Challenges in communication and leadership in multicultural teams

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Abstract

As a result of the increasingly global business environment, many multinational companies rely on multicultural teams to perform work-related activities. People from different nationalities have different views on work and hierarchy, and show different behaviour regarding time management, work norms, decision-making, and problem solving. Multicultural teams face various challenges, caused by their members' different cultural backgrounds. In this thesis, a literature study is adopted to study the communication and leadership challenges in multicultural teams, and how these challenges can be managed. Team members' different cultural backgrounds influence their own way of communication and how they perceive communication of other cultures. Next to that, culture also influences leadership expectations and leadership style preferences. To manage and overcome the challenges in communication and leadership, team members and leaders need to develop intercultural competence.

Further research is required to clarify the effects of intercultural competence of team members on communication in multicultural teams, and how intercultural competent leadership contributes to manage leadership challenges in multicultural teams.

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1. Introduction

As a result of the increasingly global business environment, many multinational companies rely on multicultural teams to perform work-related activities. The global marketplace brings new complications, requires new visions and other ways of thinking and a better understanding of local customers. "Global customer satisfaction calls for effective functioning of geographically dispersed, culturally mixed work teams." (Matveev & Milter. 2004).

An increasing number of international firms structure their work through the use of multicultural teams (Matveev & Milter. 2004). Multicultural teams are used to meet the challenges of globalization (Cheng, Chua, Morris & Lee. 2012); geographically dispersed and culturally mixed work teams are necessary to fulfil global customer satisfaction (Saphiere. 1996). Employees are working closely together in teams with people from different cultures (Cheng et al. 2012; Moon. 2013). Examples of firms who have formed multicultural teams are Marriot, Royal Dutch Shell and Ernst & Young (Matveev & Milter. 2004).
People from different nationalities have different views on work and hierarchy, and show different behaviour regarding time management, work norms, decision-making, and problem solving (Behfar, Kern & Brett, 2006; Hofstede. 1983). Multicultural teams face various challenges, caused by their members' different cultural backgrounds (Behfar et al. 2006).

This thesis will address two types of these challenges in multicultural teams: communication and leadership challenges.
Communication is very important for teams to function (Hedman & Valo. 2015; Salas, Shuffler, Thayer, Bedwell & Lazzara. 2015), and communication is highly influenced by culture (Hall. 1976; Hofstede. 1980). Therefore, communication is a key challenge in multicultural teams (Ayoko. 2007; Congden, Matveev & Desplaces. 2009; Marquardt & Horvath. 2001; Matveev & Nelson. 2004; Saphiere. 1996; Wright & Drewery. 2006). Leading multicultural teams is an important issue in multinational companies (Zander & Butler. 2010). The attitude towards hierarchy and superiors is different in every culture (Hofstede. 1980), and this causes challenges within multicultural teams (Behfar et al. 2006; Lisak & Erez. 2015; Rothacker & Hauer. 2014). It is important for a leader to learn about the different cultures in his team and how they can manage the different attitudes towards hierarchy (Zander, Mockaitis & Butler. 2012).
A detailed explanation of the communication and leadership challenges will be given in chapter two.

Although a considerable amount of research has been conducted to clarify the challenges in communication and leadership in multicultural teams, a clear overview and integration of this literature is missing. The aim of this thesis is to provide a clear perspective of the current status of literature on this topic, thereby addressing the following research question: how can communication and leadership challenges be managed in multicultural teams?

This research question is addressed by providing answers on the following sub-question:
- What are communication challenges in multicultural teams?;
- What are leadership challenges in multicultural teams?
- What are the theories on managing challenges in multicultural teams?

Section 1.2 will elaborate on the methodology of this thesis, and chapter 2 will give an explanation of key concepts and definitions. "Communication challenges in multicultural teams" will be presented in chapter 3; "Leadership challenges in multicultural teams" will be presented in chapter 4; and "Theories on managing challenges in multicultural teams" will be presented in chapter 5. The results of this thesis will be discussed in chapter 6, followed by an answer to the main research question and a conclusion.

1.2 Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to provide an overview of the communication and leadership challenges in multicultural teams and to summarize the current status of literature on this topic. A traditional literature review-based study is the appropriate method to perform this thesis and to achieve the aim of this thesis (Baumeister. 2012; Kysh. 2013). A traditional literature review is used to address a research question with a broad scope (Uddin & Arafat. 2016), and to provide a summary or overview of a topic (Kysh. 2013). A traditional review can integrate results from different methods and procedures (Baumeister. 2012). In literature, multicultural teams are studied with use of different types of studies. For that reason, in this thesis different types of studies are used to provide information about the topic 'challenges in communication and leadership in multicultural teams': literature studies, discourse and interaction analyses, experimental studies, empirical studies, qualitative studies, and quantitative studies.

Information is gathered by database searches for published articles in Scopus and Google Scholar. For the initial search, Scopus is used. Google Scholar is used for an additional

search. Scopus is used because of the high number of articles in the field of social science (Harzing & Alakangas. 2016), the feature to discover related documents to the authors or keywords of a specific article, and good performance in terms of citations (Harzing & Alakangas. 2016). Google Scholar is used as an additional database, to find relevant articles which are cited in the articles found in the initial search, but are not covered in the database of Scopus. Google Scholar is the scientific database that provides the broadest coverage of articles (Harzing & Alakangas. 2016). However, Google Scholar is not used in the initial search for articles, because the lack of quality control of the database (Waltman. 2016).

An initial broad search is carried out in Scopus. Terms that will be used in search for documents:

- Multicultural
- Intercultural
- Global
- Transnational

- Multinational
- Cross-cultural
- Team(s)

- Challenges
- Leadership
- Communication

In literature, different terms for multicultural teams (Matveev & Milter. 2004; Oeching & Price. 2010) are 'transnational teams' (Earley & Mosakowski. 2000), 'global teams' (Zaidman & Malach-Pines. 2014), and 'multinational teams' (Joshi & Lazarova. 2005). Because different terms are used for 'multicultural team', it is important to also search for articles which use different terms for 'multicultural team'. A broader search leads to a greater base of resources to use for this thesis. For this reason, next to 'multicultural', the terms 'global', 'transnational', and 'multinational' will be used in combination with 'teams' when searching for articles.

The terms are used in combination. Examples are: "multicultural team" AND communication, "multinational team" AND challenges, "intercultural communication" AND team, "cross-cultural leadership", "global leadership" AND challenges. Search terms are used in Scopus to find articles based on 'article title, the abstract, and keywords'. The discipline of this thesis is social science, and business and organisation; hence, the subject areas are restricted to 'Social Sciences' and 'Business, Management and Accounting'. Only articles that are written in English are included in the data collection.

The selection of articles will be based on the criteria, the title of the articles and their relevancy to the topic of this thesis. If the title of an article is relevant, the relevancy of the article will be based on reading the abstract. If an abstract showed that the article would give

information about multicultural teams, and their challenges in communication and leadership, the article would be read.

In the initial broad search, two relevant journals were found: the journal of intercultural communication and the journal of language and intercultural communication. Relevant articles in these journals were searched by using the search term 'team'/'teams', to find articles in the field of intercultural communication, where teams are part of the study.

Scopus offered a wide range of literature on multicultural teams. However, relevant articles did use references which were not always covered in Scopus, but were covered in Google Scholar. For this reason, an additional search was carried out in Google Scholar. This additional search was carried out to find the articles that were cited in the articles from the initial search.

The initial broad search resulted in 486 articles about communication and multicultural teams. Relevant articles were selected to include in the data collection, based on the criteria and the relevancy to the topic. This resulted in a data collection of 62 articles about communication. These 62 articles were divided into five different categories of communication challenges: verbal and non-verbal communication, decision-making, language, virtual communication, and group cohesion. After extensive reading of the articles, some articles were added after an additional search of cited articles, and some articles were removed from the data collection because they were not found relevant after extensive reading. The number of articles used to write the results was 41 articles. The results are presented in chapter 3.

