for the BTH case study area will now be identified to ascertain if they are the same as for Sweden and if not, what the significance is. The impact of internationalisation on the MScBA programme can be seen in Figure 6.

![Figure 6 - Percentage of Swedish & Non-Swedish students in the MScBA](Ladok, 2007)

Figure 6 highlights a dramatic internationalisation change to the MScBA student base over the last 7 years. In 1999 the programme consisted of 100% Swedish students. From 1999 to 2004 there was a steady increase in Non Swedish students and a steady decrease in Swedish students until 2004-2005 when the mix of Swedish to Non Swedish students reversed. The increase in Non Swedish students and the decrease in Swedish students continued until by 2006 there was nearly 100% Non Swedish students.

If the Swedish higher education system remains unchanged, the increasing number of Non Swedish students within the MScBA would be unlikely to change, even if more Swedish students joined the programme. However, if fees are introduced for non EU students this will affect the number of *free mover* non EU students entering the MScBA programme. The number of *exchange students* should
not alter. The issue for the MScBA programme is that if its major international contributors fall into the free mover non EU student category, then it must look at how it will continue to attract Swedish and non Swedish students (EU and non EU) to fill its programme.

To assess the true impact of this on the MScBA we need to firstly identify whether the countries that the non Swedish students are coming from are part of the EU and secondly, if the students are free movers or exchange students. Please note, for ease of analysis and comparison with Hofstede’s dimensions later, the countries have been grouped into continental regions.

Figure 7 identifies the continental regions that have contributed to the non Swedish component of the MScBA student base for 2004 - 2006. This period was chosen specifically because this is where the significant change in the mix between Swedish and Non Swedish students occurred in Figure 6.

Figure 7 shows the MScBA major continental region contributors are:-

- South Asia * India, Bangladesh & Pakistan
- East Asia * China
- West Africa * Cameroon, Gambia & Nigeria

* Countries that contributed to these continental region statistics.

Of these three major contributors none are part of the EU and only a few of the East Asian students in 2006 were exchange students, all the rest were free movers.

What is also interesting to note is that the only EU country that has consistently had the same percentage of students entering the MScBA each year, although it is not a major contributor, was Finland (Northern Europe).
This finding is significant because it means that the introduction of fees to non EU students could have serious ramifications for the MScBA programme. The MScBA must now look at other ways of attracting these students and this is where addressing the items on the list in 1.3.2 could be beneficial.

The benefit of doing so can be seen in the results from the MScBA 2006/07 programme evaluations (Appendix # 4) and MScBA 2006/07 student focus groups (Appendix # 5). In these results, the MScBA student’s answers appear to directly relate to the items identified in list in 1.3.2. They also directly link to the difficulties of having culturally diverse environments, identified in 1.2.4.

The focus groups and programme evaluations identified the following as ‘positives’ in relation to Swedish education.

- Free education.
- Degree is highly regarded because it is from a European university.
- University environment is very conducive to studies.
- MScBA programme is very international in content.
- Teacher to student rapport mostly very good.
- Class sizes (30-80 students)
- Student friendly environment.
- Knowledgeable teachers.
- Flexibility to choose courses.
- Education taught in English.
- Swedish people can communicate in English.
- Opportunity to meet interesting people from all over the world.
- International office arranging some social activities.

However, they also highlighted a number of areas where they felt improvements could be made, such as:-

**Provision of information (prior or during stay)**
- Personal number needed - not able to truly integrate into Sweden without one.
- Visa extension possibilities and difficulties.
- Accommodation – communal living, multi-gender, multicultural, noise factor.
- What can be expected from the institution and teachers at the BTH.
- What is required of the students when studying at the BTH and in Sweden.

**Support**
- Students Union should assist the international students to settle in both initially and during their stay.
- Emails should be sent to students in English as well.

**Integration assistance**
- Would like more Swedish students in their classes.
- More social activities with Swedish people.
- Cultural education to help students to integrate into the Swedish community.

**Grading**
- Students should be made aware that absolute grading is used not relative grading as this is important for their home countries.

**Graduation ceremony & display certificate**

**Unpaid internships in local companies**
3.6 INTERNATIONALISATION IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES IN SWEDEN

The employee base has changed as well. It too is much more heterogeneous, being made up of both Swedish and an increasing number of foreign employees. This change in the employee base has resulted from the need to fill some of the vacancies that have been created by the expansion of the Swedish higher education system. The employee base change has come from two directions; immigration and the recruitment of non Swedish employees.

Immigrants have joined the employee base as follows; 1) as the children of immigrants who entered Sweden many years ago who are now old enough to enter the workforce and 2) as new immigrants. According to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (2006) 16% of the Swedish population is now made up of immigrants from foreign backgrounds.

The other direction from which the vacancies are being filled is by the recruitment of non Swedish employee’s.

The impact of the Swedish higher education expansion on the employees can be seen directly in the statistics from the OECD thematic review of tertiary education 2006. In these statistics it shows that since 1985 in Sweden the number of employees, including doctoral students, has risen by more than 60% (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006). To identify just how much of this 60% falls into either the non Swedish or immigrant category has been more difficult (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2006; Högskoleverket, 2006; Högskoleverket, 2007). However, as both categories have joined the employee base to fill some of the vacancies that have been created by the expansion of the Swedish higher education system, they will be looked at in a combined manner from this point onwards and will be referred to as the ‘international component’.

According to the Statistiska Centralbyrån (2007), for 2003 – 2005 the international component has been consistently around 18%.

The impact on employees is two fold. Firstly, as a by product of the increased recruitment of students from the international market there has been a need created for the institutions, and the employees within them, to change some of their practices to cater for the new culturally diverse student base (Regeringskansliet, 2001). This has created a huge developmental demand on the employees, as they have had to become more culturally sensitive in their education delivery.

Secondly, the internationalisation changes to the Swedish higher education institutions, outlined in 3.3.1, directly impact on the institutions and thus its employees. Over the last decade there has been an increasing amount of importance placed on internationalisation and its effects. This has lead to institutions and its employees being pressured into modifying, adapting or changing some of their practices to accommodate the international aspect and to come in line with the changing higher education system. However, the level at which this occurs at the 39 different institutions in Sweden is variable (Högskoleverket, 2005).

In educational environments such as this, where there are large rapid internationalisation changes that impact on the institutions and its employees along with changes to the student and employee bases, it is easy to see how things can get ‘lost in translation’. It is therefore really important to look at these things closely to make sure that changes are made smoothly and without to much resistance. In order to do this we must look at the needs of our students and employees, and try to marry some of them together and come to a compromise with others.

In order to truly address the impact of internationalisation on the Swedish higher education system we must look at the different cultures that are now in the system and the cultural diversity that they bring to the mix. Only then can we understand how countries and their cultures differ from Sweden
and assess whether these ‘differences are significant’ enough to warrant accommodation for them in the Swedish higher education institutions practices (G Martin, 2006).
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

4.1 HÖGSKOLEVERKET INTERNATIONALISATION COMPARISON

When comparing the data in 3.5.3 Figure 7 against the Högskoleverket (2006) data in 3.5.2, it would appear that apart from West Africa they are the same. Both East Asia and South Asia are noted as major continental contributors for Sweden and the MScBA. However, when you break down the South Asia region further and look at the countries that contributed the most you notice a significant difference. Sweden also has a larger contribution from the EU and developed countries.

The differences between the Sweden and MScBA statistics are as follows:-

- **South Asia** – In this continental region the MScBA data identifies Pakistan as the major contributor and in the Swedish data it is India. The significant difference is that India is one of the oldest countries in the world and is considered to be a newly industrialised country, whereas, Pakistan is a young country, having only gained their independence from British India in 1947, and is still considered a developing country.

- **West Africa** – The MScBA data identifies this continental region as a major contributor, however, in the Swedish data it is not. West Africa is also considered a developing country.

- **North America** – The MScBA does not identify this continental region as a major contributor but it can be seen that it has contributed consistently each year. On the other hand, it is considered one of Sweden’s major contributors.

- **Europe** – Sweden’s major contributors tend to be from the older developed countries in Europe (e.g.) Germany, France, Norway and Finland. The only correlation with MScBA data is Finland. (Hofstede, 1993; Geographic.com, 2002)

This presents a problem as the information available on Internationalisation in the Swedish Higher education system and how to manage it, has mainly come from the Högskoleverket (Högskoleverket, 2006). Most of this has been based on EU countries and non EU continental regions and countries that differ from the MScBA. It is therefore the intention of this thesis to use this case study to:-

1) Identify the specific needs of the MScBA major contributors in relation to their national culture.

