Cultural Diversity within the Company and Its Influence on Managers’ Informational Roles: Case Study of UMA Ltd Co

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Abstract

This thesis examines how cultural diversity within an organization might influence managers’ information-handling process. The models used are; Geert Hofstede’s five dimensions of national culture, to represent the cultural diversity; and Henry Mintzberg’s definition of the manager’s informational roles, to represent the managers’ information-handling.

To show this empirically, a case study of a half-Swedish, half-Vietnamese-owned retail company, UMA Ltd Co, was conducted. This company is situated in Vietnam and employs a range of different nationalities. Interviews were conducted with seven of UMA’s managers to gain an understanding of their opinions concerning their informational roles, as well as to identify issues and benefits within the company caused by the cultural diversity.

The results of the interviews revealed some relevant cultural issues and benefits of working in a culturally diverse company. It was evident through the analysis, in which the cultural dimensions were applied onto the informational roles, that there are a number of problems at UMA in need of repair. For instance, differences in employees’ perception of the power distance dimension seem to affect how information is spread and gained. This is also caused by the unclear organizational structure of the company, where employees, instead of realizing who they are obliged to answer to, rather follow their culturally given hierarchical system. Further issues caused by the cultural diversity at UMA are presented in the conclusion of this thesis.
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1. Introduction

Running a business might not always be the easiest thing to do. There are many variables that need to be identified, coordinated and managed in order for the company to be successful. One of these variables is arguably the one of business-related information. W.B. Adeoti-Adekeye (1997) stresses the relevance and importance of managing information when stating that “management in the modern age relies heavily on information to thrive”. According to Adeoti-Adekeye (1997), nothing moves without information and this supports the general belief that information is power and that he who has information, also has power. Moreover, the author mentions how information is an important resource needed to develop other resources, and that changing circumstances and/or environments have necessitated the need for the proper dissemination of information at various levels of management.

Authors such as Adeoti-Adekeye illuminate the importance of information-handling and different aspects of it, such as the collecting, managing and spreading of information within and between different parts of the company. Henry Mintzberg (1990) speaks of how this specifically goes under one of the three sets of managerial roles, the informational roles, in which the manager gains and disseminates information within the organization. Seeing that this process is of great importance for the company, it will be necessary to identify factors that influence the information-handling, and also how one can make the best of it. One such, possible factor is the one of culture. Considering the different nationalities of employees within a culturally diverse company, one might expect these differences to influence the information handling process, which we earlier defined as crucial for organizations and their managers.

Operating in a very culturally diverse environment is the company UMA Ltd Co (UMA). UMA is a Vietnam-based home furniture company that focuses on retail, export and consulting services. Nationalities within UMA include Vietnamese, French, Singaporean, Canadian and Swedish. The company is owned by their Swedish CEO, August Wingardh, and their Vietnamese Vice President, Ngo My Lan. The firm operates from the capital Hanoi, with three retail stores, an office in the city and an upcoming store in Ho Chi Minh City. They have contacts with local producers and suppliers throughout Vietnam as well as in China. They also act as intermediaries to companies looking to import Vietnamese products.

Since the year of 2007, UMA has been steadily growing and has now approximately 70 employees. Their CEO, August Wingardh, has been working within the business of home interior for over 10 years, and has had a lot of experience operating outside his home country, Sweden. The
company is now planning to expand, as stated, into Ho Chi Minh City, as well as establishing a sustainable design center to consult local and international firms on sustainability.

1.1. Research question
When looking only at national culture, one can argue that differences in such culture within an organization, such as UMA, might influence the managing of the organization. Having employees with different backgrounds, hence also different values, norms, ethics and language abilities, could be expected to have its toll on the organization somehow. We hypothesize that this might affect the spreading and collecting of business-related information, since differences in language and norms might play a role in the communication process. More specifically, we think that cultural differences might influence the manager’s so called informational roles, which were defined by Henry Mintzberg and are described later on in this paper. Thus, the question stands;

*How do the managers of UMA Ltd Co perceive cultural diversity within their company, and how does this cultural diversity affect their informational roles?*

1.2. Objectives of this research
Our objectives with this research are to find different ways in which cultural diversity within an organization might influence a manager’s informational roles. We aim at answering the above stated research question by conducting a case study of UMA which has a number of employees with different nationalities. Hopefully, by first identifying the different ways by which cultural diversity impinge on the handling of information within the organization, we can find ways to help managers of UMA run their business in a more efficient manner.

1.3. Methodology

1.3.1. Course of action
To answer our research question and fulfill the objectives of this thesis, we began by investigating what previous literature and research had come up with regarding the subject of cultural diversity and its influence on management. As was realized, much relevant research had been made on the matter, therefore the use of the chosen literature for this thesis aided in defining and mapping the different aspects of management, the manager's informational roles specifically, and cultural diversity.

Firstly, to identify and define the three managerial roles and later on look more closely at the managers informational roles, Mintzberg’s article, “The Manager’s Job: Folklore and Fact”, was used. Using Mintzberg as the primary source of information concerning the ten
managerial roles was considered to be the only way of retrieving the correct and objective definitions of the necessary terms. This is due to the fact that they were primarily defined by Mintzberg himself.

The focus on cultural diversity’s influence on managers’ informational roles, as opposed to their interpersonal- and decisional roles, was chosen particularly because we found that the process of information handling, and thereby also communication, was one of the most important factors which in turn gave managers power (Adeoti-Adekeye, W.B., 1997). Mintzberg (1990) himself sates that the decisional roles depend on the informational ones. However, he later adds that the informational roles flow from the interpersonal ones, suggesting that the interpersonal roles are more important. In other words, he argues that quality of information gained will depend on how much of a leader, figure-head, etc, the manager is. However, considering later research by Adeoti-Adekeye (1997), we argue that this should work the other way round as well where the information gained and handled by the manager gives him/her power which in turn affects his role as a leader and figure-head. This leads us to believe that the other two managerial roles, the interpersonal and decisional roles, are somewhat dependent on the informational ones. Therefore, we think that the informational roles of managers are vital to the success of businesses, and since misunderstandings during communication caused by cultural differences could lead to the loss of crucial information; we research in what way the informational roles are sensitive to cultural diversity.

Secondly, to be able to use a model that will map the difference in culture within UMA, we chose to use the five dimensions of national culture constructed by Hofstede (1993). Hofstede’s dimensions are used since they have been widely utilized as an acceptable research tool and a representation of cultural values (Orr and Hauser, 2008).