The initial broad search resulted in 329 articles about leadership and multicultural teams. Relevant articles were selected to include in the data collection, based on the criteria and the relevancy to the topic. This resulted in a data collection of 39 articles about leadership. These 39 articles were divided into four different categories of leadership challenges: leadership behaviours and project globe, leadership style preferences, leadership styles in multicultural teams, and global leadership and universal leadership attributes. After extensive reading of the articles, some articles were added after an additional search of cited articles, and some articles were removed from the data collection because they were not found relevant after extensive reading. The number of articles used to write the results was 32 articles. The results are presented in chapter 4.

After the initial broad search, more knowledge was gathered on how challenges in multicultural teams are managed: with the use of intercultural competence. For this reason, in the additional search for articles, 'intercultural competence' was added as a search term to find articles about intercultural competence in multicultural teams.

The additional search resulted in 455 articles about intercultural competence and multicultural teams. Relevant articles were selected to include in the data collection, based on the criteria and the relevancy to the topic. This resulted in a data collection of 41 articles about intercultural competence. These 41 articles were divided into three different categories of intercultural competence: intercultural competence theories, development of intercultural competence, and global intercultural competent leadership. After extensive reading of the articles, some articles were added after an additional search of cited articles, and some articles were removed from the data collection because they were not found relevant after extensive reading. The number of articles used to write the results was 34 articles. The results are presented in chapter 5.

Before the results are presented in chapters 3, 4, and 5, some key concepts and definitions will be explained in chapter 2.

2. Key concepts defined and explained

To be able to answer the main research question "How are communication and leadership challenges managed in multicultural teams?" and the following sub-questions, it is important to clarify the key concepts of this study. The goal is to discard misinterpretations about essential concepts, and to specify the aim of this study. The concepts that will be defined and explained are: "communication challenge", "leadership challenge", and "multicultural team".

2.1 Defining multicultural teams

In literature different terms are used for multicultural teams. Multicultural teams (Matveev & Milter. 2004; Oeching & Price. 2010) have been referred to as 'transnational teams' (Earley & Mosakowski. 2000), 'global teams' (Zaidman & Malach-Pines. 2014), and 'multinational teams' (Joshi & Lazarova. 2005), but these terms all refer to the same definition: "multicultural teams are task-oriented groups consisting of people of different nationalities and cultures" (Marquardt & Horvath. 2001). Articles will be included in this thesis if the teams that are studied in the article fit the definition of a multicultural team. Next to that, in studies to multicultural teams, teams usually consist of team members from different continents (Moon. 2013; Cheng et al. 2012; Behfar et al. 2006). Following this information, in this thesis, multicultural teams will refer to task-oriented teams with members of different nationalities and cultures, and also from several different continents.

2.2 Defining communication in multicultural teams

Team communication is defined as the process by which information is exchanged between two or more team members; the ability to clarify or acknowledge the receipt of information, in collaboration with others (Cannon-Bowers, Tannenbaum & Volpe. 1995; Hedman & Valo. 2015; Salas et al. 2015). Communication is already a challenge within same-cultural teams but is even more complicated in multicultural teams (Behfar et al. 2006). Team members have different attitudes, behaviours, and cognitions; in multicultural teams these differences are very extensive, because of the different cultural backgrounds (Behfar et al. 2006).

In literature, the term "intercultural communication" is often used to describe communication between cultures (Gudykunst & Mody. 2002; Ting-Toomey. 1999). Intercultural communication can be defined as "the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation." (Ting-Toomey. 1999)

Based on the two definitions of communication in teams and intercultural communication, communication in multicultural teams is defined as: 'the process by which people exchange and share information in collaboration with others, whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation'. When a challenge in a multicultural team fits this description of communication, it will be considered a communication challenge in this thesis.

2.3 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Studies to multicultural teams often use the Cultural Dimensions Theory to analyse and explain communicational differences within teams; therefore, the dimensions of the Cultural Dimensions theory will be mentioned several times in this thesis. The Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede. 1980) is a classic framework for intercultural communication. The framework consists of five dimensions:

1. Power distance: "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally."

The Power Distance Index (PDI) distinguishes countries based on:

- The tendency by individuals to behave submissively in the presence of someone superior.

- The subordinates preferred style of managerial decision-making and supervision.

2. Individualism vs. collectivism: in collectivist cultures people consider themselves as part of a larger group, and in individualist cultures people take care of themselves and emphasize individual achievement.

3. Uncertainty avoidance: "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other manifestations, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules."

4. Masculinity vs. femininity: "a society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct; men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life."

5. Long-term vs. short-term orientation: "long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards – in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present – in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of "face", and fulfilling social obligations."

All dimensions are work-related to cross-cultural communication, and cultures can be analysed by the five different dimensions. There are huge differences between cultures and what they score in each dimension (Hofstede. 1980).

2.4 Defining leadership in multicultural teams

In multicultural teams, a leader needs to pay attention to cultural diversity and anticipate on the consequences of the cultural diversity for the team (Lisak & Erez. 2015). Leaders of multicultural teams need to adopt a challenging set of competencies to be able to effectively motivate and lead these teams (Rothacker & Hauer. 2014).

The cultural diversity of team members also causes different preferences in how they value hierarchy (Leung. 1997; Tinsley & Brett. 2001). This difference is also shown by the Power Distance Index (PDI) dimension of the Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede. 1980).
In countries that score high on the PDI, a more autocratic or paternalistic supervisor is preferred, whereas countries that score low on the PDI, a more participative or consultative one (Bochner & Hesketh. 1994).

This thesis will use a general definition of leadership to identify leadership challenges in multicultural teams. In this thesis leadership will be defined and used as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse. 2004). It follows that a leader can be defined as "an individual who influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal". When a challenge in a multicultural team involves a leader or manager of the team, and fits the description of leadership, it will be considered as a leadership challenge. This challenge can involve difficulties from the leader's perspective, but also difficulties with the leader from the team members' perspective.

2.5 Distinction of communication and leadership

Since both communication and leadership challenges are addressed in this thesis, it is important to distinguish leadership challenges and communication challenges, because they can be related. When a challenge involves both communication and leadership, it is necessary to look at the origin of the challenge and which party is dealing with the challenge. Usually, research on multicultural teams is executed from either the perspective of the team members of from the perspective of the leader or manager of the team. When a challenge involves team

members who face communication issues with other team members, it will be considered a communication challenge. When the challenge involves team members who face communication issues with a leader, it will be considered a leadership challenge. When the challenge involves a leader, who faces an issue in communication with the team members, it will be considered a leadership challenge.

3. Communication challenges in multicultural teams

This chapter provides an answer to the sub-question 'What are communication challenges in multicultural teams?'.

Communication between different cultures is very complex and intercultural interactions are usually accompanied with difficulties (Cañado & García. 2007; Congden et al. 2009; Ferraro. 2002; Hofstede. 1980). These difficulties are enlarged in multicultural teams, where a group of people from different cultures are obliged to collaborate and communicate together. People tend to communicate with those who are similar to them, and group members who perceive themselves as similar tend to communicate more openly with each other (Congden et al. 2009). Communication is influenced negatively when group members perceive themselves as dissimilar. Especially cultural diversity and dissimilarity is associated with increased problems in communication (Ayoko. 2007). In this chapter, the subjects that will be addressed section wise are: verbal and non-verbal communication, decision-making, language, virtual communication, and group cohesion.

3.1 Verbal and non-verbal communication

Communication can be classified in verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication is the sharing of information between individuals wherein the message is transmitted through spoken words or writing. Nonverbal communication is "the non-linguistic behaviours that are consciously or unconsciously encoded or decoded via multiple communication channels" (Ting-Toomey. 1999).

Verbal communication is particularly good for sharing information and intentions, but less good for communicating relationships and feelings (Guirdham. 1999). Differences in verbal communication styles between cultures need to be taken into consideration to guarantee successful intercultural communication (Cañado & García. 2007; Gudykunst & Mody. 2002).