2) Compare the list in 1.3.2 (what students are looking for when choosing where to study) against the MScBA major contributors’ needs to ascertain if the items on the list are impacted by the cultural needs of the specific MScBA groups.

3) Determine if the BTH currently meets the needs of its students in relation to the list in 1.3.2 and if not, make recommendations on how to meet this based on Best Practice.

4.2 NATIONAL CULTURE ANALYSIS ACCORDING TO HOFSTEDE’S DIMENSIONS

Figure 8 & Table 1 are based on data collated from Hofstede (2003) & (2005). They are designed to give a comparison of the cultural differences & similarities of the MScBA major contributors using Hofstede’s dimensions.

In these two figures, South Asia has been divided into its countries; India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This is because the dimension rankings largely differed between these countries and thus to leave it as a continental region would not paint a true picture of their cultural needs. These differences can be linked back to the age of these countries, their reasons for their independence, economic development level and their religion (Geographic.com, 2002).
Continental Region comparison using Hofstede’s dimensions

Figure 8 – Continental region comparison using Hofstede’s dimensions (Hofstede, 2003)

Table 1 – Hofstede’s dimensions for Sweden, East Asia, South Asia & West Africa (Hofstede, 2005)
In Table 1 Sweden’s dimension rankings and those that match Sweden have been highlighted in red for ease of comparison. It can be seen in Table 1 that none of the three continental regions match Sweden’s dimensions entirely. Each region has one to three dimensions that match a Swedish dimension (e.g.) West Africa has 3 out of 5 dimensions matching Sweden’s; Bangladesh has 2 out of 5 and India, Pakistan & East Asia have 1 out of 5. However, when determining how similar or different two cultures may be these matches may or may not be significant. Similarities or differences between cultures actually depends more on the combination of the dimensions and how that compares to another culture. In this case, how the three region’s dimension combinations compare to Sweden’s (Hofstede, 2003). To look at the effects of the combinations Hofstede created ‘maps’ that consist of mapping two dimensions against each other. The most relevant maps will be utilised for the comparative analysis below.

4.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THESE NATIONAL CULTURES IN RELATION TO EDUCATION DELIVERY, STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

There are two main ways of addressing the above data. They are based on ‘whether one believes that countries are similar (convergent) or dissimilar (divergent) to their own national cultures. In this thesis the belief is more towards the divergent angle, that is, “that the differences between national cultures and institutions have remained relatively unmarked and consistent over time” (Martin, 2006, p.161).

Based on the divergent angle and the breakdown of Sweden and the cultural regions within the MScBA programme according to Hofstede’s dimensions, a generalised comparison of the similarities and differences between Sweden and the regions will now be completed. All the dimension differences will be analysed to ascertain if they are significant enough to impact on the attraction of these students to the MScBA programme. If the differences are significant then there may be a need to change some of the practices at the School of Management (MAM) to accommodate for this cultural diversity (Martin, 2006). However, to what extent this accommodation should occur is dependant on maintaining attractiveness to the Swedish students as well. This decision can only be made by MAM itself and thus it is my intention to outline what ‘could’, not ‘should’, be done to meet the culturally diverse needs of the students in order to continue to attract students to study with MAM.

It is important to note that the following analysis will not try to fit each and every individual into one cultural mould, rather it will give an overview of the differences between the cultures based on Hofstede’s findings, in an attempt to raise a generalised understanding of the cultural differences that may be encountered in the case study area.

The first two dimensions, Power distance (PD) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), are strongly related to organisational structures. This is because in order to structure something one must always answer the following: - “1)Who has the power to decide what? (PD) and 2)What rules or procedures will be followed to attain the desired ends (UA)” (Hofstede, 2005, p. 242). The next two dimensions, Individualism and Masculinity, are related to the “way we think about people in organisations, rather than the organisations themselves” (Hofstede, 2005, p. 242) and the final dimension, long term orientation, is related to time.

NB. An overview of each the individual continental regions, in relation to Hofstede’s dimensions, is available in Appendix # 2.
4.3.1 **POWER DISTANCE AND UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE**

**POWER DISTANCE (PD)**

South Asia, East Asia and West Africa differ from Sweden as they are at different ends of the Power distance (PD) spectrum. Sweden has a low PD and South Asia, East Asia and West Africa have a high PD. This may lead to clashes in opinions, negative attitudes towards each other and a decreasing output from the students and employees for some of the following reasons.

In South Asia, East Asia and West Africa significant distance and respect is expected to be given to teachers because they are seen as ‘gurus’ rather than just imparters of knowledge (Hofstede, 2005). They expect the teacher to take all of the initiative in class and that their quality of education lies solely with the teacher not on themselves (Hofstede, 2005). In Sweden, however, everyone is considered equal and thus students are expected to treat teachers as equals and show initiative in class. There learning is expected to be a result of two way communication between the teacher and student (Hofstede, 2005). This difference in expectation can result in frustration and dissatisfaction on both sides and may lead to the South Asia, East Asia and West Africa students being seen as:-

- Accepting everything the teacher says and therefore not participating or showing interest in class by asking questions.
- Memorising what the teacher says rather than critically thinking about it.
- Always asking for guidance instead of initiating tasks on their own.
- Having not applied themselves if they don’t pass because the student didn’t let the teacher know they were having problems (Hofstede, 2005; Laroche, 2003)

On the other hand, the students from these three countries may see the Swedish employees as ‘uninterested in their work, elusive or technically incompetent’ because they do not give them the details and guidance they expect (Laroche, 2003) (Appendix # 4).

South Asia, East Asia and West Africa expect to formally greet a superior, avoid eye contact and only address a superior when speaking (Laroche, 2003). In Sweden the hierarchy and power of a superior is often ‘played down’ and thus this is not expected. This difference often leads to confusion because teachers may feel that students do not know the answer to their question, do not understand or are being dishonest, when they are simply being humble towards them (Ethnicity online, 2005)

**UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE (UA)**

Pakistan is the only country that differs to Sweden. Sweden has a low UA and Pakistan has a high UA. Sweden’s low UA leads to an educational environment that does not like too much structure. It likes ‘open ended learning situations where there are good discussions, vague objectives and broad assignments. There is usually not one correct answer and a student’s originality is often rewarded. The teachers are not expected to know all the answers and are respected for saying ‘I don’t know’ and therefore “intellectual disagreement in academic matters” is considered stimulating rather than an act of disrespect’ (Hofstede, 2005, p. 179). A student’s results are also attributed to their own ability (Hofstede, 2005; Martin, 2006). Pakistan, on the other hand, ‘favour structured learning situations with precise objectives, detailed assignments and strict timetables. They expect there to be one correct answer to find and to be rewarded for their accuracy. Teachers are considered experts who have all the answers and thus intellectual academic disagreement is considered as disloyalty. A student’s results are attributed to circumstances or luck’ (Hofstede, 2005; Hofstede, 1997).

It is because of this that Sweden is often seen as an ‘easy going’ culture. This creates problems for Pakistani students who come to Sweden to study because at the higher education level the students generally have a large amount of uncertainty. The students have a large amount of freedom in there
choice of studies and often the courses within it; and are encouraged to show initiative and to take responsibility for their studies. This freedom and independence often leads to the Pakistani students feeling very uncertain and in need of guidance and assistance. This is evident by the following comments collected from the case study area; ‘students often need to meet individually with teachers etc. frequently’, ‘students are very persistent when it comes to having everything registered and visible immediately’, and ‘repeatedly contacting staff, or a number of staff at once, to clarify their concerns’.

**POWER DISTANCE AND UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE CONNECTION (MAP)**

Figure 9, in one of the most relevant maps for this thesis. It “explains the relationship between national culture and organisational structures” (Martin, 2006, p.180)

![Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance Connection Map](image)

According to Figure 9, *Sweden* falls into the category of ‘Village market’ (low PD, low UA). This category favours a “more flexible, decentralised, organic organisation that is less bound by rules and procedures” (Martin, 2006, p.180). *India, China, Bangladesh & West Africa* fall into the ‘Family’ category (high PD, low UA), which is based on “centralised personal leadership rather than on routines and rules” (Martin, 2006, p.180) and *Pakistan* falls into the ‘Pyramid of People’ category (high PD, high UA) which favours “bureaucratic or mechanistic organisational structures” (Martin, 2006, p.180).