After laying out Mintzberg and Hofstede’s relevant theories, we presented the results from our empirical research which was based on a case study of UMA. To focus on the qualitative results surrounding culture and management at UMA, we conducted e-mail interviews with some of their managers and the CEO. As a way to gain insight on the company’s management and also on how they are influenced by their cultural diversity, we simply asked them questions concerning their day-to-day activities that would affect their collecting, spreading and sharing of business-related information (see Appendix). Thereby, we could map how the informational roles of the managers at UMA were reflected and represented by their activities at the company. Afterwards, we asked them questions regarding cultural differences at UMA and how the company is structured as a way to gain insight on how Hofstede’s five dimensions of culture were present at UMA.
Nevertheless, we were at all times aware of Fang’s (2010) discussion regarding ‘bicultural identity’, ‘multicultural identities’ and ‘multicultural minds’. In this discussion Fang (2010) speaks of how some foreign employees, when working overseas, develop their own ‘multicultural’ mindset which could differ from the national culture of their home country (Fang, 2010, p. 167).

The results of these interviews were then described and summarized in tables, so that the readers could fully grasp the information and see the connection and relation between the different given aspects. We also included some empirical results from other researchers, such as Quang and Kohl, regarding the national culture of Vietnam. This due to the fact that the national culture surrounding UMA, which also is the culture of most of the staff within the company, could be expected to affect the informational roles of the managers. Since we could not personally conduct such generalizing research to conclude what the national culture of Vietnam is, we chose the use of existing research. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that these facts are generalizing an otherwise rich and diverse Vietnamese culture which has lots of subcultures itself. In addition, we summarized the five dimensions of Hofstede applied to the Vietnamese, Filipino and Scandinavian cultures, in a table. These were the cultures represented in the seven interviews.

Following the empirical results, we conducted the analysis of this thesis. To be able to answer the question and thereafter draw relevant conclusions, we applied the replies we received concerning Hofstede’s five dimensions onto the ones we gained regarding Mintzberg’s informational roles of the managers. After the description of this application we added a summarizing table in which we cross-referenced the five dimensions with the three features of the informational roles, to once again make it simpler for the reader to see the relations.

Finally, using the analysis and discussion, we drew our conclusions on the topic of this thesis and presented an answer to the research question.

1.3.2. Limitations to course of actions
Basing the analysis partly on Hofstede’s work requires an awareness to the criticism it has received. Several authors want readers and researchers to take into account the fact that the information Hofstede has built his cultural dimensions on can possibly seem old or lack a sense of “generalisability”, while being “too condensed to capture culture.” (Ng et al, 2007, p. 168). This criticism is based on the notion that; since the information was collected more than thirty years ago, modernization could possibly have lead to a shift in cultural values, where for example, it has contributed to an increase in individualism overall (Ng et al, 2007, p. 175). In other words, changes in cultural values over time may not be captured by Hofstede’s dimensions, but it should be
clarified that these dimensions measure relative, not absolute, cultural values (Tang and Koveos, 2008, pp. 1045-1046).

Orr and Hauser (2008) have attempted to empirically validate Hofstede’s dimensions, and came to some conclusions that it is important to survey a range of individuals, within diverse corporate cultures as well, whereas Hofstede performed his research at only one corporation, IBM. Moreover, Orr and Hauser (2008) believe that some of the cultural constructs overlap and that there is no clear distinction between the five dimensions. Finally, the authors state that it is important to acknowledge sociological factors, the significance of subcultures and the growing power of the internet, as a way to transfer cultural values, norms and ideas. Despite this criticism, Orr and Hauser conclude in their study that Hofstede’s national dimensions are important to the foundation of cross-cultural analysis, even though they might need to be re-examined and updated to fit in the 21st century (Orr & Hauser, 2008, p.16). Therefore, since Hofstede’s dimensions are considered to create a foundation for cross-cultural analysis despite all criticism, we use them as a model in this thesis.

The sample of managers responding to the questions was limited to the managers that had time to reply. This resulted in seven managers, including the CEO, responding. However, the lack of other respondents did not affect the development of this thesis, since the sample of interviewees needed to contain at least one local and one foreign employee in order to establish the cultural diversity within UMA. Nonetheless, even though we gained information from at least three different national cultures, it limits the extent of the analysis as we assumed to get at least one or two more responses from different nationalities. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that the individual opinions of the respondents can differ from their national culture.

2. According to the literature

2.1. Mintzberg’s ten managerial roles
Mintzberg (1990) made a classification of managerial work into ten roles with three organized sets of behaviors; interpersonal, informational and decisional. These roles are presented below in Figure 1:
Looking more closely at these roles we see that the interpersonal roles represent the formal authority of the manager while the informational roles of the manager show how the manager works as a “nerve centre” for the dissemination of information. Mintzberg (1990) further explains how the manager’s informational roles flow from the interpersonal ones. Finally, the interpersonal and informative roles enable the manager to perform four decisional roles (Mintzberg, 1990). The extent to which a manager actually can do this depends on where within the organizational hierarchy he or she is placed and his or her specific functional responsibility (Bratton, 2007).

2.1.1. Looking further at the Informational Roles

Mintzberg (1990) speaks of how managers usually have quicker and better access to more relevant and vital information than their subordinates. He argues that the possibility for this could be found when looking at the relationship between the interpersonal and informational roles. In other words, within the interpersonal roles, the manager has formal and easy access to the staff as a leader, and as a liaison the manager is exposed to external information to which subordinates are not. Hence, the interpersonal roles of the manager aid him/her in gaining and enhancing the informational ones.

Processing information is a key part of a manager’s job where a lot of their time is dedicated to the transmission of information and where most of their incoming mail is purely informational (rather than requests for action) (Mintzberg, 1990). A large part of their interaction with others is informational and their job is basically communication, thus, Minztberg (1990) stresses the importance of the informational aspect and identifies three roles within this feature. As

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**Figure 1. Henry Mintzberg’s ten managerial roles**

- **Interpersonal roles**
  - Figurehead
  - Leader
  - Liaison

- **Informational roles**
  - Monitor
  - Disseminator
  - Spokesperson

- **Decisional roles**
  - Entrepreneur
  - Disturbance handler
  - Resource allocator
  - Negotiator
a monitor, the manager is attempting to gather information from the environment by various means such as; interrogating liaison contacts and subordinates and receiving unsolicited information as a result of the network of personal contacts (Mintzberg, 1990). He also mentions that much of this information is collected by the managers from gossip, hearsay and information.