Differences in verbal communication styles between team members cause difficulties in communication in multicultural teams. The existence of low- vs. high-context communication (Hall. 1976), ("whereas low-context communication is characterized by being direct, explicit and open, high-context communication is indirect, subtle and understated" (Cañado & García. 2007)), is difficult for team members to deal with (Cañado & García. 2007; Gassman. 2001; Henderson. 2005). Some cultures prioritize low context communication, express themselves more directly, "with more assertive greetings and linear logic" (low-context) (Cañado & García. 2007), other cultures prioritize high context communication, "read more between the

lines, following a more spiral logic" (high-context) (Cañado & García. 2007). Asian cultures are often categorized as cultures who use high-context communication (Gassman. 2001). In Asian countries, dominated by Asian cultures, people tend to communicate indirectly (Ding. 2006; Glinow, Shapiro & Brett. 2004; Park et al. 2012), "by using words that are less explicit, blunt and sender oriented, and words that are more ambiguous and intended to avoid leaving an assertive impression" (Glinow et al. 2004). Whereas Western cultures (Europe and North America) tend to use more low-context communication and a direct interaction style, they do not hesitate to say 'no' and have no problem with criticizing another person to his/her face (Ding. 2006; Gassman. 2001; Giri. 2006; Park et al. 2012).

Nonverbal communication is used to express meaning and is the major contributor to communication of "affect" in messages (Guirdham. 1999). Nonverbal communication includes body language such as facial expressions like smiling, frowning, eye contact or other physical gestures (Ntuli. 2012). The use of nonverbal communication between cultures often leads to misunderstanding (Abdulai, Ibrahim & Mohammed. 2017; Ting-Toomey. 1999). In multicultural teams, the most challenging subjects in nonverbal communication are: paralinguistics (tone), oculesics (eye contact) haptics (touch or contact), and proxemics (space) (Andersen, Hecht, Hoobler & Smallwoord. 2002; Cañado & García. 2007). The tone in which people express themselves is important in intercultural communication: e.g. the Southern European cultures usually speak louder or with more passion than the Northern European cultures. Eye contact can contain different messages in different cultures; in some cultures it is a sign of being interested, in other cultures you would not do so unless you were given permission. Touching or physical contact (haptics) is acceptable in some cultures, e.g. tapping people on the shoulder, whereas it inappropriate in others. Also, the space bubble is bigger in certain cultures than in others (proxemics), "this causes speakers of the former to feel their space encroached on and to move constantly backwards" (Cañado & García. 2007). When looking at non-verbal communication, it is very important for team members to be aware and sensitive of other people's cultures, treat each other with respect, and respect each other's differences and spaces by not crossing the boundaries (Ntuli. 2012).

3.2 Decision-making

An important part of group communication is the decision-making process. The different communication styles among cultures influences the decision-making process in multicultural teams (Aritz & Walker. 2009; Behfar et al. 2006). Studies have shown that culture

preferences for length of turns, pauses between turns, simultaneous talk, or discrete turns affect team performance and lead to communicative difficulties in the decision-making process (Clyne. 1994; Fitzgerald. 2003; West & Graham. 2004).

Aritz and Walker (2009) performed a discourse analysis on the decision-making process of sixteen multicultural teams. The study found that contribution diminished, and participation indicators decreased in frequency as speakers of East Asian languages became a minority in a group. The participants from the United States "overperformed" by overlapping and latching when they were the minority within the team. "This discourse style change by the US-born students may have resulted in the diminished contribution and participation of the East Asian team members, who produced less and less as they became a minority in a team" (Aritz & Walker. 2009). This difference can be explained by the fact that non-native speakers of English have a disadvantage when they operate in the language of the business domain (English), and are also judged by native speakers of English (Clyne. 1994; Charles. 2007). This issue may contribute to the fact that East Asian speakers, contribution decreases as they become the minority in a mixed group (Aritz & Walker. 2009; Zhang, Lowry, Zhou & Fu. 2007). The majority influence on collectivist group minorities (Asia) is stronger than on individualistic group minorities (United States) in multicultural teams (Zhang et al. 2007). Team members from individualistic show similar communication patterns in cultural homogeneous and cultural heterogeneous groups, whereas team members from collectivistic cultures speak less in cultural heterogeneous groups than in cultural homogeneous groups (Zhang et al. 2007).

3.3 Language

Language is a major source of problems for communication in multicultural teams (Schweiger, Atamer & Calori. 2003). Studies show that language mastery is essential for achieving successful intercultural verbal communicative interaction in multicultural teams. When team members do not adequately master the language of communication, this causes misunderstandings and confusion (Butler. 2011; Cañado & García. 2007; Ladegaard & Jenks. 2015; Li, Yuan, Bazarova & Bell. 2017; Tenzer & Pudelko. 2017).

Several studies have researched language in multicultural teams from a linguistic perspective. Language difficulties in intercultural communication are mainly caused by differences in semantics and pragmatics (Charles. 2007; Chen, Geluykens & Choi. 2006; Tenzer & Pudelko. 2014; Wierzibicka. 2003).

Semantics is the study of meaning in language, and how words relate to each other. The significance for multicultural teams is that different languages have different word associations, and team members with different linguistic backgrounds have different understandings and associations with a word. When teams communicate in a common language, "team members still carry associations from their native language" (Chen et al. 2006).

Pragmatics studies how the transmission of information always takes place within a social context; "the actual formulation of a message depends on the social, situational and conversational context" (Chen et al. 2006). Difficulties in communication arise "when the speaker assumes that the listener does not require elaboration and the listener interprets the statement incorrectly because he lacks a vital piece of information". In multicultural teams, situation like this can easily arise, for instance if one team member assumes another team member has certain local knowledge, which is in fact not the case (Chen et al. 2006; Tenzer & Pudelko. 2012).

Another challenge in communication in multicultural teams is language proficiency. Multicultural teams usually communicate in a common language, most often English, and this can lead to significant differences in language proficiency between native and non-native speakers (Charles. 2007; García & Cañado. 2005; Henderson. 2005; Lauring & Selmer. 2011; Li et al. 2017; Tenzer, Pudelko & Harzing. 2014). A study on the effect of language proficiency of team members on communication in multicultural teams. The results of the study showed that team members with higher language proficiency were more likely to speak up, and this increased other team members' perceptions of their competence (Li et al. 2017). Contrasting behaviours were also observed; non-native speakers with lower language proficiency did not speak up, which decreased other team members' perceptions of their competence. Greater dispersion of language proficiency across a team led to greater difficulty in recognizing competence within the team, overall lowered team performance, and creates social divisions between native and non-native speakers.

The findings help explain that non-native speakers in multicultural teams often fail to adequately communicate their professional competence (Piekkari, Vaara, Tienari & Säntti. 2005). Another study on language barriers in multicultural teams, non-native speakers state they are unable to express their competency and "if you speak in a flawed way you don't come across like a professional, don't look competent and secure" (Tenzer, Pudelko & Harzing. 2014). Low language proficiency is easily mistaken for a general lack of abilities

(Tenzer et al. 2014). Team members are more willing to trust team colleagues whom they believe are competently fulfil their share of the common task. The negative attributions about competence, based on language proficiency, directly influence team members' judgements about each other's trustworthiness (Tenzer et al. 2014). Thus, the differences in language proficiency also cause reduce the trustworthiness of non-native speakers.

3.4 Virtual communication

Many multinational companies use multicultural virtual teams for organizational knowledge sharing (Klitmøller & Lauring. 2013). Virtual teams are groups of people working closely together in geographically dispersed work groups, and who may reside in different time zones and countries (Horwitz, Bravington & Silvis. 2006). They have contract by using advanced information and communication technologies, e.g. video-calls and e-mail (Horwitz et al. 2006; Shachaf. 2008). Communication in multicultural virtual teams is very limited, so it is important for team members to trust each other. Trust is essential for multicultural virtual teams to achieve successful performance (Duran & Popescu. 2014). Several characteristics of multicultural virtual teams decrease potential existence of trust; multicultural virtual teams have no common past or future, the team is culturally diverse and team members have different geographic backgrounds, and no physical touch between team members (Jarvenpa, Shaw & Staples. 2004). Teams that experience high levels of trust are more capable of managing uncertainty, complexity, and expectation of the virtual environment, than teams that experience low levels of trust (Jarvenpaa et al. 2004).