The Swedish approach is compatible with the students from India, China, Bangladesh and West Africa, the only difference being that they expect to have more centralised leadership. However, for Pakistan the Swedish way goes against what they expect. They need to have routines and rules to follow.

Pakistan is the only country in the study that has both a high PD and UA. These two dimensions are also the highest ranking dimensions for Pakistan. This is significant because it means that these two dimensions dominate the other dimensions. This type of culture values rule makers and thus expect their superior to have the ultimate power, make all the decisions and direct them accordingly. Their environment should also be structured and governed by rules and regulations (Hofstede, 2003), which is the complete opposite of Sweden.
4.3.2 INDIVIDUALISM (I) VS. COLLECTIVISM (C)

In comparison to Sweden all of the other regions are at the opposite end of the Individualism spectrum. Sweden, with its high I, is considered to be Individualistic and South Asia, East Asia and West Africa with their low I, are considered as collectivists.

In Sweden it can be said that individuality is an integral part of the Swedish daily living (Hofstede, 2003). It is this that can cause problems for South Asia, East Asia and West Africa when they come to Sweden. These regions are collectivists, which means that they like to form strong, close ‘groups’ that provide protection in exchange for loyalty. In collectivist cultures loyalty to the collective group is paramount (Hofstede, 2005). As privacy is not rated highly and integration is usually welcomed within their ‘groups’ they often try to integrate into groups when they arrive, which is often not received well by the Swedish (Hofstede, 2003). This is not because the Swedish are unfriendly, it is because they value their privacy and usually limit their groups to close family and friends (Hofstede, 2005). They believe that one day they will ‘stand on their own feet’ and therefore have little need to establish groups for protection. Swedish people also value individual pride and respect very highly and degrading a person is not well received, accepted, or appreciated. However, these values are not held that highly in collectivist cultures and degrading a person is often looked past (Hofstede, 1993; Hofstede, 2003).

In educational settings, students from collectivist cultures “speak up in class only when sanctioned by the group” (Hofstede, 2005, p.104) and if ‘placed in large groups, with people that are not part of their group, they may not speak at all’. The purpose of education to collectivists is “learning how to do” (Hofstede, 2005, p.104). This is the opposite of Sweden, where students are ‘encouraged to speak up in class and believe that education is there to teach them “how to learn”’ (Hofstede, 2005, p.104). Students from collectivist cultures also put a great deal of “weighting on their degree giving them entry into higher status groups” (Hofstede, 2005, p.104) whereas, in individualistic cultures the degree is seen as an increase to their “economic worth and self respect” (Hofstede, 2005, p.104).

**POWER DISTANCE AND INDIVIDUALISM CONNECTION (MAP)**

![Power Distance and Individualism Connection Map](image)

Figure 10 - Hofstede’s map of Power Distance and Individualism (Hofstede, 2005)
According to Hofstede (2005), PD and I are negatively correlated. That is, the higher the PD the lower the I. This can be seen in Figure 10. Hofstede (2005) states that ‘cultures that are more dependant on ‘groups’ usually are also dependant on power figures’.

As both high PD and collectivism cultures expect that students only speak when asked too, having both of these dimensions present, like South Asia, East Asia and West Africa, makes this a very strong and likely unalterable trait in these cultures. Thus, this may be an area where accommodation needs to be made.

**UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE AND INDIVIDUALISM CONNECTION (MAP)**

![Map of Uncertainty Avoidance and Individualism](image)

In Figure 11 Sweden’s low UA & high I gives rise to a culture that’s “majority will support integration of minorities and equal rights for all. They are tolerant of different ethnicities, are positive or neutral towards foreigners and show a defensive nationalism” (Hofstede, 2005, p.203).

East Asia, India, Bangladesh and West Africa also have low UA, but have low I. They are likely to find a way to ‘tolerate different groups and complement the strong group identities within it’ (Hofstede, 2005). Sweden, East Asia, India, Bangladesh and West Africa therefore are all cultures that are seen to be ‘tolerant of different ethnicities, are either positive or neutral towards foreigners and display defensive nationalism’ (Hofstede, 2005).

Pakistan on the other hand has high UA & low I. This gives rise to a culture where “rules are implicit and rooted in tradition. They often attempt to eliminate inter-group conflict by denying it and by trying to assimilate or repress minorities” (Hofstede, 2005, p.196). In this culture there is more “ethnic prejudice, xenophobia, and aggressive nationalism” (Hofstede, 2005, p.203).

**4.3.3 MASCLINITY (M) VS. FEMININITY (F)**

West Africa is the only country that is Feminine like Sweden. South Asia and East Asia are at the opposite end of the spectrum, that is, masculine.

As Sweden & West Africa are ‘feminine’ cultures it means that they are ‘openly concerned with modesty, caring and the quality of life’ (Hofstede, 1997; Martin, 2006) and because of this they do
not have a gap between the values of men and women. That is, females and males are treated more equally. The education systems in these feminine cultures consider the ‘average student to be the norm and it is the weaker students that are praised in order to encourage them to achieve, although failing is not considered to be a major disaster’. In these cultures there is some ‘jealousy towards those who try to excel’, so students generally try to “underrate their performance and thus awards for excellence are not popular” (Hofstede, 2005, p.136). In this culture aggression is not accepted (Hofstede, 2005).

This is not the case for the masculine cultures which ‘value assertiveness, competitiveness, achievement, winning and money’ (Hofstede, 1997; Martin, 2006). In these cultures there is often differentiation between the genders and females are not treated equally. It can also be ‘indicative of a more competitive and assertive female population, although it is still less than the male population’ (Hofstede, 2003). In Masculine cultures the ‘best student is considered the norm and it is the excellent students that are praised, thus encouraging competition in class. Failure is considered a disaster and thus students tend to overrate their performance’ (Hofstede, 2005). In these cultures aggression is acceptable (Hofstede, 2005).

This difference can present a problem when students from a masculine culture come to study in Sweden. They may have trouble taking direction from female teachers or administrative staff, and can be seen to be ‘disrespectful’, as noted from the field notes. They may be seen as aggressive because of their direct approach and their competitive achievement orientated nature, which is often not well received by the modest Swedes who follow the principle of ‘Lagom’.  

**UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE AND MASCULINITY CONNECTION (MAP)**

Figure 12, is an interesting map because its combination of UA & M relate to motivational patterns. This linkage was suggested by Hofstede (2005) when he compared the IBM surveys against the work of McClelland. It revealed that the “need for achievement strongly correlated to low UA and even stronger with high M and low UA” (Hofstede, 2005, p.187). From this comparison with McClelland, Hofstede (2005) identified some motivators of the different cultural combinations; the relevant ones will be discussed below.

![Figure 12- Hofstede’s map of Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity (Hofstede, 2005)](image_url)

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4 Lagom is defined as "enough, sufficient, adequate, just right" (Lexin, 2007).
Sweden & West Africa both have low UA & low M which means that there strongest motivators are ‘achievement and belonging’ (Hofstede, 2005). East Asia, India and Bangladesh have ‘achievement of self or group and esteem’ as their strongest motivators and in Pakistan it is ‘esteem, safety and security’ that rates the strongest (Hofstede, 2005).

East Asia, India and Bangladesh are similar to Sweden in that achievement is a common motivator however; they are also similar to Pakistan, with esteem also a strong motivator. Pakistan, on the other hand, does not have similar strong motivators to Sweden.

**INDIVIDUALISM AND Masculinity CONNECTION (MAP)**

![Hofstede's map of Individualism and Masculinity](image)

In figure 13, Sweden’s high I & low M has created a culture where well-being of each individual is the main focus. In West Africa (low I, low M) well-being of the group is the main focus. In East Asia & South Asia (low I, high M) survival and group ego/success are the main focus (Hofstede, 2005).

Sweden and West Africa both have a main focus on well being which makes them compatible, even though Sweden’s focus is on the individual and West Africa on groups. East Asia & South Asia, on the other hand, with their focus on survival and group ego/success are less compatible. What is interesting to note is that students from Masculine (M) cultures do not behave as would be expected when these two dimensions are combined. M students usually try to make themselves visible in class or compete openly with each other, however, when M is combined with Collectivism(C), the C puts a limit to it (Hofstede, 2005).

**4.3.4 LONG TERM ORIENTATION (LT) VS. SHORT TERM ORIENTATION (ST)**

Sweden, Bangladesh, Pakistan and West Africa all have short term orientation. India and East Asia are at the opposite end of the spectrum and have long term orientation.