Through the disseminator role, the manager passes some privileged information directly to the subordinates who would usually not have access to this information, and also, when two or more subordinates don’t have contact with one another, the manager will pass information between them (Mintzberg, 1990).

By means of the spokesperson role, the manager sends information to other parts outside the unit and also, as a spokesman, the manager needs to inform and satisfy the influential people who control the organizational unit (Mintzberg, 1990).

2.2. Cultural Diversity

“A multicultural organization not only has a diverse cultural workforce, but also values diversity. Diversity serves as a competitive advantage.” (Weiss, 2001, p. 362). However, in order to successfully achieve this competitive advantage through diversity, the management needs to fully understand the different aspects to their workforce and to appreciate them. They need to create an organizational environment in which all members, of all nationalities, can excel (Weiss, 2001, p. 362). Culture in relation to organizations has been researched thoroughly by different authors, not the least by Hofstede who believes that:

The nature of management skills is such that they are culturally specific: a management technique or philosophy that is appropriate in one national culture is not necessarily appropriate in another (Hofstede 2007, p. 413)

Moran (2007) states that there are two different types of societies that influence behaviors; the geographic society is composed of members of a nation, tribe or religious sect; the role society is composed of members of a profession or the elite of a group. Moran (2007) argues that managers are members of the same role society, meaning that they have a similar business environment, but that they are often members of different geographic societies. Hence, at one level, the communication between managers from two different cultures should be relatively smooth. On another level, significant differences in values, approach, pace, priorities and other factors may cause difficulties (Moran, R et al. 2007).
2.2.1. National Culture

First of all, culture needs to be defined. In the case of this thesis, the type of culture that is discussed is that of national culture. This refers to the common values, beliefs, and assumptions that are learned in early childhood, and that distinguishes one nation or group from another (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p. 754). In addition, Hofstede (1993, p. 89) states that:

Culture is a **construct**, that means it is ‘not directly accessible to observation but inferable from verbal statements and other behaviors and useful in predicting still other observable and measurable verbal and nonverbal behaviour.

2.2.2. Hofstede’s Five Dimensions of National Culture

The main theory that is applicable to organizational management is that of Hofstede’s five dimensions of national culture (Hofstede 1993). The author discusses the issues of power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance and short-term versus long-term orientation. According to Hofstede (1993), each of these dimensions affects the organizational management in different ways and can result in different outcomes for the company as a whole when cultures with different dimensions interact. Hofstede (1993 p. 89) refers to these as “tools of analysis” in certain situations. These five dimensions are presented below.

**Power Distance**

Power distance refers to the degree of inequality among people within a country. This refers to the amount of power that is unequally distributed among the country’s citizens (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p. 756). Power influences the hierarchy, as well as the degree of centralization and the role in decision making which the employees have in an organization (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p.756). Hofstede (2007) explains that this is transferred in a parent-child relationship, which can affect the way the child has respect for authority.

**Individualism versus Collectivism**

This dimension is concerned with whether people act as individuals or as members of groups, “I” versus “we” (Hofstede 1993, p.89). Hofstede (1993) states that this is something which children grow to learn; either they remain loyal to a group or they think for themselves like individuals. Individualistic cultures let people look out for themselves whereas collective societies rely on groups to identify themselves and their status (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p. 758). Newman & Nollen (1996) state that the attribute of individualism is the search for identity and status, while for collectivism it is the aim to act in the interest of the group. This is the one dimension, according to Hofstede (2007) that produces the most significant difference between Asian and Western European
and Anglo countries. This in the end affects the way management is developed in each part of the world.

However, Fang (2010) discusses the fact that even though Asian people are seen as collectivist, in some situations, the same persons can be individualistic. The author refers to the activity of karaoke, where the collectivist employees become individualistic in different settings (Fang 2010).

**Masculinity versus Femininity**

“Masculine cultures value achievement and abhor failure while feminine cultures value affiliation and view failure as much less important.” (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p. 758). Hofstede (1993) describes masculinity as valuing assertiveness, performance, success and competition, while femininity prefers values such as the quality of life, personal relationships and solidarity. In the workplace, Newman & Nollen (1996, p. 759) state that a masculine culture assumes that employees are searching for high earnings, rewards and recognition, while feminine cultures emphasize the importance of interpersonal relations.

**Uncertainty Avoidance**

This dimension refers to the preference of structured over unstructured situations (Hofstede, 1993, p. 90), and deals with the extent to which people are threatened by uncertainty (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p. 756). It refers to the degree of the clarity of plans, policies, procedures and systems (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p. 756). Even though this aspect was discussed in Hofstede’s original research, Newman and Nollen (1996) argue that uncertainty avoidance is not supported through their empirical studies and does not have a large impact on the organization, especially when there was a low result. In addition, they state that it could simply ‘be an artifact of the time during which it was developed.’ (Newman & Nollen, 1996, p. 756). It is important to take this into account when conducting the empirical research.

**Long-term versus Short-term Orientation**

Long-term orientation refers to the values oriented towards the future, while short-term is concerned with the past and present, such as tradition and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede, 1993, p. 90). This dimension is particularly relevant to Asia, where long-term orientation involves patience, perseverance and respect, and short-term refers to having a shorter outlook where they put high performance in front of longevity (Newman & Nollen, 1996, pp. 759-760). It was later added to the cultural framework after a Chinese Value Survey was conducted, where the results were influenced by the teachings of Confucius (Hofstede, 1993, p. 90). Harrison and Lassen (2005, p. 55) make a list of six features that are particularly persistent in the long-term orientation (Confucian
dynamism), these are: group orientation, respect for hierarchy, the concept of not losing one’s face, avoidance of conflict and confrontation, the importance of relationships and the need for harmony.

As this thesis aims to analyze the effects of cultural diversity on the management’s informational roles, it might simply come down the statement by Hofstede (1993, p.87) which says:

At best, one can hope for a dialogue between equals with the locals, in which the Western partner acts as the expert in Western technology and the local partner as the expert in local, culture, habits, and feelings.