Walker, Cardon and Aritz (2018) performed a case study among 616 students who participated in a project titled Virtual Business Professional, which was designed to introduce students to cross-cultural communication working in multicultural virtual teams. The most striking challenges that the multicultural virtual teams experienced were: coordination of problems, not being able to meet face-to-face, lack of involvement and participation, and decision-making problems (Walker et al. 2018). Trust was also a subject in this study; however, students from all countries reported moderately high trust, and trust was not a main challenge. This may be explained by the participants being of similar ages, functional backgrounds, and educational levels (Walker et al. 2018).

3.5 Group cohesion

Despite the fact that cohesion is not specifically a communication challenge, poor cohesion is a major consequence of a lack of communication in groups (Early & Mosakowski. 2000).

Group cohesion is an essential part of teamwork in order to perform successfully. Group cohesion can be defined as "a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs" (Carron, Brawley & Widmeyer. 1998). Cultural diversity has an impact on the group cohesion of multicultural teams. The complexity of communication in multicultural teams makes it difficult for teams to become a cohesive group and to achieve the performance typically associated with increased cohesion (Shachaf. 2008; Wright & Drewery. 2006). Teams composed of culturally homogeneous teams experience more cohesiveness than culturally heterogeneous teams (Thomas. 1994). "Cohesion is arguably the most important determinant of success among small groups" (Wright & Drewery. 2006). Wright & Drewery (2006) explored factors caused by cultural differences, which influence cohesion: collectivism vs. individualism, absenteeism, tardiness, and the formation of subgroups. The factor with the highest negative influence on group cohesion is 'collectivism vs. individualism'. In general, the collectivistic culture is more widespread in Asia, whereas the individualistic culture is more widespread in North America (Raeff et al. 2000; Cherlin. 2010). One can assume that group members from individualist cultures are more likely to take advantage of the group collective effort and pursue their own goals, whereas collectivists are better at cooperating because they generally enjoy working in a group and value the team objectives (Wright & Drewery. 2006). These different perceptions of what is appropriate behaviour in a team, leads to miscommunication and poor group cohesion (Wright & Drewery. 2006).

3.6 Summary

This chapter provides an answer to the sub-question 'What are communication challenges in multicultural teams?'. A summary of the challenges is listed below:

- Members of multicultural teams have different verbal communication styles; some cultures prioritize low-context communication, other cultures prioritize high-context communication. More information about this challenge can be found in section 3.1.

- Members of multicultural teams have different nonverbal communication styles, and this often leads to misunderstanding. People from different cultures have differences in body language, tone, eye contact, touch and space. More information about this challenge can be found in section 3.1.

- Cultural preferences for communication styles influences the decision-making process in multicultural teams. The length of turns, pauses between turns, simultaneous talk, or discrete

turns affect team performance and lead to communicative difficulties in the decision-making process. Team members from different cultures also show different behaviour in the decision-making process when being a majority or a minority in the group. The majority influence on collectivist group minorities is stronger than on individualistic group minorities in multicultural teams. More information about this challenge can be found in section 3.2.

- Differences in language and language proficiency between members of cultural teams are a major source of problems for communication. Team members differ in semantics and pragmatics. Language proficiency differences between members can cause decreasing perceptions of team members' their competence. More information about this challenge can be found in section 3.3.

- In multicultural virtual teams, team members experience lack of trust, coordination of problems, not being able to meet face-to-face, lack of involvement and participation, and decision-making problems. More information about this challenge can be found in section 3.4.

- Poor group cohesion in multicultural teams causes a lack of communication. The complexity of communication in multicultural teams makes it difficult for teams to become a cohesive group and to achieve the performance typically associated with increased cohesion. Differences between collectivist and individualist cultures has a negative influence on group cohesion. More information about this challenge can be found in section 3.5.

4. Leadership challenges in multicultural teams

This chapter provides an answer to the sub-question 'What are leadership challenges in multicultural teams?'.

Leading multicultural teams is an important issue in multinational companies (Zander & Butler. 2010). Team members of multicultural team have different views of what is appropriate leadership behaviour and differ in their preference for leadership styles (Behfar. 2006; Zander. 1997). Leaders of multicultural teams need to adapt their leadership style to the cultural diversity of the team (Deresky. 2006), and need to manage the different attitudes towards hierarchy (Zander et al. 2012).

In this chapter, the subjects that will be addressed section wise are: leadership behaviours and project GLOBE, leadership style preferences, effects of leadership styles on multicultural team behaviour, and global leadership and universal leadership attributes.

4.1 Leadership behaviours and project GLOBE

Leaders of multicultural teams face the challenge that their behaviour has different effects on different cultures. Certain leader behaviours are acknowledged as positive by one culture, and are acknowledged as negative in another culture (Bird & Mendenhall. 2016; Harris & Moran. 2004). Cross-cultural leadership studies have shown that there are some leader behaviours that appear to be universally effective across cultures, while other leader behaviours and preferences vary considerably between cultures (Brodbeck et al. 2000; Dorfman et al. 1997). Different leadership behaviours are effective for different cultures, and members of cultural teams prefer different leader behaviours. When effectiveness of various leader behaviours was compared in Japan, Korea, Mexico, Taiwan, and the United States, one learned that supportive, charismatic, and contingent reward behaviours of leaders were positively related to subordinate satisfaction and performance in all studied countries (Dorfman et al. 1997). However, the effectiveness of participative and directive behaviours of leaders varies across countries. For example, directive leadership behaviours showed positive effects on satisfaction of employees in Taiwan and Mexico, while participative leadership behaviours showed a positive effect in South Korea and the United States (Dorfman et al. 1997).

Not only do team members from different cultures prefer different leadership behaviours; leaders from different cultures also show different leadership behaviour, influenced by their cultural background (Brodbeck et al. 2000; Gutierrez, Spencer & Zhu. 2012). A comparison of leader behaviour by CEO's from India, China and Western cultures (the U.S. and Europe)

showed that the CEO's had different business thinking styles (Gutierrez et al. 2012). CEO's from India applied adaptive thinking; CEO's from China applied business perspective, and the Western CEO's applied strategic insight. "While CEO's from India might deal with situations by changing technologies, methods or models to meet the country's needs, the Chinese CEOs could attempt to deal with them by understanding and predicting the developments of the industry, and the Western CEOs by relying on their insight of the market and competitors" (Gutierrez et al. 2012).

The most extensive study in the domain of cross-cultural leadership is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE). GLOBE is a research program focusing on culture and leadership and examining the inter-relationship between societal culture, organizational culture, and organizational leadership. GLOBE was founded in 1991, and the main findings of the program were presented in 2004 (House et al. 2004). In more than over 10 years, GLOBE researchers collected and analysed data on cultural dimensions and leadership attributes from 17.000 managers in 62 societal cultures (Hwang et al. 2015). The 62 societal cultures were combined into 10 cultural clusters: Latin America, Anglo, Latin Europe (e.g. Italy), Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Confucian Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Southern Asia, and Eastern Europe (Javidan, Dorfman, De Luque & House. 2006). GLOBE studies cultures in terms of their cultural practices and their cultural values, and national cultures are examined in terms on nine dimensions: performance orientation, future orientation, assertiveness, power distance, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and gender egalitarianism (House, Javidan, Hanges & Dorfman. 2002). Some dimensions are similar to Hofstede's cultural dimensions; the Hofstede cultural dimensions have been used extensively in the development of the GLOBE cultural dimensions (House et al. 2004).

GLOBE empirically identified 112 universally perceived leadership behaviours and attributes, that contribute to outstanding leadership or restrain outstanding leadership (Javidan et al. 2006). The GLOBE leadership questionnaire included these 112 behaviours and attributes, that were, that were hypothesized to either facilitate or impede outstanding leadership. GLOBE empirically reduced the huge number of behaviours and attributes into 21 primary groups; which were used to develop the six global leadership dimensions (Javidan et al. 2006):

1. Charismatic/Value-Based: "A broadly defined leadership dimension that reflects the ability

to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance outcomes from others on the basis of firmly held core beliefs" (Javidan et al. 2006). The Anglo cluster scores highest on this leadership dimension, the Middle East the lowest.