Sweden, Bangladesh, Pakistan and West Africa have ‘respect for traditions and believe that important events occur in the past or present’ and thus place a high value on protecting ones ‘face’, fulfilling social obligations and overcoming obstacles quickly in addition to gaining quick results
(Hofstede, 2003; Hofstede, 2001). This is different from India or East Asia who place a higher importance on the future and thus their values centre on perseverance and “overcoming obstacles with time, if not with will and strength” (Hofstede, 2003; Hofstede, 1997). Students in these cultures often will receive gifts for their education and development not for fun and believe that success is attributed to the effort you put in (Hofstede, 2005).

This dimension does not generally cause a problem in the Swedish system because all of the cultures either have the same orientation or the ones that don’t are often seen to have a very strong ‘drive to do well’ and thus ‘very persistent’ when it comes to their studies and meeting deadlines, as observed from the field.

4.3.5 CULTURAL DIFFERENCE SUMMARY

The differences identified above between the major contributors of the MScBA programme and Sweden resulted in the following ranking. The rankings are from the region with the least differences to Sweden to the most. For a detailed list of the differences see Appendix #3.

1. West Africa
2. East Asia, India and Bangladesh (equal second)
3. Pakistan

In 4.2 the dimension rankings of the continental regions in comparison to Sweden were first established and placed in Table 1. In this table, West Africa was identified as having the most dimensions (3 out of 5) similar to Sweden. It was however noted at that point that similarities or differences between cultures is actually more dependant on the combination of the dimensions and how that compares to another culture, thus the comparative analysis above. As West Africa ranked both the highest in Table 1 and the comparative analysis if would seem that the dimensions in common must be significant in this thesis between West Africa and Sweden. However, that is where Table 1’s ranking ceases to be similar. Bangladesh which was the next similar to Sweden in Table 1, having 2 out of 5 dimensions, ranked equal in the comparative analysis to India & East Asia, which only had 1 out of 5 similar. Pakistan rated the least similar in the comparative analysis, but was equal to India & East Asia in table 1 with 1 out of 5 similar. This reaffirms that the dimensions are not independent of each other and in order to truly assess the impact of different cultures on the MScBA there must be a comparative analysis done so as to determine the particular needs of the students and thereby, what is needed to meet these needs. The recommendations below are based on the differences identified in the comparative analysis against the list in 1.3.2 and Best Practices.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has highlighted that internationalisation of higher education system’s is a global phenomena that has created fierce competition between the higher education systems for students, either in quality or quantity. The current generation of international students have a huge number of countries and institutions to choose from and because of this they are making themselves more aware of what each country and institution has to offer. Students are now, more than ever, choosing where to study based on their own needs and how many of them are met. It has therefore become a necessity for institutions to look at ways in which they can be more attractive to these students in comparison to other institutions so as to ensure that the student chooses to study at their institution. To do this, institutions must look at the needs of its culturally diverse students, that is, become more culturally aware and sensitive to them.

To address the international students’ needs one can look at their needs in relation to their national culture and then compare it to what the Swedish higher education system offers, which is what was done in this thesis. What was found was that the extent to which institutions change their practices depends on whether the differences are significant enough. This is because the educational system also needs to remain attractive to the Swedish students. If the differences are however significant, then consideration needs to be made as to how much the Swedish practices should be adapted to accommodate for the culturally diverse needs of the international students in an attempt to become more attractive to them (Martin, 2006). This is a decision that needs to be made by each individual institution. One example of an area where modification may be needed is within the education packages that are offered. The Swedish higher education institutions could review these in relation to the culturally diverse needs of their students, thus making them more suitable and thus attractive to both the Swedish and Non Swedish students.

Internationalisation and thus cultural diversity should not be seen as a problem but rather as an asset that can be used to increase competitiveness (Richardson, 2004). This may seem simple but the reality is that many attempts at internationalisation do not end up in a positive way. For example, if Swedish institutions fail to recognise that the Non Swedish students have differing values and beliefs and thus differing needs, and continue to follow their own values and practices without considering the needs of the Non Swedish culture it can lead to negative feelings and an increase in dissatisfaction (Martin, 2006). It is therefore important that the Swedish institutions take into account the ‘cultural and psychological differences between their cultural values and practices and the Non Swedish cultures’ (Martin, 2006). If they can do this, then the Non Swedish student’s needs can be potentially met, leading to an increase in the student’s level of satisfaction and the institutions attractiveness. This is important because these students will act as ambassadors for the institution when they leave thus helping to build the ‘reputation of the institution in the receiving country’.

It is important to mention that although this thesis has focused on what can be done by the institutions in order to continue to attract students it by no means suggests that the students have no responsibility in this. Research has indicated that equal responsibility lies with the students as well. However, for this thesis this was not the focus and thus will not be developed further, but it does open a door for further study.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

HOW CAN THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS MEET THE NEEDS OF THEIR CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENT BASE?

The research showed that there is a general list of needs that students look for when choosing a place to study and if this list is taken into consideration and strategies implemented to meet some of the needs, then the students will be more attracted to that institution and thus chose it over another. Therefore, this list was the first key to identifying ‘how’ we can meet the needs of our culturally diverse student base. The second key was identifying what the actual ‘needs’ of the culturally diverse students were using a case study area.

In the case study area there were three main majority cultural regions contributing to the student base. On investigation and analysis of the cultural needs of these regions the following was identified:-

- The regions all differ from Sweden, some greater than others.
- The differences are many or extreme in some cases but manageable if strategies are put in place to deal with the cultural diversity issues.
- Some of the regions do not require a great deal of modification in order to meet their needs.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ON THE EMPLOYEES AT THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS?

The research identified that the implications for employees of having a culturally diverse student base are:-

- Change in practices
  - Teaching practice - more international in content, offered in English, differing classroom dynamics, timetabling considerations for some cultures etc.
  - Administration – international considerations, offered in English, guidelines on Sweden, Blekinge and the BTH, instructions on how to use internal systems, etc.
- Policies – Bologna, internationalisation at home, exchange programmes etc.
- Communication in English, both written and oral – information (brochures, web), conversation, etc.
- Differing supports needed- international office, international contact people, prayer rooms, health services, etc

WHAT ARE THE INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES THAT CAN BE INTRODUCED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENT BASE AND ITS EMPLOYEES?

What was found was that the institutional measures that are recommended in the Best Practices and the Högskoleverket, such as cultural adjustment assistance and cultural training, are affected by cultural differences. This is because in order to cater for the needs of the culturally diverse student base the needs of the identified cultural groups must be the main focus. That is, when an institution decides that these are recommendations they would like to implement it is important that the content covered be specific to the cultural groups being catered for at that institution. For the case study area the content should include information about East Asia, South Asia, West Africa & Sweden.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are based on what could be done, according to current Best Practice, to meet items 7-14 from 1.3.2. in relation to the cultural differences identified in the comparative analysis. They also consider the need to maintain a balance between remaining attractive to the Swedish students and increasing the attractiveness for the Non Swedish students.
ITEMS 7-14 FROM 1.3.2 - WHAT ‘MOST’ STUDENTS LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING THE RIGHT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN WHICH TO STUDY.

NB. The Italics under each item identifies what ‘could’ be done for that item and these are expanded on below.

7 Programmes of exchange between the establishments.
8 Transferability and recognition of the diploma between higher education facilities.
9 Quality of education
   Communication, leadership, intra team processes
   Course content
   Cultural Awareness Training
10 Teaching language, countries native language and opportunity to use language skills
   Common language
11 Reputation of the institutions in the receiving country
   Cultural adjustment assistance
   Internal support systems
12 Quality of life and cultural attraction
   Cultural adjustment assistance
   Internal support systems
   Social Activities
   Cultural Awareness Training
13 Presence of ethnic groups and existing network of support / foreign student associations
   Communication
   Cultural adjustment assistance
   Internal support systems
   Social Activities
14 Gain international knowledge and experience and to create international networks
   Studying in Sweden
   Course content
   Social Activities

COMMUNICATION & COMMON LANGUAGE

In educational systems communication is the most significant cultural diversity difficulty (Kerrigan, 2005). The reason for this is without the ability for students and teachers to communicate there is no opportunity for effective teaching and learning.