3. Empirical results

3.1. Informational Roles of managers at UMA

3.1.1. Monitor

Looking into the practice of manager’s at UMA, and more closely at their roles as monitors, we can see that the information gained by them from their subordinates, fellow managers and CEO, deals with many different aspects of their work. Information gathered by managers from their subordinates includes feedback regarding the work and production within their specific departments. For instance, the Warehouse System Executive states that he receives information concerning quantity and quality of products in the warehouse. Whereas the Store Manager receives information concerning more general aspects of the products and what customers expect, etc.

The managers interviewed at UMA describe the typical characteristics of the subordinates who give them feedback. These are; Vietnamese, below 30 years old and usually male. The language used between the managers and their subordinates usually depends on the nationality of the manager. If the manager can handle the local language, he or she will often use it to communicate with since most of the staff is Vietnamese, and this information will be gained on a daily basis through verbal interaction during the day-to-day business or the more formal staff meetings. When asking the CEO the same question regarding the characteristics of the typical “feedback giver”, he responded that these would usually be non Vietnamese, male and female Swedes, French, Canadian and Filipino staff. But he also receives feedback and information from senior Vietnamese staff and his Vietnamese business partner. However, the Swedish Export Manager states that he receives no feedback from any of his subordinates.
3.1.2. Disseminator

Depending on the manager, the information spread to subordinates ranges from daily emails to weekly meetings. Most information is spread when dealing with the staff face-to-face and often concerns the daily work activities and products. When dealing with more serious matters, more formal ways of communication are required, such as letters and memos. Ordinarily feedback is given back to the subordinates from their respective managers regarding job performance, job related problems and also how to develop effective job habits. Looking more closely at the different managers and what they share with their staff, we can observe that the Vietnamese purchasing executive speaks to his subordinates about quality issues, development progress and new technology issues. The Vietnamese Store Manager discusses relevant matters concerning products and the store, whereas the Filipino Customer Service Manager deals with customer service issues, time aspect and other related topics.

3.1.3. Spokesperson

As spokespersons within UMA, the managers send information to fellow managers and the CEO. The information sent to colleague managers usually concerns different problems within the field of operation, quality of products, new products planning and results. This occurs on a frequent basis through email and phone. Meeting face-to-face usually takes place during their so called Friday meetings. Similar to the communication between managers and subordinates, here managers communicate with managers in Vietnamese or English depending on their nationalities. Usually it will be in English as it might relate to all managers, and later on the CEO, who do not speak Vietnamese.

Between managers and CEO, communication is often done through email and phone calls. As the Customer Service Manager says “on critical matters we will try to schedule a meeting (face-to-face) and talk things over”. The manager explains that this happens when approval is needed from the CEO to make significant decisions. This is commonly done in English and the information concerns the current status of sales, staff and future enhancements to gain new customers.

3.2. Vietnamese Culture and Cultural Diversity at UMA

To be able to take the cultural diversity at UMA into account, it is important to acknowledge the main external national culture of Vietnam. As many of UMA’s employees are Vietnamese, as well as their customers, it is vital to understand their customs and norms in order to effectively operate a
business in the country. War and invasions have occupied their history over a long period of time but they have now been independent and war-free for more than 30 years, and due to this the Vietnamese people have a very strong sense of national pride (Moran et al, 2007, pp. 488 - 491). Their largest minority group is Chinese, and it is this culture that has dominated Vietnam for more than 1000 years (Moran et al, 2007, p. 490). They are very future oriented and curious about new business opportunities, they have great respect for their elders along with a strong sense of hospitality, and they have solid ties with their extended family (Moran et al, 2007, pp.491-492).

On top of the Vietnamese culture, there is a range of different cultures present at UMA. The CEO is Swedish, as well as the Export Manager. Additionally, one of the store managers is from Canada and the manager for the supply of inventory is French. The office manager, as well as some store managers, is Vietnamese and the Customer Service Manager is Filipino. The subordinates to each of these managers are often Vietnamese. By operating such a culturally diverse company, it is important that information is spread, monitored and collected correctly. Through our empirical study we have interviewed seven of the managers at UMA to gain a qualitative understanding of the cultural diversity at UMA. These interviewed managers do not cover the whole range of cultures present at UMA, rather they represent the Vietnamese, Filipino and Scandinavian cultures. In Table 1 Hofstede’s five dimensions are applied to these three cultures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultures</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Scandinavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power distance</strong></td>
<td>High power distance</td>
<td>High power distance</td>
<td>Low power distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism vs. Collectivism</strong></td>
<td>High degree of collectivism</td>
<td>Higher degree of collectivism</td>
<td>High degree of individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculinity vs. Femininity</strong></td>
<td>High femininity</td>
<td>High masculinity</td>
<td>High degree of femininity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncertainty Avoidance</strong></td>
<td>Moderate uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>Moderate uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>Moderate uncertainty avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-term vs. Short-term orientation</strong></td>
<td>Long-term oriented</td>
<td>Less long-term oriented</td>
<td>Moderately long-term oriented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Hofstede’s five dimensions applied to the Vietnamese, Filipino & Scandinavian cultures

Table 1 shows that, in relation to Hofstede’s five dimensions of national culture, Vietnam can be described as ‘high power distance, high collectivism, [and] moderate uncertainty avoidance’ (Quang & Vuong, 2002, p. 38). Kohl (2007) also acknowledges that high power-distance in Vietnam is combined with low uncertainty avoidance, as employees see their organizations as families; they feel that they will be taken care of, both financially and physically.
In contrast, Quang and Vuong (2002), as stated above, proclaim that the Vietnamese culture displays moderate uncertainty avoidance, as they often try to avoid ambiguous situations to for example save face. As shown in Table 1, collectivism in Vietnam consists of ‘tight social frameworks and self-functioning communities’ where titles, status and formality are very important (Quang & Vuong, 2002, p.38). Moreover, Kohl (2007) speaks of how the Vietnamese culture often encourages face-to-face communication over written interaction, this reflecting their pointing more towards femininity than masculinity in Hofstede’s five dimensions. Finally, as Kohl (2007) mentions, we can see that the Vietnamese are highly long-term oriented.

Table 1 also illustrates how the Filipino culture has high power distance, a higher degree of collectivism, high masculinity, moderate uncertainty avoidance and a lesser degree of long-term orientation compared to other cultures (Itim international [1]). This could be compared to the Scandinavian culture which has a low power distance, resulting in a higher degree of individualism, high degree of femininity, moderate uncertainty avoidance and a tendency to be more moderately long-term oriented (Itim international [2]).