2. Team-oriented: "A leadership dimension that emphasizes effective team building and implementation of a common purpose or goal among team members" (Javidan et al. 2006). The Latin American cluster scores highest on this leadership dimension, the Middle East the lowest.

3. Participative. "A leadership dimension that reflects the degree to which managers involve others in making and implementing decisions" (Javidan et al. 2006). The German European cluster scores highest on this leadership dimension, the Middle East the lowest.

4. Humane-Oriented: "A leadership dimension that reflects supportive and considerate leadership but also includes compassion and generosity" (Javidan et al. 2006). The Southern Asia cluster scores highest on this leadership dimension, Nordic Europe the lowest.

5. Autonomous: A leadership dimension which "refers to independent and individualistic leadership" (Javidan et al. 2006) The Eastern Europe cluster scores highest on this leadership dimension, Latin America the lowest.

6. Self-Protective: A leadership dimension that "focuses on ensuring the safety and security of the individual. It is self-centered and face saving in its approach." (Javidan et al. 2006). The Southern Asia cluster scores highest on this leadership dimension, Nordic Europe the lowest.

With its ten cultural clusters, the nine cultural practices and values, and the six leadership dimensions, GLOBE theory gives a clear overview of cultures worldwide and their cultural values and preferred leadership styles. GLOBE theory is often applied in studies to cross-cultural leadership and leadership style preferences. GLOBE theory is often applied in studies into cross-cultural leadership and leadership style preferences (Aritz & Walker. 2014; Gutierrez et al. 2012; Hwang et al. 2015; Javidan et al. 2006). The learnings from these related studies will be discussed in section 4.2.

4.2 Leadership style preferences

The challenge that leaders of multicultural teams face is that team members hold different culturally-based leadership expectations and preferences (Behfar. 2006; Zander. 1997). Leaders of multicultural teams need to be aware of the team members' different cultural backgrounds, because cultural characteristics such as language, values and beliefs affect people's behavioural and attitude preferences in leadership (Dorfman et al. 1997). When these preferences vary, difficulties may emerge, and a power paradox can arise.

A power paradox occurs when for some team members, leaders who delegate tasks and decision-making are seen as legitimate leaders, and for other team members, who prefer direction instead of delegation, these leaders lose authority and their legitimacy as leaders (Zander. 1997). The leader of the team gets in the position where part of the team questions his/her legitimacy and authority, and for the same reasons other team members give the leader the 'licence to lead'; the leader ends up in a discretionary vacuum (Behfar et al. 2006; Zander. 1997).

The GLOBE cultural dimensions, cultural clusters, and six leadership dimensions, are often used in studies to cross-cultural leadership. They often compare different clusters and try to determine specific differences between clusters and which cultural dimensions different cultural clusters consider to be important (Aritz & Walker. 2014; Gutierrez et al. 2012; Hwang et al. 2015; Javidan et al. 2006).

Two clusters which are typically compared are the Anglo cluster and the Confucian Asia cluster (Aritz & Walker. 2004; Hwang et al. 2015; Javidan et al. 2006). There are two dimensions where there are big differences between the Anglo cluster and the Confucian Asia cluster: power distance and collectivism.

In the Anglo cluster, there is a low power distance culture, and in the Confucian Asia cluster there is a high power distance culture. The Confucian Asia cluster scores high on collectivism, and the Anglo cluster scores low on collectivism (Hofstede, Hofstede, Mikov. 2010; Javidan et al. 2006). Confucian Asia countries tend to describe effective leaders as individuals who care about their team members (supportive, collectivism), but leaders make decisions independently without the input of others (less participative, high power distance) (Hwang et al. 2015). They value 'status-conscious' and 'procedural style' over being 'decisive and task-oriented' (Aritz & Walker. 2014).

The ideal leadership type in the Anglo cluster is a highly charismatic, participative, and team-oriented leader, and respondents from this cluster emphasize the autonomy and being able to voice their opinions; it is important for a leader to allow team members to participate in decision-making (House et al. 2004). Also, being 'decisive and task oriented' is an important characteristic of leader in the Anglo clusters (Aritz & Walker. 2014).

An analysis of what types of leadership behaviours are related to perceived job performance of leaders from the United States and four Confucian Asia countries (China, Japan, Singapore, and South Koreao) showed that charismatic leadership behaviours had positive relationships with the perceived job performance of leaders in the U.S., as well as in the Confucian Asia

countries (Hwang et al. 2015). These results support the outcomes of other studies, where they observed that charismatic leadership behaviours seem to be universally effective across cultures (Dorfman et al. 1997; House et al. 2004). Supportive leadership behaviour was significantly related to perceived job performance of leaders in all countries, except Singapore. Participative leadership behaviour was not significantly related to perceived job performance of leaders in China, Singapore, and South Korea, whereas it showed a positive impact of leaders in Japan and the U.S. (Hwang et al. 2015). The results show that even though GLOBE assumes that there are similar leadership behaviour preferences within clusters, countries within the same cluster may show different preferences; researchers should be very careful with generalization and taking conclusions (Hwang et al. 2015).

A hypothetical case study of an American executive in charge of four similar teams in Brazil, France, Egypt, and China, used GLOBE to analyse different leadership style preferences between these four countries and the U.S. (Javidan et al. 2006). The results showed that several conflicts may arise when an American executive finds himself or herself in one of the four foreign countries (Javidan et al. 2006). For example, in Brazil there is a high-power distance culture, and Brazilians expect their leaders to be class- and status-conscious, and leaders need to be aware of status boundaries and to respect them. Americans do not value status and class consciousness as much. Respect, to an American manager, means mutual respect and open dialogue, and they tend to see formality as an obstacle to open debate. However, what may seem as an open debate to an American, may be assessed as aggressive and unacceptable behaviour by the Brazilians (Javidan et al. 2006). In Egypt, "culture is distinct by its emphasis on in-group and institutional collectivism, power distance, humane orientation and male domination." (Javidan et al. 2006). Americans dislike autocratic leaders who make individual decisions and micromanage their employees. Egyptians seem to have an elitist, transcendent view of their leaders. Their leaders need to be unique, superior, status- and class-conscious, individualistic, and better than others in their group. In contrast, Americans have a more benign and simplistic view towards their leaders. Leaders are regarded as successful people, but they are not extraordinary (Javidan et al. 2006).

Leaders of multicultural teams need to be aware of the different cultures of their team members and their different leadership style preferences (Dorfman et al. 1997; Zander. 1997). Literature provides a lot of information about the expectations and leadership style preference of different cultures and/or cultural clusters. It can be very useful for leaders of multicultural

teams to be aware of the specific differences in cultures; and they can use their knowledge to anticipate on the different preferences of the team members, and how to behave appropriately and effectively.

4.3 Leadership styles in multicultural teams

Leadership styles of leaders of multicultural teams also influence multicultural team behaviour (Earley & Mosakoski. 2002; Ravlin, Thomas & Ilsev. 2000). Team members from different cultures have different reactions towards the leader and how the leader approaches the team members.

A research to the effects of leadership styles on multicultural teams showed that a directive leadership style resulted in greater imbalance among group members, compared to a cooperative leadership style (Aritz & Walker. 2014). The groups consisted of members from East Asia and the United States, and the language of communication was English (Aritz & Walker. 2014). With a directive leadership style, the American group members spoke ten times more words than the East Asian group members during group meetings. This might have also been a result from the fact that the directive leadership style was demonstrated by U.S.-born males. "A directive leadership style may not be the best approach when working with people from collectivist cultures, if the goal is to encourage participation and satisfaction with the group process among East Asian speakers" (Aritz & Walker. 2014). The cooperative leadership style resulted in a more balanced member contribution to group meetings. This leadership style was demonstrated by U.S. female participants. This style included invitations of contribution, which resulted in a more inclusive leadership style that ensured collaborative decision-making process. In this setting, the average contribution by American participants was more similar to the contribution of the East Asian participants, compared to the directive style.