An obvious part of communication is having a common language. To decide on a common language is difficult but for this case study, English is the most commonly taught and used language in the countries identified as major contributors. Sweden, West Africa & India are considered to be fluent in English (Geographic.com, 2002). Pakistan, Bangladesh & East Asia have had increasing exposure to English, with Pakistan, Bangladesh and China now having some of there education offered in English (Geographic.com, 2002). Therefore, English is the only common language that is currently available to all the students and teachers and thus it is a key component to communication with the students in the case study area. This means that programmes, courses and information need to be available in English (Kerrigan, 2005).

Communication does not only mean that there needs to be a common language but also that there needs to be an understanding of the less obvious parts of communication, such as non verbal communication, feedback scales, spans of silence & ‘comfort’ groups. Increasing ones awareness
to these differences is extremely beneficial as it can lead to a decrease in misunderstandings and conflicts and thus make the educational environment less dissatisfying or more satisfying (Archer, 2006). This awareness education can be included in the cultural awareness training listed below.

**Course Content**

The course content should also be offered and delivered in such a way that the students gain the knowledge they seek and the teachers are able to impart their knowledge effectively. This is a two way relationship between the teacher and student. From a teacher’s perspective, this can be done by making themselves aware of the teaching methods that the students they will be teaching are used to and then trying to incorporate or accommodate for these in their teaching. Awareness can be gained in cultural awareness training, outlined below. From a student’s perspective, the students should make themselves aware of the type of educational system they are entering into and what will be required of them in relation to their education. This can be done through the cultural adjustment training discussed below.

The course content should also have an international focus in order to cater for both the international students and the Swedish student, by offering them ‘internationalisation at home’. Having an international focus allows all students the ability to ‘prepare for the realities of an interdependent world, give them the ability to think globally, consider issues from various perspectives and apply international standards within their own field of study or professional practice’ (Leask, 2001; Morey, 2000).

By having this mixture of internationalisation at home and the presence of international students, the students are also able to create valuable international knowledge and networks.

**Internal Support Systems**

Internal support systems, such as International Offices and Student Unions, are required if internationalisation is to develop (Högskoleverket, 2005). The International office and Student Union have been identified as an integral part to the success of students needs being met (Högskoleverket, 2005). They are an important part in assisting students to settle in and enjoy the Swedish experience. According to the Högskoleverket (2005) international offices and Student Unions need to:-

- Provide services to the entire institution in relation to internationalisation (e.g.) inductions, preparation of outgoing students, awareness training etc.
- Be responsible for the information that is to be given to the international students to assist with their cultural adjustment (e.g.) brochures, guidelines, contact people, etc.
- Assist with general settlement issues (e.g.) accommodation, banking, transport etc
- Assist in the organisation of social activities, so as to integrate the cultures and help minimise isolation.
- Monitor current changes in the outside world, so as to guide institutions on how to modify their internationalisation practices accordingly.
- Deal systematically with administrative and pastoral concerns.

There are two key strategies that the international office and students union can participate in that have been highlighted as necessary to address many of the needs of the students and employees. These are: - cultural adjustment assistance and cultural awareness training. Both of these help individuals to avoid taking their own assumptions for granted and projecting them onto others, which in turn helps to decrease misunderstandings and make the environment less dissatisfying or more satisfying for everyone.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Cultural adjustment is a serious problem associated with internationalisation. It has been estimated that failure to “make cultural adjustments has cost US businesses around $2 billion” (Martin, 2006, p.198). Therefore, the ramification of not assisting with cultural adjustment could be dire for an institution.

When a student arrives in a new country they bring with them certain expectations of how a country should be, based on their own culture. The problem arises when their expectations are different than what they actually experience. This creates, what is often referred to as, a ‘culture shock’ and a negative experience which can reinforce previously held views and make adjustments more difficult (Martin, 2006). To minimise this students need to be aware of the type of culture and educational system they are entering into and what will be required of them in relation to this. The shock will therefore be minimised and they will have a much more enjoyable experience. Stereotyping also tends to diminish, and there is a greater likelihood of shared understandings and similarities (Martin, 2006). It should be noted that it is most effective if the awareness is started prior to the students arriving, so that they can make an informed decision as to whether to actually study at that institution or not.

The whole process of helping to make someone aware is referred to as ‘Cultural adjustment assistance’ and the available options for doing this are virtually limitless (e.g.) websites, brochures, booklets, inductions, courses, training, activities etc.

In the educational system, cultural adjustment assistance should cover the following, but it is not limited to this:

- Provision of information about Sweden and what to expect (e.g.). Swedish culture (utilising the differences identified in the analysis section), accommodation, banking, identification, health services, transport etc.
- Provision of information about the Swedish education system (e.g.) the student’s role, the teacher’s role, other employees/departments roles, important policies/procedures, social activities etc.

Cultural adjustment however, is not just an institutional responsibility. The students have an equal responsibility in this. As the students are the ones entering a new country, and sometimes a different culture, they need to understand that things may be different than what they expect and thus prepare themselves for this. They need to understand that there may need to be accommodations made on their behalf too, and that they should not expect that the host country will change their culture to meet their needs. This is not because the country may not want to, but because to meet the needs of every individual cultural would be very difficult if not impossible. Rather they should expect that the host country should try to help them adjust into the new culture by assisting them to gain the knowledge they need about the host country.

CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

Managing cultural differences effectively needs to become a subconscious action. Employees must learn to see and acknowledge the differences, and act appropriately without having to think about it too much. It must become instinctual. This may sound complicated but in fact, it is not. It has been shown in many studies that cultural awareness training can help facilitate this by helping to create a shared frame of reference and understanding between the teachers and students (Högskoleverket, 2005). Cultural awareness training also gives teachers valuable insight into their students and allows the teachers to think more creatively about addressing the cultural differences and expectations of their students. This creativity can help to ensure that most of the students have understood what is being taught and increase both the teachers and students level of satisfaction.
Cultural awareness training for employees should include:-

- Providing insight into the way in which the cultures coming to the institution are similar or differ from Sweden
- What strategies can be used to help accommodate for these.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX #1 – THE BOLOGNA ACTION LINES

According to the Europe Unit, (2007) the Bologna action lines are as follows:

“Established in the Bologna Declaration of 1999:
1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles
3. Establishment of a system of credits
4. Promotion of mobility
5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education

Added after the Prague Ministerial summit of 2001:
7. Focus on lifelong learning
8. Inclusion of higher education institutions and students
9. Promotion of the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Added after the Berlin Ministerial summit of 2003:
10. Doctoral studies and the synergy between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area”
APPENDIX #2 – DESCRIPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL CULTURES IN THE CASE STUDY AREA, ACCORDING TO HOFSTEDE

SWEDEN

Power Distance (PD) - Low

Inequality minimised – everyone is interdependent, has equal rights and people in power try to look less powerful (Hofstede, 2001). These individuals work independently and will show initiative (Triandis, 2003).

Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) – Low

This means that they ‘may be more open to unstructured ideas and situations and they have fewer rules and regulations to attempt to control every unknown and unexpected event or situation’ (Hofstede, 2003). They are “tolerant of different opinions, phlegmatic and contemplative and do not express emotions openly” (Hofstede, 2006).

Individualism (I) – Highest dimension, therefore individualistic

They are independent and only look out for “themselves and their close family members” (Hofstede, 2003). They have “individualistic attitudes and relatively loose bonds with others” (Hofstede, 2003). They expect to one day stand on their own feet and do not expect the cultural group to continue to protect them. This leads to an individual that does not feel the need for strong loyalty to the group (Hofstede, 1993). “Privacy is considered the cultural norm and attempts to ingratiate may meet with rebuff. Due to the importance of the individual within the society, individual pride and respect are highly held values and degrading a person is not well received, accepted, or appreciated” (Hofstede, 2003).

Masculinity (M) – Lowest dimension, therefore Feminine

‘Indicative of a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders where females and males are treated more equally. They are a more openly nurturing society’ (Hofstede, 2003).

Long Term Orientation (LT) – Low, therefore Short Term orientation

They have ‘respect for traditions and believe that important events occur in the past or present’ (Hofstede, 2001). There is no issue with status in relationships and shame is not a common trait. Importance is placed on protecting ones ‘face’, fulfilling social obligations and overcoming obstacles quickly in addition to quick results (Hofstede, 2003).

SOUTH ASIA - INDIA

Power Distance (PD) - Highest dimension

There is inequality of power and wealth. “This condition is not necessarily subverted upon the population, but rather accepted by the population as a cultural norm” (Hofstede, 2003). Decision making is centralised to a superior who is expected to give detailed guidance on tasks and there is a significant distance placed between the superior and the subordinate. This is emphasised by the need to formally greet a superior and avoid eye contact. It is also expected that when presenting information only the superior be addressed (G Martin, 2006).

Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) – Lowest dimension

This is the same as Sweden.

Individualism (I) – High, therefore Collectivists

They are Collectivists, which means that they develop ‘close and committed memberships to a 'group' whether it is family, extended family, or an extended relationship’ (Hofstede, 2003). They are strong relationships where everyone in the group reinforces the ideology that they must take care of their fellow members. Loyalty is paramount. Privacy is not rated highly and integrating is welcomed within the group. As the importance lies on the
collective group, individual pride and respect are not as highly held values as in an individualistic culture and degrading a person is often looked past (Hofstede, 2003).

*Masculinity (M) – High, therefore Masculine*

“The higher the country ranks in this Dimension, the greater the gap between values of men and women. It may also generate a more competitive and assertive female population, although still less than the male population” (Hofstede, 2003).

*Long Term Orientation (LT) – High, therefore Long Term Orientation*

“Indicates a society's time perspective and an attitude of persevering; that is, overcoming obstacles with time, if not with will and strength” (Hofstede, 2003).

**SOUTH ASIA - BANGLADESH**

*Power Distance (PD) - Highest dimension*

There is inequality of power and wealth. “This condition is not necessarily subverted upon the population, but rather accepted by the population as a cultural norm” (Hofstede, 2003). Decision making is centralised to a superior who is expected to give detailed guidance on tasks and there is a significant distance placed between the superior and the subordinate. This is emphasised by the need to formally greet a superior and avoid eye contact. It is also expected that when presenting information only the superior be addressed (G Martin, 2006).

*Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) –Low*

This is the same as Sweden.

*Individualism (I) – Lowest dimension, therefore Collectivist*

They are Collectivists, which means that they develop ‘close and committed memberships to a 'group' whether it is family, extended family, or an extended relationship’ (Hofstede, 2003). They are strong relationships where everyone in the group reinforces the ideology that they must take care of their fellow members. Loyalty is paramount. Privacy is not rated highly and integrating is welcomed within the group. As the importance lies on the collective group, individual pride and respect are not as highly held values as in an individualistic culture and degrading a person is often looked past (Hofstede, 2003).

*Masculinity (M) – Average*

“The higher the country ranks in this Dimension, the greater the gap between values of men and women. It may also generate a more competitive and assertive female population, although still less than the male population” (Hofstede, 2003).

*Long Term Orientation (LT) – Low, therefore Short Term orientation*

This is the same as Sweden.

**SOUTH ASIA - PAKISTAN**

*Power Distance (PD) - Second highest dimension*

*Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) – Highest dimension*

High (UA) and (PD) scores create cultures that are highly rule-oriented. They have ‘laws, rules, regulations and controls in place to reduce the amount of uncertainty’. They also have ‘inequalities of power and wealth that have been allowed to grow within the society’ and they are “more likely to follow a caste system that does not allow significant upward mobility of its citizens” (Hofstede, 2003).

“When these two dimensions are combined, it creates a situation where the leaders virtually have ultimate power and authority, and the rules, laws and regulations developed by those in power, reinforce their own leadership and control. It is not unusual for new leadership to
arise from armed insurrection, the ultimate power, rather than from diplomatic or democratic change” (Hofstede, 2003).

**Individualism (I) – Low, therefore Collectivist**

They are Collectivists, which means that they develop ‘close and committed memberships to a ‘group’ whether it is family, extended family, or an extended relationship’ (Hofstede, 2003). They are strong relationships where everyone in the group reinforces the ideology that they must take care of their fellow members. Loyalty is paramount. Privacy is not rated highly and integrating is welcomed within the group. As the importance lies on the collective group, individual pride and respect are not as highly held values as in an individualistic culture and degrading a person is often looked past (Hofstede, 2003).

**Masculinity (M) – Average, therefore Masculine**

“The higher the country ranks in this Dimension, the greater the gap between values of men and women. It may also generate a more competitive and assertive female population, although still less than the male population” (Hofstede, 2003).

**Long Term Orientation (LT) – Lowest dimension, therefore Short Term orientation**

This is the same as Sweden.

**EAST ASIA - CHINA**

**Power Distance (PD) - High, higher than any other Far East Asian country**

There is inequality of power and wealth. “This condition is not necessarily subverted upon the population, but rather accepted by the population as a cultural norm” (Hofstede, 2003). Decision making is centralised to a superior who is expected to give detailed guidance on tasks and there is a significant distance placed between the superior and the subordinate. This is emphasised by the need to formally greet a superior and avoid eye contact. It is also expected that when presenting information only the superior be addressed (G Martin, 2006).

**Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) – Low**

This is the same as Sweden.

**Individualism (I) – Low (lower than any other Asian country), therefore Collectivist**

They are Collectivists, which means that they develop ‘close and committed memberships to a ‘group’ whether it is family, extended family, or an extended relationship’ (Hofstede, 2003). They are strong relationships where everyone in the group reinforces the ideology that they must take care of their fellow members. Loyalty is paramount. Privacy is not rated highly and integrating is welcomed within the group. As the importance lies on the collective group, individual pride and respect are not as highly held values as in an individualistic culture and degrading a person is often looked past (Hofstede, 2003).

**Masculinity (M) – High, therefore Masculine**

“The higher the country ranks in this Dimension, the greater the gap between values of men and women. It may also generate a more competitive and assertive female population, although still less than the male population” (Hofstede, 2003).

**Long Term Orientation (LT) – Highest dimension, therefore Long Term Orientation**

“Indicates a society's time perspective and an attitude of persevering; that is, overcoming obstacles with time, if not with will and strength” (Hofstede, 2003).

**WEST AFRICA**

**Power Distance (PD) - highest dimension**

There is inequality of power and wealth. “This condition is not necessarily subverted upon the population, but rather accepted by the population as a cultural norm” (Hofstede, 2003).
Decision making is centralised to a superior who is expected to give detailed guidance on tasks and there is a significant distance placed between the superior and the subordinate. This is emphasised by the need to formally greet a superior and avoid eye contact. It is also expected that when presenting information only the superior be addressed (G Martin, 2006).

**Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) – Low**
This is the same as Sweden.

**Individualism (I) – Low, therefore Collectivist**
They are Collectivists, which means that they develop ‘close and committed memberships to a 'group' whether it is family, extended family, or an extended relationship’ (Hofstede, 2003). They are strong relationships where everyone in the group reinforces the ideology that they must take care of their fellow members. Loyalty is paramount. Privacy is not rated highly and integrating is welcomed within the group. As the importance lies on the collective group, individual pride and respect are not as highly held values as in an individualistic culture and degrading a person is often looked past (Hofstede, 2003).

**Masculinity (M) – Low, therefore Feminine**
This is the same as Sweden.

**Long Term Orientation (LT) – Lowest dimension, therefore Short Term orientation**
This is the same as Sweden.
APPENDIX #3 – MAJORITY CONTRIBUTOR’S CULTURAL DIFFERENCES TO SWEDEN

NB. This list is according to the Hofstede Analysis in Chapter 4

West Africa (Hofstede, 2005)
- ‘Achievement’ is also a strong motivator
- Only “speak up in class only when sanctioned by the group” and if placed in large groups with people that are not part of their ‘group’ they may not speak at all
- Education is “learning how to do”
- Great deal of weighting on their degree giving them “entry into higher status groups

India, Bangladesh and India (all have the same differences) (Hofstede, 2005)
- Survival and group ego / success are the main focus
- ‘Achievement of self or group and esteem’ are the stronger motivators
- Aggression is acceptable and can be attributed to their direct approach and competitive achievement orientated nature
- Teachers evaluated by their “brilliance and academic reputation”
- May have trouble taking direction from females and be seen as ‘disrespectful’
- Best student is considered the norm
- Excellent students are praised, thus encouraging competition in class.
- Failure is considered a disaster and thus students tend to overrate their performance
- Only “speak up in class only when sanctioned by the group” and if placed in large groups with people that are not part of their ‘group’ they may not speak at all
- Education is “learning how to do”
- Great deal of weighting on their degree giving them “entry into higher status groups

Pakistan (Hofstede, 2005)
- Survival and group ego / success are the main focus
- ‘Esteem, safety and security’ rate as strongest motivators
- Rules are implicit and rooted in tradition; therefore they need structured learning situations with precise objectives, detailed assignments and strict timetables.
- Expect there to be one correct answer
- Rewarded for their accuracy
- Value rule makers and expect them to have ultimate power, make all the decisions and direct them accordingly.
- Teachers are considered experts who have all the answers and are thus evaluated by their “brilliance and academic reputation
- Intellectual academic disagreement is considered as disloyal
- ‘Best student is considered the norm
- Excellent students are praised, thus encouraging competition in class.
- Failure is considered a disaster and thus students tend to overrate their performance
- Only “speak up in class only when sanctioned by the group” and if placed in large groups with people that are not part of their ‘group’ they may not speak at all
- Education is “learning how to do”
- Great deal of weighting on their degree giving them “entry into higher status groups”
- Often attempt to eliminate inter-group conflict by denying it
- Try to assimilate or repress minorities
- They exhibit xenophobia and aggressive nationalism
- Aggression is acceptable and can be attributed to their direct approach and competitive achievement orientated nature
- May have trouble taking direction from females and be seen as ‘disrespectful’
**Appendix # 4 – MScBA 2006/2007 Programme Evaluation Summary**

The 2006/2007 MSc Programme evaluations were sent to the students who were actively participating in the 2006/2007 MSc Programme in May 2007. Reminders were sent on two occasions.