3.2.1. Linking UMA to Hofstede

To make it possible to identify cultural differences within UMA in terms of Hofstede and his five dimensions, questions concerning relevant matters, such as the power structure at UMA and the way in which they work, were addressed to the managers at UMA. The resulting information is presented in Table 2 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power distance</th>
<th>Vietnamese Stock Controller</th>
<th>Vietnamese Purchasing Executive</th>
<th>Filipino Customer Service manager</th>
<th>Vietnamese Ex-Shop Manager</th>
<th>Vietnamese Shop Manager</th>
<th>Swedish Export Manager</th>
<th>Swedish CEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UMA is mostly decentralized</td>
<td>UMA is decentralized</td>
<td>UMA is both decentralized (70%) and Hierarchical (30%)</td>
<td>UMA is decentralized</td>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>UMA is decentralized</td>
<td>Aim is to make it very decentralized</td>
<td>Though current situation requires CEO to make many decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Individualism vs. Collectivism | Likes to work in groups | Likes to work in groups | Works in groups and enjoys it. Too much work to take on alone | Works in groups | Works in groups | Works in groups | A lot is done in groups |

| Masculinity vs. Femininity | Wants to gain both a higher bonus and good relationships/secure working life | Wants to gain good relationships/secure working life | Wants to gain experience to enhance knowledge and good personal relationships. Higher bonuses, etc comes as a secondary purpose | Wants to gain good relationships/secure working life | Wants to gain good relationships/secure working life | Looks for personal relationships/stable/secure working life | Most important is to have fun and gain new, valuable contacts |

| Uncertainty Avoidance | Prefers a structured environment | Prefers spontaneous and unstructured environments | Prefers a structured environment with clear responsibilities | Prefers a structured environment | Prefers a structured environment (but with room for spontaneous decisions) | Aim is to create a more structured environment |


Table 2. UMA managers’ replies on Hofstede-inspired questions
By looking at Table 2 we could see how the opinions of five of the managers at UMA, and the CEO, were cross-referenced with Hofstede’s five dimensions of culture. The results show us that most of them think of UMA as a decentralized company, some more than others. They all agree upon the fact that they usually work in groups and that most of them want to gain good relationships with their surroundings and contacts. Four of the managers prefer structured environments, one prefers spontaneous ones, and the CEO aims at making them more structured than spontaneous. Finally, all of the managers prefer long-term solutions over short-term solutions, but some of them acknowledge the fact that it many times depends on the given situation.

3.2.2. UMA Managers’ opinions concerning consequences of cultural differences

When asking different managers at UMA what problems they found in connection to the difference in culture, we found different answers, and they are presented in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese Purchasing Executive</th>
<th>Filipino Customer Service manager</th>
<th>Vietnamese Ex- Shop Manager</th>
<th>Vietnamese Shop Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of cultural differences between Managers and fellow Managers</td>
<td>Different tastes of products leading to discussion</td>
<td>Different attitudes, behavior and beliefs affecting things such as holidays.</td>
<td>More freedom to do your work depending on your nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of cultural differences between Managers and Subordinates</td>
<td>Differences in visions of how to solve problems</td>
<td>Vietnamese culture suggests that younger are inferior to older. But as a Filipino manager this does not apply</td>
<td>Younger person should respect older by 100%, even in work which causes lots of problems for managers. But this does not affect the foreign managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of cultural differences between Managers and CEO</td>
<td>Cost consciousness and priorities differ</td>
<td>Since UMA is run by foreigners, it gives younger people more challenging responsibilities than what a Vietnamese company would have</td>
<td>Managers get more freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. UMA managers’ opinions concerning consequences of cultural differences

When looking at the results in Table 3, the issues that seem to exist when managers of different nationalities at UMA interact are; differences in tastes, attitudes, behavior, beliefs, working styles and knowledge base. Also, a number of managers feel that different nationalities
give managers different amount of freedom to perform their work since some cultures allow some to take on bigger responsibilities.

When asked what problems, or issues, arose between them and their subordinates due to the cultural differences within UMA, the answers included the fact that many times there were differences in visions and how problems should be solved. But what was discussed most by all managers was that the Vietnamese culture made it difficult for the Vietnamese managers to manage their subordinates since this culture emphasizes the superiority of the elders above the younger people. Hence, younger managers cannot “boss around” their staff like other foreign managers, that seem to be unaffected by this rule. Though the Vietnamese Shop Manager seems to find something positive in the fact that there is an understanding between him and the Vietnamese staff due to similar cultures, and he can see how this might not be the fact for the foreign managers. At the same time the foreign managers, such as the Filipino Customer Service Manager, think that they are favored by their nationality since their culture, and lack of Vietnamese culture, allows them bigger responsibilities and since they as a result can act as the authority of the elders within their staff.

Finally, the managers were asked whether or not they perceived any complications due to cultural differences when it came to their interaction with the Swedish CEO. The Vietnamese Purchasing Executive thought that there were differences in cost consciousness and priorities, and that this could make ground for discussions. The Filipino Customer Service Manager and the Vietnamese Ex-Shop Manager agreed on the fact that since the company is run by a foreigner, they are given more freedom, bigger responsibilities and greater challenges as managers. The current Vietnamese Shop Manager stated that there are a number of language and cultural barriers present. This is shown in difficulties in communication and differences in what is expected. Not included in Table 3 are the thoughts of the Swedish Export Manager who simply said that:

In general, the Vietnamese have much more respect for their managers compared to Sweden. In most cases, you really need to stress that you want and is open to comments and feedback on decisions you make as a manager. Otherwise, no one will oppose or comment. You also need to be more “hands on” as a manager, securing and follow up that things really are done and in time. You cant just delegate a task without following it up in detail.

Similar questions were asked to the Swedish CEO of UMA to reveal his opinion on the matter, though his answers are not compiled in Table 3. When asked to describe a situation between him and managers in which culture made a difference he stated that “Development talk with Vietnamese managers; everything has a polite dimension where most of the subordinates comments
are positive, even if I know they have negative thoughts”. He continues by explaining how, when discussing with Canadian staff, everything is exaggerated and there is a use of many, “unnecessary” words to describe a situation and make it comprehensible. When asked to describe how similar issues might arise when communicating with his staff and other subordinates, he says that such situations occur “[when] we discuss and agree [on] a topic in English and the staff is acting / doing totally opposite of agreed, (lost in translation)”. 