Another approach of leadership styles in multicultural teams states that leaders can express power through behaviour, with emotional tones helping to define different leadership styles. These behaviours are categorized in three styles: passive, assertive or aggressive (Levi. 2001; Williams. 2008). Depending on the cultural backgrounds of the team members, different styles suit different multicultural teams.

The passive style "is polite, using pleasant emotional tones, with the aim of avoiding problems by not taking definite stands, and being unclear about positions" (Williams. 2008). However, this can send mixed messages, and receivers can be uncertain about the beliefs and

feelings of the passive communicator. This style is helpful in high conflict situations, and is often applied by leaders who lead a team with very diffuse cultures (Levi. 2001; Williams. 2008). The assertive style "uses clear communication with little emotion attached and focuses on concern for others and self" (Williams. 2008). Open communication, respect for each other, and high trust in teammates are important aspect of the assertive style. The assertive style is appropriate for teams where there is emphasis on equality (Lumsden & Lumsden. 1997), but is not very successful in teams with team members from high context cultures (Griffin. 2008). High context cultures may perceive emotional expressions of leaders from low context cultures as aggressive (Williams. 2008).

The aggressive style is "forceful and critical, using negative emotions to appear powerful while being unwilling to listen to others" (Williams. 2008). The assertive style may be useful in emergency situations where a forceful approach is necessary but is inappropriate for team leaders to use in most situations, especially in situations of unequal power (Williams. 2008).

Different cultures prefer different leadership styles, and it is important that leaders of multicultural teams adapt their leadership style to the cultural backgrounds of the team members. It is a challenge for leaders to be able to implement different leadership styles, and adjust themselves to the composition of a multicultural teams. It seems impossible for a leader to be able to perform every leadership style that the different cultures prefer. However, literature suggests that leaders can apply global leadership to be able fulfil expectations and achieve higher satisfaction of the different preferences in leadership styles of different cultures. Global leadership will be discussed in the next section 4.4.

4.4 Global leadership and universal leadership attributes
Leaders of multicultural teams are expected to be global leaders and have universal leadership attributes (Lisak & Erez. 2015; Zander et al. 2012). There are many studies on global leadership and the competencies and characteristics that a global/universal leader needs to be able to perform effective leadership in a multicultural setting (Caligiuri 2006; Muczyk & Reimann. 1987; Osland, Bird, Osland & Mendenhall. 2012). Global leadership is "the process of influencing the thinking, attitudes of a global community to work together synergistically toward a common vision and common goal" (Osland. 2008). Global leaders are leaders who "are capable of operating effectively in a global environment while being respectful of cultural diversity" (Harris & Moran. 2004). Some examples of activities of global leaders are: working with colleagues from other countries, speaking a foreign language at work,

supervision of employees from different countries, development of strategic plans with worldwide scope, and engagement in negotiations in other countries and with people from other countries (Caligiuri. 2006). Certain knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics are necessary for successful performance in these tasks and activities of a global leader. The knowledge domains proposed to be related to global leadership include culture-general knowledge, cultural-specific knowledge and international business knowledge (Caligiuri. 2006; Harris & Moran. 2004). The skills and abilities proposed to be important for a global leader are intercultural interaction skills, foreign language skills, and cognitive ability (Bird & Mendenhall. 2016; Caligiuri, Jacobs & Farr. 2000; Ones & Viswesvaran. 1997). Examples of personal characteristics that contribute to successful global leadership performance are agreeableness (Caligiuri & Day. 2000; Ones & Viswesvaran. 1997) and openness (Caligiuri. 2006; Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman. 1978). Leaders who are more agreeable report greater cross-cultural adjustment and are likely to perform better in multicultural teams, compared to leaders who are not agreeable (Caligiuri. 2006). It is important for a global leader to have the ability to correctly assess the social environment of a multicultural team, since interaction is more complicated in the global context (Caligiuri & Day. 2000). Leaders with greater openness will have fewer rigid views of right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, and are more likely to accept cultural diversity (Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman. 1978).

Several leader attributes are considered as universal leader attributes, which are effective in every culture. According to GLOBE theory, there are 22 attributes that are universally deemed to be desirable (House et al. 2004) (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: GLOBE universal desirable leader attributes (House et al. 2004).

Trustworthy	Just	Honest	Foresight
Plans ahead	Encouraging	Positive	Dynamic
Motive arouser	Confidence builder	Motivational	Excellence oriented
Intelligent	Decisive	Effective bargainer	Win-win problem solver
Informed	Coordinator	Communicative	Administrative skilled
Dependable	Team builder		

There are seven leader attributes that are universally undesirable (House et al. 2004) (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: GLOBE universal undesirable leader attributes (House et al. 2004).

Loner	Irritable	Ruthless	Asocial
Nonexplicit	Dictatorial	Noncooperative	Egocentric

These universal desired and undesired attributes show that while there are many differences between countries, there are also similarities. "Such similarities give some degree of comfort and ease to leaders and can be used by them as a foundation to build on" (Javidan et al. 2006). More information about Global Leadership and how it can be effective in multicultural teams will be given in Chapter 5.

4.5 Summary

This chapter provides an answer to the sub-question 'What are leadership challenges in multicultural teams?'. A summary of the challenges is listed below:

- Behaviour of leaders of multicultural teams has different effects on their team members. Cultures accept different leadership behaviours and have different opinions about what is appropriate and inappropriate leadership behaviour. Leaders themselves also prefer different behaviour and show different behaviour, influenced by their cultural background. More details about this challenge can be found in section 4.1.

- A power paradox can arise, where one part of the team questions the legitimacy and authority of the leader based on his leadership style, and for the same reasons other team members give them the 'licence to lead'. More details about this challenge can be found in section 4.2.

- Members of multicultural team hold different culturally-based leadership expectations and prefer different leadership styles. Leaders of multicultural teams need to be aware of the cultural characteristics of team members, such as language, values, and beliefs. Cultures also prefer different leadership styles because of differences in power distance, and whether they are a collectivist or an individualistic culture. More details about this challenge can be found in section 4.3.

- Leaders need to be aware that their leadership style influences team members of multicultural teams. Team members from different cultures react different towards the leader, based on the leader's leadership style and how a leader approaches them as team members. A directive leadership style is not the best approach when a leader is working with team members from collectivist cultures. A cooperative leadership style will result in more

balanced member contribution in a team with members from collectivist cultures. More details about this challenge can be found in section 4.4.

- Leaders of multicultural teams are expected to be global leaders and to possess universal leadership attributes. They need to learn about universally desirable and undesirable leadership attributes, develop knowledge about other cultures, and develop skills and abilities to be a global leader. More details about this challenge can be found in section 4.5.

5. Theories on managing challenges in multicultural teams

This chapter provides information on theories that are applied to manage challenges in multicultural teams that are caused by cultural diversity.

Literature does not give exact answers how to manage the specific communication and leadership challenges presented in chapter 3 and 4. However, there are theories in literature which are applied to manage and overcome challenges in multicultural teams.

In this chapter, the subjects that will be addressed section wise are:

- Managing communication challenges: intercultural competence, the development of intercultural competence, and an analysis of communication challenges and intercultural competence.

- Managing leadership challenges: global leadership and intercultural competence, and an analysis of leadership challenges and global leadership.

5.1.1 Managing communication challenges

This section will give information about theories on managing communication challenges in multicultural teams. The first sub-section will explain intercultural competence, the second sub-section will explain how to develop intercultural competence, and the third sub-section will give an analysis of how intercultural competence can contribute to manage and overcome the communication challenges presented in chapter 3.