The evaluation consisted of the 18 questions. Question 1-5a, 6-8, 13 & 14 all had a multi-choice option and a comment section. Each of these multi-choice questions had differing scales and thus in the results column the entire scale for each question will be reflected next to the question in relates to. The percentages given have been rounded up for ease of comparison. Questions 5b, 5c, 9-12 & 15-18 all required comments only.

The students were given the option to answer the evaluation anonymously therefore there will be no data presented on the gender of the respondent. The students where asked to indicate their country of origin, which all respondents did. The summary table below is indicative of all of the following nationalities- East Asia, S Asia (*India*), West Africa, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe & North America. South Asia (*Bangladesh & Pakistan*), Central America & South Africa are not represented, as they chose not to complete the evaluation.

Total number of active students in the programme - 33.

Number of responses received – 18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Results:</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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| 1. How did the MSc Programme content correspond to its goal and purpose? | 15% - Very well 50% - Well 0% - Satisfactory 15% - Badly 0% - Very badly 15% - Unfamiliar with goal and purpose of programme 5% - No answer                                                                 | China – Generally ranked this on the bad end  
Nigeria – well to very well  
India – well  
General-  
● Needs a bit more organisation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2. What do you think of the general planning & organisation of the MSc Programme? | 0% - Very good 50% - Good 30% - Satisfactory 15% - Bad 0% - Very bad 5% - no answer                                                                                                                                 | Comments  
China – satisfactory  
Nigeria – good  
India – satisfactory  
General-  
● Programme needs a bit more organisation  
● Courses need to be more organised and structured before they start                                                                                     |
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<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>0% - Very good</th>
<th>50% - Good</th>
<th>0% - Satisfactory</th>
<th>0% - Bad</th>
<th>0% - Very bad</th>
<th>50% - Unfamiliar with main focus of the programme</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>What do you think of the “main focus” used in the MSc Programme?</td>
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<td>China – not familiar with the “main focus” of the programme</td>
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<td>0% - Very good</td>
<td>50% - Good</td>
<td>0% - Satisfactory</td>
<td>0% - Bad</td>
<td>0% - Very bad</td>
<td>50% - Unfamiliar with main focus of the programme</td>
<td>Nigeria – good</td>
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<td>India – good</td>
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<td>● Gives an opportunity to gain international knowledge and experience</td>
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<td>● Can make international connections</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>What do you think of the structure of the 4 ten week Learning Periods?</td>
<td>30% - Very good</td>
<td>50% - Good</td>
<td>0% - Satisfactory</td>
<td>15% - Bad</td>
<td>0% - Very bad</td>
<td>5% - No answer</td>
<td>China – good</td>
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<td>Nigeria – very good to good</td>
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<td>India – good</td>
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<td>● Allows students to focus on a few courses at a time</td>
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<td>● Should be mandatory that students complete 10 credits per LP</td>
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<td>5a</td>
<td>What do you think of the courses offered in the overall MSc Programme?</td>
<td>30% - Very good</td>
<td>0% - Good</td>
<td>50% - Satisfactory</td>
<td>15% - Bad</td>
<td>0% - Very bad</td>
<td>5% - no answer</td>
<td>China – satisfactory</td>
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<td>Nigeria – very good</td>
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<td>● Good and wide in scope</td>
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<td>● Having the courses in English was a benefit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Good international content in courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Which course/s did you “like” the most &amp; why?</td>
<td>37% Strategy</td>
<td>30% Knowledge Management</td>
<td>30% International Economics</td>
<td>20% Business Intelligence</td>
<td>15% Corporate Finance</td>
<td>15% E business</td>
<td>All these courses were felt to be:-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Interesting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Give up to date knowledge</td>
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<td>● Give students a competitive advantage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Classes were lively</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **5c.** Which course/s were your “least favourite”? Why, and can you offer any suggestions on how they can be improved? | 25% E business  
25% Business Intelligence  
15% Advertising  
15% Investments in IT *  
15% Marketing of High Tech Products | All these courses were felt to have good content but lacked in the following:  
- Poor feedback or guidance  
- Unclear assignment/exam questions  
- Unorganised  
- Depth of content * |
|---|---|---|
| **5d.** What courses do you think would be beneficial to include in the MSc programme? And why? | 65% students did not answer this question | Suggestions only -  
- Business Negotiations  
- Law  
- HRM  
- Business/IT related courses  
- More specialised programmes (e.g.) marketing, finance stream |
| **6.** What do you think of the forms of examination used in the Programme? | 50% - Very good  
50% - Good  
0% - Satisfactory  
0% - Bad  
0% - Very bad | Comments  
China – very good  
Nigeria – good to very good  
India – good  
General-  
- No useful comments |
| **7a.** How have you experienced the cooperation between class mates within the programme? | 75% - Very good  
15% - Good  
0% - Satisfactory  
0% - Bad  
0% - Very bad  
10 % - No answer | Comments  
China – very good to good  
Nigeria – very good  
India – very good  
General-  
- Learn to cooperate with each other  
- Share study materials and information |
| **7b.** How do you value the teacher’s contribution to your learning? | 50% - Very high  
30% - High  
15% - Satisfactory  
0% - Low | Comments  
China – High  
Nigeria – very high  
India – very high |
| 7c. | How do you value the group work’s contribution to your learning? | 0% - Very low  
5% - no answer  
30% - Very high  
50% - High  
15% - Satisfactory  
0% - Low  
0% - Very low  
5% - no answer  
30% - Very high  
50% - High  
15% - Satisfactory  
0% - Low  
0% - Very low  
5% - no answer | General-  
- Knowledge Management course– very good  
- When teachers give guidance a feedback it is easier to learn  
- Teachers should be available for students during BTH office hours.  
Comments  
China – high  
Nigeria – high  
India –high  
General –  
- Share different knowledge, experiences and ideas  
- Opens discussion |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | On what level did the MSc Programme meet your expectations? | 0% - Very low  
5% - no answer  
30% - Very high  
30% - High  
15% - Satisfactory  
15% - Low  
0% - Very low  
10% - No answer | Comments  
China – satisfactory  
Nigeria – very high  
India – high  
General-  
- No useful comments |
| 9a. | Mention at least three positive things about the Programme that we definitely should NOT change, and why? | 0% - Very low  
5% - no answer  
- Flexibility to choose courses  
- Minimum requirement for D level courses  
- Internet based courses  
- Self registration  
- Report/project writing  
- 4 ten week LP structure  
- Examination methods  
- Research methodology course  
- Teacher to student rapport |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9b.</th>
<th>Mention at least three negative things about the Programme that we definitely should review, and why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Masters in Business Administration Thesis 2007**
**Melissa Engelke** |
| **Class size**
**Student friendly environment**
**Knowledgeable teachers**
**Helpdesk**
**MSc Programme assistant available during office hours**
**Knowledge management course**
**Graduation ceremony**
**Freedom of speech** |

| **deadline for thesis proposal adhered too**
**Subject areas available to choose for thesis work**
**Time for thesis work to short**
**Opponents for thesis should be paired up earlier**
**Too many males**
**No Swedish students**
**Library should be a quite area**
**Teachers more interested in students**
**More cooperative student union**
**More connection to businesses in courses and thesis**
**Programme duration too short**
**Needs to be more organised** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>10. What would make it easier for a student to settle into the MSc programme and BTH quickly? (e.g.) supports, information etc</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Background information about BTH as a whole**
**Need more student union support**
**Interaction activities**
**Clear information re: what students need to do to start their studies (e.g.) entry cards, computers, printing,** |
11. What do you think is useful to know prior to coming to Sweden to study?