Finally, on the question of what problems occur when the CEO communicated with his external network, he replied that:

When making a presentation in industrial design of furniture to a Vietnamese audience, English translated to Vietnamese, only to discover afterwards that they were into food and agricultural business, they didn’t understand much but nobody said anything.

4. Analysis and Discussion

To analyze the information we have received from UMA and to be able to fulfill the objectives of this thesis, we need to apply the cultural dimensions at UMA onto their managers’ informational roles. As the thesis is presenting how culture affects the way managers perceive their informational role in the company, the aim is to apply Hofstede’s dimensions onto Mintzberg’s managerial roles. Each dimension’s effects will be discussed in terms of the three areas of the informational roles.

4.1. Power Distance and the Informational Roles

When questioning about power distance in the interviews with UMA’s managers, there was not a unified answer whether UMA is decentralized or hierarchical. This could affect the monitoring roles of the manager as the information intended for him or her never reaches them, due to a misunderstanding of whom the subordinates should report to. However, UMA’s management seems to pursue decentralization even though the Vietnamese culture, as mentioned by Quang and Vuong (2002), is based on a high power distance. This might cause problems since; trying to run a decentralized company may consume both time and resources in order to re-educate employees that naturally come from a culture which adopts hierarchical patterns in professional and personal arenas.

Furthermore, as monitors, managers have to encourage subordinates to give feedback. Many of the Vietnamese managers stated that they received feedback from their subordinates, the common employee responding being average 30 years old, male and Vietnamese. However, these subordinates usually avoid giving feedback to the CEO, as there appears to be some definite
“distance” between them, in a hierarchical sense. This also seems to be the case for the Swedish Export Manager who is experiencing similar problems due to the cultural distance. Yet here we can see that the senior Vietnamese have no hesitations to addressing the CEO, possibly since their power and hierarchical position within their own culture gives them a bigger right to speak-up, compared to the younger Vietnamese.

For Vietnamese managers, difficulties arise when spreading information to subordinates, controlling and giving them orders. This is due to cultural norms, where there is a high respect for elders and their authority, within and outside of the business world. As a disseminator, when managers attempt to spread information to their subordinates, they have to consider their cultural values in order to successfully inform their employees. This problem also occurs in the role of the spokesperson, between managers themselves and the CEO. Managers of other nationalities are exceptions as they are possibly unaware of the cultural values and therefore cannot connect to their employees on such a cultural level as a Vietnamese national.

Some of the managers mention problems arising when communicating with each other, their subordinates and CEO where different nationalities matter. These problems include, like Moran (2007) mentions, differing visions, problem identification and solutions for these given problems. Looking closer at Hofstede’s two dimensions, power distance and uncertainty avoidance, we can see that power distance is affected by different cultures, which, in return, will influence the way problems are diagnosed within the business. This due to the fact that people will have diverse opinions on whose responsibility and right it is to investigate and resolve the problem. Then, the different degrees of uncertainty avoidance will give varied results for course of action. Linking these facts to Mintzberg’s informational roles we can see that as a disseminator, if not all subordinates agree upon the fact that the specific manager has authorization to handle the given problem (they do not have a similar degree of power distance), they might not pay attention or find the information spread to be relevant. This also applies to the managers as monitors and them spreading the information to fellow managers. Also, if they have a dissimilar level of uncertainty avoidance, then they will not agree upon the same solutions, and this might affect the managers’ spokesman roles.

4.2. Individualism vs. Collectivism and the Informational Roles

Applying the dimension of individualism and collectivism to the informational roles, it is evident that a collectivist attitude, which the Vietnamese culture is based on, can affect the way managers collect and spread information. As mentioned earlier, the collectivist view emphasizes the importance of the group and the “we” above the “I”. This goes hand-in-hand with the national
culture of Vietnam which is characterized by strong social communities, as well as national pride. Through this, it is evident that there are possibly stronger bonds established between Vietnam nationals in comparison to the bonds between foreign managers and their subordinates within UMA, since most Vietnamese will relate more to fellow Vietnamese. This could result in different ways feedback is given to certain managers, and hence the manager’s and the subordinate’s nationality might affect the manager’s monitor roles. An example of this is how the Vietnamese subordinates feel more comfortable speaking to their Vietnamese managers when giving feedback and spreading information while the Swedish Export Manager is not getting any feedback. They obviously feel that the cultural differences, including language barriers, as one of the Shop Managers mentions, between them and the foreign CEO/managers are too big. This is a probable reason seeing that the foreign, Scandinavian and other Western managers have no problems with confronting the CEO as they find that they can relate to him and are not intimidated by his nationality. Therefore the collectivist view of the staff at UMA also affects the spokesperson roles of the managers.

However, if only the collectivist attitude is considered as a whole, as a disseminator, this could allow for better communication between the manager and their subordinates. In addition, the way managers spread information between themselves can also describe their attitude towards either individual or group work.

4.3. Masculinity vs. Femininity and the Informational Roles

Evident from our research at UMA, is that the company is operating in a more feminine environment than masculine. This can be concluded by the fact that the managers prefer good relationships and stable working lives, above instant rewards. This is consistent with Hofstede’s description of the feminine dimension as; searching for quality of life and interpersonal relationships. Also, as mentioned earlier, Kohl (2007) speaks of how the Vietnamese culture often encourages face-to-face communication over written interaction, which shows they are more feminine. We could, from our interviews with the managers at UMA, see a pattern of how face-to-face and verbal communication was valued highly and this in turn shows that they have a culture within the business which is generally more feminine than masculine. This face-to-face interaction affects the informational roles in various ways. As monitors, the managers gain more subtle information from their subordinates, as they are communicating both verbally and through body language. Moreover, femininity can bring about valuable feedback from employees. As this dimensions views failure as less important, employees may feel more secure in giving feedback to their managers, knowing that it is about constructive criticism. However, the face-to-face
interaction might hinder crucial feedback from the subordinates since the Vietnamese culture avoids confrontation and the risk of losing face, therefore they might be less critical towards their managers or the CEO. An example of this is given by the CEO when he explains how development talks with Vietnamese managers usually have a polite dimension, where most of the subordinates’ comments are positive, even though the CEO knows that they have negative thoughts.