5.1.2 Intercultural competence

To manage the challenges caused by cultural diversity, the international business environment depends on the ability of people to adapt to the complexity of other cultures, to effectively understand, respond, and accept to cultural differences (Dowling & Welch. 2005; Gertsen. 1990; Matveev. 2016). People who work in a culturally diverse environment, like multicultural teams, require a high level of intercultural competence (Lustig & Koester. 2009; Matveev & Milter. 2004). Intercultural competence is the ability, acquired on the basis of certain knowledge and attitudes, that enables individuals to communicate effectively and appropriately in the context of different cultures (Mažeikienė & Virgailaitė-Mečkauskaitė. 2007; Perry & Southwell. 2011). Interculturally competent individuals have the ability to step beyond their own cultural conditioning and function effectively and appropriately with other individuals from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds (Matveev. 2016). An intercultural competent member of a multicultural team is able to establish interpersonal relationships with foreign nationals through effective exchange at both verbal and nonverbal

levels of communication (Matveev & Nelson. 2004). Intercultural competence increases team performance, as the members clearly express themselves and better understand their colleagues (Matveev & Nelson. 2004). Multicultural teams with intercultural competent team members experience stronger group cohesion (Moynihan, Peterson & Earley. 2006), and intercultural competence in multicultural teams facilitates the development of shared values (Adair, Hideg & Spence. 2013).

In literature, different theoretical approaches of intercultural competence are presented. Intercultural competence can be described as requiring knowledge, motivation, skills in verbal and non-verbal communication and appropriate and effective behaviours in intercultural interaction (Lustig & Koester. 2012). Intercultural competence is also linked to a tolerance for ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for others and empathy (Hiller & Wozniak. 2009). Another description of intercultural competence consists of three components: sufficient cultural knowledge, skilled actions, and suitable motivation or personality orientation (Matveev & Milter. 2004).

This IC was applied in a study to the value of intercultural competence in multicultural teams (Matveev & Milter. 2004). Interviews were taken with managers and executives from America and Russia, who worked in multicultural teams. The Americans and Russians both acknowledged the importance of intercultural competence in multicultural teams, and both identified the skill component of the IC model to be of the highest relative importance when working in a multicultural team (Matveev & Milter. 2004).

Several characteristics are linked to intercultural competence, including the ability to establish and maintain relationships and effectively share information with others, as well as personal traits such as inquisitiveness (Black & Gregersen. 2000; Mendenhall. 2001). Intercultural competence also entails affective and behavioural skills such as intercultural empathy, human warmth, charisma, and the ability to manage anxiety and uncertainty (Gudykunst 1998; Matveev & Nelson. 2004). There are several different views and approaches of intercultural competence. However, theories about intercultural competence are generally related to four dimensions: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours (Perry & Southwell. 2011; Wiseman & Koester. 1993). Most theories agree that intercultural competence comprises "a set of cognitive, affective and behaviour skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett. 2008).

5.1.3 Development of intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is something that individuals need to develop. Intercultural competence is a lifelong development process, there is no point at which one become fully interculturally competent (Deardorff. 2015). However, the process of development of intercultural competence is important (Deardorff. 2015). The development of intercultural competency can be divided into three stages: the intercultural mindset, the intercultural skillset, and intercultural sensitivity (Bennett. 2001). The intercultural mindset is "the recognition of deep differences in cultural worldviews and the potential value of those differences for organizations." (Bennett. 2001). The intercultural skillset is the ability to use frameworks to identify potential areas of misunderstanding and to increase one's repertoire of behaviour appropriately (Bennett. 2001). Intercultural sensitivity is "the ability to experience cultural difference in sophisticated ways." (Bennett. 2001). Intercultural competence can be developed through training and other educational efforts, and various methods have been proposed on the development of intercultural competence.

'Intercultural training' is one method to develop intercultural competence. Intercultural training is the training of intercultural competence of adults whose work requires them to interact with people from other cultures (Perry & Southwell. 2011). Intercultural training is used by government institutions, universities, and multinational corporations, who have all developed techniques for intercultural training (Pusch. 2004). The most common instructional methods in intercultural training are lectures, culture assimilators and class discussion (Mendenhall et al. 2004). Intercultural training is typically based on models such as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett. 1986), the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennet & Wiseman. 2003) (Perry & Southwell. 2011), and the Intercultural Learning Model (ILM). The DMIS describes changes in the perception of differences as an individual progresses along their intercultural competence and sensitivity (Bennett. 1986; Matveev. 2016). "The more complex perceptions of cultural difference people have, the more sophisticated (interculturally sensitive) their experience of the difference can be." (Bennett. 2001). The IDI is developed to measure intercultural sensitivity such as how people construe cultural differences, and focusses on the adaption process in intercultural encounters (Hammer et al. 2003; Matveev. 2016). Intercultural training is widely prescribed for people who work in multicultural environments (Morris & Robie. 2001), and the effectiveness of intercultural training has been shown to have a positive influence on intercultural competence (Erez et al. 2013; Fischer. 2011; Schelting, de Louw & Bulnes. 2017).

The ILM is a model that enables learners to decode effectively signs from other cultures and to encode messages to transmit the meaning to members of other cultures (Beamer. 1992). The receiver of intercultural messages needs to adapt the incoming signifiers to the existing repository of signs and adapting the repository of signifiers to create new signs (Beamer. 1992). Knowledge of another culture and the ability to enhance the personal repository of cultural signifiers can lead to more effective intercultural communication (Varner & Beamer. 2004).

Individuals can also develop intercultural competence in their education. Scholars who follow social science courses or learn a foreign language, learn more about different cultures and therefore develop intercultural competence (Perry & Southwell. 2011). Many universities worldwide are part of exchange programs, which makes it possible for students to study abroad. Studying abroad has been shown to enhance intercultural understanding and develop intercultural competence among university students (Kitsantas. 2004; Olson & Kroeger. 2001; Wolff & Borzikowsky. 2018).

The development of intercultural competent is complex and demands significant time and resources (Bennett. 2001). The knowledge dimension is the least challenging dimension to develop, and can be taught to individuals by intercultural training and education. However, the other dimensions, attitudes, skills, and behaviours, are more complicated to develop. To develop intercultural competence and gain competence in these dimensions, it is necessary to experience intercultural differences and intercultural communication (Bennett. 2001; Matveev. 2016; Perry & Southwell. 2011).

5.2 Managing leadership challenges

To manage leadership challenges in multicultural teams, leaders of multicultural teams are expected to global leaders (Zander et al. 2012). Information about global leadership, global leader activities, and what attributes are part of global leadership was given in section 4.5 of this thesis. This section will provide more information about how intercultural competence and global leadership.

5.2.1 Global intercultural competent leadership

Intercultural competence improves the decision-making and problem-solving abilities of leaders of multicultural teams (Matveev & Nelson. 2004). Global leaders are required to have culturally specific knowledge and adaption skills, and the ability to acquire a worldwide

perspective and to integrate worldwide diversity required in multicultural teams (Adler & Bartholomew. 1992). Various intercultural competencies, which contribute to intercultural competency of global leaders, are presented in literature. In an important review study, these competencies are categorized into three management divisions: Perception Management, Relationship Management, and Self-Management (Bird, Mendenhall & Stevens. 2010). "Perception management addresses how people cognitively approach cultural differences." (Bird et al. 2010).

Relationship management addresses people's orientation toward the importance of relationships in general; how aware they are of others and their interaction styles, values, etc." (Bird et al. 2010).

"The self-management factor takes into account people's strength of identity and their ability to effectively manage their emotions and stress." (Bird et al. 2010). Self-management contributes to be successful in intercultural situations; it is important that people have a clear sense of themselves and a clear understanding of their fundamental (cultural) values (Bird et al. 2010).

Each management section consists of five intercultural competencies, which contribute to intercultural competency of global leaders. The intercultural competencies are presented in the table below:

Table 5.1: Intercultural competencies of a global leader (based on Bird et al. 2010)

Perception Management	**Relationship Management**	**Self-Management**
• Nonjudgementalness	• Relationship interest	• Optimism
• Inquisitiveness	• Interpersonal engagement	• Self-confidence
• Tolerance of ambiguity	• Emotional sensitivity	• Emotional resilience
• Cosmopolitanism	• Self-awareness	• Non-stress tendency
• Category inclusiveness	• Social flexibility	• Interest flexibility

The development of intercultural competence is similar for leaders of multicultural teams as for team members; through training and education, which was explained in section 5.1.3. Though, leaders are expected to have very wide cultural knowledge, and leaders complain that it is impossible for them to know all about the cultures represented in the team they supervise (Bennett. 2001). To manage this challenge, leaders can use a set of culture-general frameworks, which provide a general set of cultural contrasts that apply to a wide range of

cultures (Bennett. 2001), such as the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions or GLOBE. A leader can identify general cultural differences when applying these frameworks, and as a newcomer to a certain culture can then avoid obvious misunderstandings and move more quickly towards learning relevant culture-specific knowledge (Bennett. 2001). "In this way, the culture-general framework offers an entrée into the culture-specific knowledge that will be necessary to operate effectively over the long run." (Bennett. 2001).