- Need good level of English
- Changeable weather
- School culture
- Programme/Course structure and when offered
- Not to expect to find work in Sweden to cover living costs
- Where to find information when you arrive

12. What do you think is useful to know at an orientation day when you start?

- School rules and regulations
- Phone numbers
- What is expected from students during their stay (general)
- Introduction into Swedish culture and behaviours
- Details on programme
- Information about teachers area of specialty
- Tour of campus- eat, study quietly, shopping

13. Do you understand the process for course registration and its importance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% - Yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Good because it is quicker and easier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% - No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student makes own commitment to course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14. To achieve the goals of the Programme within the 1-year timeframe, would you prefer deadlines to be set and adhered to or to set your own deadlines?

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>General</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60% - Deadlines set and adhered to</td>
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<tr>
<td>30% - Own deadlines</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10% - No answer</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
- China – Own deadlines
- Nigeria – Deadlines set and adhered to
- India – Deadlines set and adhered to

General:
- Deadlines set and adhered to
| Q15. | Are there any barriers that you have experienced that have made it difficult for you to participate in the programme and/or have a positive learning experience? | • Deadlines will ensure everyone works hard to meet them  
• Set penalties for not meeting deadlines  

| Q16. | What, if any, are the negative experiences you have had whilst studying the MSc Programme | • Bad English  
• Problems with male student behaviours  
• Grading system  
• Not getting good feedback  
• Some courses unorganised which meant more time finding out details rather than learning  

| Q17. | What, if any, are the positive experiences you have had whilst studying the MSc Programme | • Certain countries dominate the mix  
• Too many men  
• 10 month Programme – not able to truly integrate into Swedish system without personal number  
• “Strange behaviours” from certain nationalities  
• Students with limited business backgrounds joining D level courses lowered the depth that the course could go to  
• Students pressuring other students to borrow their books etc  
• Noisy living arrangements  

| | | • Lecturers who were able to communicate with students  
• Expanded knowledge to reach career objectives  
• Department cooperation  
• Support from MSc programme assistant, Dean and lecturers  
• University environment very conducive to |
### Have you any further comments or suggestions about the MSc Programme.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>studies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Meeting people from different parts of the world</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18.</strong></td>
<td>Have you any further comments or suggestions about the MSc Programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Information to be given on how to be a thesis opponent</td>
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<td>- Study materials not always available</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Have a MSc student study area with some computers for private quiet studies</td>
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<td>- Unpaid internships in local companies</td>
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<td>- Cultural education to help student integrate into Swedish community</td>
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<td>- More social activities</td>
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<td>- Student union needs to show more interest in international students</td>
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APPENDIX # 5 – MScBA 2006/2007 STUDENT FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

There were four focus groups held for the students who are actively participating in the 2006/2007 MSc Programme. These four focus group were held on the 21st & 23rd May 2007 and consisted of two male groups and two female groups. Each focus group was approximately 2 -3 hours long. Interesting to note was that the male and female groups identified the same issues, with the exception of some of the behavioural issues that the females identified. For this reason the results have been combined in the table below with issues relating only to the female group being indicated with an *

The summary table below is indicative of all of the following nationalities - East Asia, S Asia (India, Pakistan), West Africa, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, & North America. South Asia (Bangladesh), Central America, South-Eastern Europe & South Africa are not represented, as they chose not to attend the focus groups.

Participation Rate over the two days:-
Total active students in the programme 33 (17 men, 14 women)

Total participation – 17 / 33 = 51%
Male group - 7 attended = 41%
Female group -10 attended = 71%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Comments &amp; Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Education positives</td>
<td>● Free education</td>
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<tr>
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<td>● Degree is highly regarded because it is from a European university</td>
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<td>● Swedish people can speak English</td>
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<td>● Education taught in English, although this was still difficult for some of the students</td>
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<td>● International office arranging activities was good but not enough.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Programme is very international in content, which is good</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Meet interesting people from all over the world.</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Swedish Education Suggested changes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grading system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● In competitive countries they need you to have good grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Other countries understand ECTS to be relative. In Sweden it is Absolute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Need to have a letter for students to use with their degree transcript explaining the above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Environment | Ronneby library – need quiet rooms with computers as resources are on the web. The ‘quiet’ study rooms have no computers.  
- Need signs & education on the above – gives the student power to tell people to be quiet.  
- Computer labs – sign no food or drinks  
- No cell phones in class  
- Second hand book website  
- Borrowing books from dept  
- Computers only for MSc students in dept – quiet  
- More group events and meetings – 1 x month to discuss issues. |
| --- | --- |
| Orientation Day | International Office responsibilities  
- Student union responsibilities  
- Registration process & significance  
- Borrowing books – do not harass others *  
- Cards – door card, photocopy card, student union card, library card  
- Guided tour & maps – campus, faculty, café  
- Cheating process.  
- Deadlines  
- Grading and appeal process  
- Swedish culture education  
- Sexual harassment – males making female feel uncomfortable *  
- Student helpers in the first week would be a benefit |
| Pre-arrival Information | Swedish registration number  
- Visa process – extension etc  
- Health Insurance  
- International office  
- Accommodation problems – picking up key late (after 4pm)  
- Maps to get from train to BTH, hostel, accommodation  
- Look at :-Strategic management brochure |
| Student Union | More active with international students  
- Assist with students in first weeks to get settled  
- Information on events for students often sent out via email in Swedish only |
| Courses                                                                 | |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Master’s level courses should not have students who do not have a      | |
| business background, as it brings down the depth of information that   | |
| can be delivered *                                                     | |
| Attitude level of some of the students with different backgrounds      | |
| decreases the whole level of the class *                               | |
| Cheating should be discouraged                                         | |
| Majority of men in courses *                                           | |
| More Swedish students if possible                                       | |
| **Teaching**                                                            | |  |
| Should stick to certain standards and not adapt to other cultures *    | |
| (e.g.) Punctuality, Deadlines, Evaluation                              | |
| Need proper feedback – where went wrong, how make it better            | |
| Some teachers don’t give enough guidance and direction as to what they | |
| want.                                                                  | |
| Understandable course structure and grading                            | |
| Maintain etiquette or be disciplined                                    | |
| Teachers and staff often appear to be not interested in students work  | |
| or problems.                                                           | |
| Some of teachers are hard to get a hold of                            | |
| **Graduation certificates**                                            | |  |
| One that can be hung on the wall on nice paper                         | |
| Absolute grading to be mentioned                                       | |
| Embossed on the final official certificate to make it authentic        | |
| **Activities**                                                         | |  |
| Swedish are very friendly and helpful but difficult to get to know,    | |
| would like to have more activities with Swedish people to be able to  | |
| mingle more                                                            | |
| Social activities at Ronneby too                                       | |
| **Advertise for EU students**                                          | |  |
| Information – posters                                                 | |
| Promotional tours                                                      | |
| Erasmus                                                                | |
| **Student behaviour** *                                                | |  |
| Sometimes very poor from students from different countries            | |
| Often in public places feel threatened                                 | |
| Peoples personal space often encroached on                            | |
| People are interrupted unnecessarily                                   | |
| Women felt a certain level of fear                                     | |

Goals and strategies
Högskoleverket recommend the higher education institutions to
• Develop their strategies for internationalisation and assign clear priorities to their measures.

Organisation and support systems
Högskoleverket recommend the higher education institutions to
• Systematise the analysis of the surrounding world made for internationalisation
• Place greater weight on monitoring and evaluating internationalisation measures
• Further develop quality assurance methods for cooperation agreements
• Undertake a comparative study to determine how resources for internationalisation are used
• Use their web-sites more effectively to foster internationalisation

Undergraduate programmes
Högskoleverket recommend the higher education institutions to
• Formulate a coherent strategy for Internationalisation at Home
• Remove the organisational obstacles that hinder teachers from spending periods abroad

Postgraduate programmes
Högskoleverket recommend the higher education institutions to
• Provide all postgraduate students with the possibility of completing some of their studies abroad and to guarantee funding for this purpose

Diversity and gender equality
Högskoleverket recommend the higher education institutions to
• Pay attention to diversity and gender equality as important quality aspects in internationalisation