As disseminators, the managers of Vietnamese culture might have a harder time spreading information and thereby giving orders to their older subordinates, since they have a higher degree of power distance, and this might be more hard to overcome face-to-face than if communication had been more indirect and impersonal through mail or memos. This may well affect the spokesperson roles of the managers.

4.4. Uncertainty Avoidance and the Informational Roles

Each type of informational roles is affected by uncertainty avoidance, as it accounts for the formality of the way information is spread and collected. As most of the managers are UMA preferred a more structured work environment, the informational roles of the manager become more planned, and less spontaneous. However, as there was one objection to the rest of the managers’ points of view concerning uncertainty avoidance, it is important to discuss the problem when managers have different perspectives and how it affects the way they handle their informational roles. The Purchasing Executive Manager assumed a more unstructured view on work and so this can result in distinct ways of collecting and spreading information, which could differ from the way other managers perform the same tasks. This in turn will lead to inconsistency in gathering and spreading information at all levels. This is a problem since, besides confusing the staff, there will be gaps created in the information handling process where loss of valuable information is likely to occur.

However, it is important to take into account the research done by Newman and Nollen (1996), where they found little support for uncertainty avoidance. On the other hand, as many of the managers prefer a more structured and planned degree of working, this can account for avoiding insecure situations. In addition, as the CEO stated, there is a need for a better structured environment, but that does not specifically mean that he wants to avoid it.

4.5. Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation and the Informational Roles

After looking at Harrison and Lassen’s definition of long-term orientation which entails the features of; respect for hierarchy, high degree of group orientation, following the concept of not losing one’s
face, avoiding conflict and confrontation, the importance of relationships and the need for harmony, we figure that we can define the degree of long-term orientation at UMA by looking at their dimensions of power distance, femininity versus masculinity, individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. This due to the fact these are defined by the features which in turn describe the long-term orientation. For instance, looking at the power distance dimension; the Asian managers at UMA have a high degree of power distance which can be seen in their respect for elders, division of authority, etc. we can also see that they have a high degree of collectivism, femininity and uncertainty avoidance. Since all of these factors are included in the features of long-term orientation, we can conclude that this is the case of most managers at UMA and also that this is positively related to Quang’s (2002) report which states that Vietnamese are long-term oriented. Connecting all of this to Mintzberg’s informational roles, we could assume that their long-term orientation affects them in the same way as we have mentioned earlier for the other four dimensions which define the long-term orientation.

Also, we could consider the fact told by the CEO where he states that he could be making a presentation to a Vietnamese audience about his business, only to discover later that they were not into the same kind of business, that they had not understood anything and that they did not say anything anyways. Here we see a case of Vietnamese culture where they do not want to confront problems and “lose face” which, defining their long-term orientation, will cause problems for the managers in their communication. This will cause difficulty in communication between managers, managers and their subordinates and CEO since they will never know if the information they gain as monitors or spread as disseminators and spokespersons, is fully comprehended.

4.6. Table summary of Hofstede’s dimensions applied to Mintzberg’s Informational Roles

Table 4 below presents a summary of the information discussed in the previous analysis and discussion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mintzberg’s informational roles of managers</th>
<th>Monitor</th>
<th>Disseminator</th>
<th>Spokesperson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power Distance</strong></td>
<td>● No unified agreement whether UMA is decentralized or hierarchical; causes problems in right information reaching right manager</td>
<td>● Cultural norms hinder young Vietnamese managers</td>
<td>● Cultural norms hinder young Vietnamese managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Vietnamese subordinates avoid giving information and feedback to non-Vietnamese managers</td>
<td>● Non-Vietnamese managers not affected</td>
<td>● Vietnamese managers feel more freedom towards CEO and are given more responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism vs Collectivism</strong></td>
<td>● Difference in how information is spread from subordinates to managers depending on their respective nationalities.</td>
<td>● Allows for better communication between managers and their subordinates</td>
<td>● Diverse opinions on whose responsibility and right it is to investigate and resolve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculinity vs Femininity</strong></td>
<td>● Subtle information can be gained thanks to face-to-face communication</td>
<td>● When communicating face-to-face it is harder for Vietnamese managers to overcome cultural power distance between them and senior Vietnamese managers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Failure less important, hence more criticism is encouraged from subordinates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Face-to-face : Vietnamese subordinates might hold back on valuable information as not to “lose-face” and “confront”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncertainty Avoidance</strong></td>
<td>● Difference in uncertainty avoidance: loss of valuable information</td>
<td>● Difference in uncertainty avoidance: loss of valuable information</td>
<td>● Different degrees of uncertainty avoidance will give varied results for course of action when solving problems and disagreements on solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-term vs Long-term Orientation</strong></td>
<td>● Difficult for managers to know full relevance of information gained since it might have been altered so that Vietnamese Subordinates don’t “lose face”</td>
<td>● Managers might not always know if the subordinates have understood the given information correctly, since they might not want to admit to not comprehending</td>
<td>● Information between managers and CEO might not always be fully understood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4. Impact of culture on the informational roles of managers (including the CEO) at UMA*
5. Conclusion

This thesis aimed at answering the following question: “How do the managers of UMA Ltd Co perceive cultural diversity within their company, and how does this cultural diversity affect their informational roles?”. To investigate this, we have conducted a case study of UMA to identify the character of their managers’ informational roles and Hofstede’s five dimensions of the culture within the company. This was done so that we could cross-reference the results and answer the research question.

After analyzing the effects of Hostede’s five dimensions on the informational roles of the managers and CEO at UMA, we observed that there is evidence of overlapping between the five dimensions, as Orr and Hauser discovered in their study of Hostede. For instance, considering the discussion within the long-term orientation analysis, it is clear that the dimensions might not be as clearly defined as Hofstede portrays. However, it is evident that the managers at UMA have similar opinions regarding many of these dimensions, and this could benefit their business in many ways. Moreover, a combination of feminine and collectivist attitude toward life can result in good relationships both between managers and subordinates, but also between managers themselves, which can influence the role of the spokesperson. As UMA is a relatively small company, good relations between managers can help the way in which information is spread, especially between units.

Regarding power distance, there is a general view by the managers that UMA is a decentralized company. However, there is still culturally established distance that leaves the company in a more hierarchical state. In addition, as the CEO stated, the firm is still relatively small and without operating with a full workforce, decisions need to be made by him in absence of a better suited employee. This, we think, could be a big source of confusion for the employees. Having diverse views on how the company is structured will affect the way information is handled, since different people will have different opinions on who should receive the specific information. This could result in people getting wrong information and not being able to use it in a beneficial way, which would mean that the right people miss out on important information. In other words, gaps will be created within the company and the stream of information will not be smooth, and the risk of loss of vital information increases. Here we see the need of setting a common and official organizational structure of UMA’s business, and they should make sure to spread it to all employees, so that awareness and routines of who accounts for what can be established.

Another problem concerning the degree of power distance at UMA was found;
Vietnamese employees, managers and subordinates, follow the norms of their culture which has strong respect of elders, and in which young people many times lack authority over seniors. We found that this many times hindered the managers of executing their authority over their staff and when they were interacting with other Vietnamese managers. In other words, the informational roles are suffering from this and UMA needs to find a way to bridge the gap in power distance which is high in the Vietnamese culture, but low in the foreign managers and CEO’s cultures. Like earlier, this will cause confusion for the staff, since some subordinates, mainly the older ones, will have different ways of communicating with different managers depending on their nationality, and some managers, the younger Vietnamese ones, will also communicate differently with subordinates and managers. Once again, inconsistency is never good in this case. Since this power distance is deeply rooted in their every-day lives, it will obviously be hard to “undo”, but some sort of compromise might be possible since the senior Vietnamese subordinates are apparently willing to oversee this distance when it comes to younger non-Vietnamese managers.

When analyzing how the degree of femininity at UMA affects their informational roles, we find that the high use of face-to-face communication has both positive and negative sides to it. Positive in that the managers will gain the subtle and unspoken information that otherwise would have been excluded in a phone call or on an e-mail. The negative part is that, since Vietnamese never want to lose their face and like to avoid confrontation, the face-to-face communication is likely to put them “on the spot” and to increase the pressure on them. We think that this might lead to them not accounting fully for situations, that they might not criticize and express their true feelings, as a way to avoid confrontation. This was supported by evidence from the CEO, where he described such a situation. We think that this could possibly be avoided through the use of other media when looking for a specific type of information. For instance, when wanting more feed-back from the employees and ideas on how to improve; they could use anonymous evaluation slips, or place a box in the office in which employees can put notes with ideas, continuously. Of course the use of face-to-face communication should be used as well, but it could be profitable to complement it by other means as well.

We also found that the degrees of uncertainty avoidance were different within the company. Once again, consistency is crucial when it comes to business, and UMA needs to set common goals, visions and routines by which all staff, of all nationalities can follow when at work. In other words, they need to make the corporate culture, the culture by which the whole business follows, more clear. This leads to another aspect that needs to be considered in reference to Orr and Hauser’s article. This is; since many of the managers and CEO have similar opinions regarding the
five dimensions, this could portray an overall corporate culture instead of a national culture. Even though national culture evidently influences the way UMA is operating, there might be a combination of national and corporate culture that affects the informational roles of the managers. Orr and Hauser try to eliminate this concern by using a diverse range of corporations in order to distinguish corporate culture from national culture. However, as this thesis is based on a case study of a single firm, this is not possible.

In conclusion, we have received usable information, the number of different interviewees can also represent the general proportion of each nationality in UMA. It is evident that there is a cultural impact on the informational roles, and this research could be extended in the future to possibly eliminate the corporate culture and focus on the national culture dimensions.

6. Suggested future research

After conducting this case study on UMA, it is evident that more studies can be conducted surrounding the topic of cultural diversity and its impact on the managerial roles, especially when it concerns communication. What was not specifically researched in this thesis was the topic of language and translation. When operating a multicultural company it is important to realize that language plays a large role when it comes to communication, more specifically, translation. Translation is dependent on how the translator decides to convert the words from one language to another. What needs to be taken into account is the context the translator is in and what nationality he or she is. As the communicators rely on the translator to properly translate, the power lies in the translator’s hands, which means they are able to interpret the message in the way that possibly suits them best. However, as this is only speculation, it would still be an interesting aspect for future research.
References


Itim international [1], “Geert Hofstede, cultural dimensions”<http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_phpippines.shtml>[2/6-2010]

Itim international [2], “Geert Hofstede, cultural dimensions”<http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_sweden.shtml>[2/6-2010]


Appendix

Interview Questions:

Objectives of this interview: to obtain information concerning managers’ role within UMA Ltd Co, how information is spread and collected between managers, subordinates and CEO. Also, to collect information regarding feedback from manager to subordinates and vice versa. This is to answer if cultural diversity within UMA Ltd Co seems to affect the informational roles of the managers.

Questions:

1. What nationality are you?

2. What role do you play in the organisation? What do you do?

3. Describe how information concerning business within UMA, is collected and spread(sent out):
   a. between managers:
      i. In what form (eg. email, letter, phone, face-to-face)
      ii. What kind of information do you share?
      iii. How often do you collect/spread information
   
   b. between managers and subordinates(your staff):
      i. In what form (eg. email, letter, phone, face-to-face)
      ii. What kind of information do you share?
      iii. How often do you collect/spread information
   
   c. between managers and CEO
      i. In what form (eg. email, letter, phone, face-to-face)
      ii. What kind of information do you share?
      iii. How often do you collect/spread information

3. Do you give any feedback to your subordinates(your staff)?
   a. If so, in what form do you give it?
   b. What topics are usually discussed?

4. Do you receive any feedback from your subordinates(your staff)?
   a. If so, in what form do you receive it?
   
   b. What topics are usually discussed?
c. Describe the characteristics (age, gender, nationality etc) of the typical staff that gives feedback to you.

5. In what language do you communicate?
   a. Between managers
   b. Between managers and your staff
   c. Between managers and CEO

6. Please describe a situation where you felt that difference in culture made a difference.
   a. Between managers
   b. Between managers and your staff
   c. Between managers and CEO

7. For each question, choose one of the given alternatives:
   a. Do you see UMA as a hierarchical organization (where the CEO makes the decisions) or a decentralized organization (where each manager makes decisions within their respective area)?
   b. Do you work more in groups with other managers and your staff, or do you believe you work more individually (alone)?
   c. As a manager, what do you want to gain out of work? A higher bonus (more money) or more personal relationships/stable/secure working life?
   d. Do you like to work in a more structured environment (you have many formal rules and you follow a plan) or a more spontaneous/unstructured environment (more informal, where you plan very little)
   e. Do you look for the short-term solution or long-term solution (where the effects do not show until in the future)?