5.3 Summary

This chapter provides an answer to the sub-question 'What are the theories on managing challenges in multicultural teams?'. A summary of each section is listed below:

- Intercultural competence is used to manage and overcome challenges caused by cultural diversity. Intercultural competence is the ability that enables individuals to communicate effectively and appropriately in the context of different cultures. Intercultural competence increases team performance in multicultural teams, and multicultural teams with intercultural competent team members experience stronger group cohesion. There are different views and approaches of intercultural competence. Theories about intercultural competence are generally related to four dimensions: knowledge, attitude, skills, and behaviours. Most theories agree that intercultural competence comprises "a set of cognitive, affective and behaviour skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts". More information about this subject can be found in section 5.1.1.

- The development of intercultural competence is an important process. The development of intercultural competency can be divided into three stages: the intercultural mindset, the intercultural skillset, and intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural competence can be developed through intercultural training and education. Intercultural training is typically based on intercultural models such as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, the Intercultural Development Inventory, and the Intercultural Learning Model. Individuals can develop intercultural competence through education by studying a foreign language, or studying abroad. More information about this subject can be found in section 5.1.2.

- Leaders of multicultural teams are required to be global leader and be interculturally competent. There are fifteen intercultural competencies which contribute to global interculturally competent leadership. These fifteen competencies can be categorized into three management divisions: Perception Management, Relationship Management, and Self-Management. Leaders can also develop intercultural competence through training and

education. Leaders of multicultural teams can also use culture-general frameworks to be interculturally competent, to identify cultural differences easily and avoid obvious misunderstanding. More information about this subject can be found in section 5.2.1.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to provide a summary of the current literature on communication and leadership challenges in multicultural teams and provide information about how to manage communication and leadership challenges in multicultural teams. This chapter will discuss the results and limitations of the study and give recommendations for further study, and provide an answer to the main research question 'How can communication and leadership challenges in multicultural teams be managed?'.

6.1 Discussion: communication challenges

Chapter 3 of this thesis provides a summary about the challenges in communication in multicultural teams, based on numerous studies on communication in multicultural teams. The study to communication challenges in multicultural teams resulted in challenges which could be divided into five subjects: verbal and nonverbal communication, decision-making, language, virtual communication, and group cohesion.

The results present a wide range of communication difficulties that are caused by different cultural backgrounds, and how this leads to communication challenges in multicultural teams. Literature provides a lot of information on how cultures influences how people communicate, and also about how conflicts between specific cultures may arise.

One limitation in this part of the study is that many studies provide information about intercultural communication in general and on communication between individuals; however not as many studies are specifically focused on intercultural communication in multicultural teams. Studies which focus on intercultural communication in multicultural teams provide more detailed information about the process of communication and challenges that multicultural teams face. Conclusions about intercultural communication in general can be applied to analyse multicultural teams; intercultural communication does take place in multicultural teams. Though, one needs to be aware of the differences between intercultural communication between individuals, and intercultural communication in groups.

Another limitation is that there are many different ways to composition a multicultural team, and multicultural teams studied typically consist of team members from only two different cultures, for example team members from the U.S. and Asia (Aritz & Walker. 2009; Zhang et al. 2007; Li et al. 2017). Studying communication in multicultural teams that consist from more than two different cultures is complicated. Researchers need to take into account more differences between the cultures, and study more different cultural backgrounds and how these influence communication of team members in a multicultural team. It might also be

more difficult to find the cultural sources of communication challenges in multicultural teams with more than two different cultures.

6.2 Discussion: leadership challenges

Chapter 4 of this thesis provides a summary about the challenges in leadership in multicultural teams, based on numerous studies on leadership in multicultural teams.

The study to leadership challenges in multicultural teams resulted in challenges which could be divided into four subjects: leadership behaviour, leadership style preferences, leadership styles in multicultural teams, and global leadership and universal leadership attributes.

The results present leadership challenges that are caused by cultural backgrounds, and how this leads to leadership challenges in multicultural teams.

Literature provides a lot of information on how cultures have different views and perceptions of leadership, and what are the cultural differences in leadership expectations and preferences. A limitation of this part of the study is that a lot of information can be found about differences between cultures and how they perceive leadership, but there are only few studies on how these differences cause challenges in multicultural teams. Little research has been performed on what leadership style is the best approach for a multicultural team. This depends on the composition of a multicultural team, and which cultures the multicultural team consists of. One can apply the knowledge of cultural preferences of leadership styles of different cultures on a multicultural team, and how this will cause challenges. However, a study which observes the performance of different leadership styles in a multicultural team, provides more detailed information on how different cultures respond to certain leadership styles in the context of a team, and how this causes challenges for a leader of a multicultural team.

6.3 Discussion: theories on managing challenges in multicultural teams

Chapter 5 of this thesis provides information about theories on managing challenges in multicultural teams.

Intercultural competence and global interculturally competent leadership are theories that are used to manage challenges in multicultural teams. Intercultural competence is used to manage and overcome challenges in communication in multicultural teams. Global interculturally competent leadership is used to manage challenges in communication in multicultural teams. A major limitation of this part of the thesis is that literature does not provide information on how to manage each specific communication and leadership challenge described in chapters 3 and 4. Literature provides information about how individuals can improve intercultural

communication, by intercultural competence, and that interculturally competent team members contribute to effective communication. However, literature does not provide information on how multicultural teams can manage and overcome communication challenges in the context of a team. For example, one can think of team sessions before the start of a project, that gives team members a chance to acknowledge cultural differences which influence communication, or share previous experiences of intercultural communication, to prevent miscommunication. However, these things typically take a lot of time, and time is usually limited in the business environment.

Literature provides information about how leaders of multicultural teams can manage leadership challenges, by being a global intercultural competent leader. Though, literature does not provide information how leadership challenges in multicultural teams can be managed or overcome by the team members of a multicultural team. It seems obvious to manage these challenges from the leaders' perspective; however, team members might also contribute to overcome these challenges. For example, team members can adapt their expectations by learning more about the cultural background of their leader. Though, it is probable that interculturally competent team members will also contribute to overcome leadership challenges, simply because they have more knowledge and skills in intercultural communication in general.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

Based on these limitations, several recommendations are given for further research.

Further research is recommended to study communication in multicultural teams with teams that consist of more than two different cultures. Current literature typically studies multicultural teams consisting of team members from two different cultures. Research to multicultural teams consisting of more than two cultures can give more insight in communication challenges in multicultural teams.

Furthermore, further research is recommended to study the influence of different leadership style preferences caused by cultural background on multicultural teams. A very small amount of research has been performed on these effects, and there is much more to investigate and discover in this field of study.

Last, further research is recommended to investigate on the management of the specific communication and leadership challenges, and how intercultural competency and global intercultural competent leadership contribute to manage and overcome the communication and leadership challenges in multicultural teams.

6.5 Conclusion: how can communication and leadership challenges be managed in multicultural teams?

To be able to give an insight on how to manage the specific communication and leadership challenges presented in chapter 3 and 4, an analysis of the challenges is carried out, based on intercultural competency and global interculturally competent leadership.

6.5.1 How can communication challenges in multicultural teams be managed?: an analysis of communication challenges and intercultural competence

Literature does not give exact answers how to manage the specific communication challenges presented in chapter 3. One could say that there is a research gap in this field of study. However, literature gives information about the intercultural competence theory, which is presented in section 5.1.2. of this thesis. Intercultural competence is used to manage challenges in intercultural communication, and is also effective for multicultural team communication. To answer the communication part of the main research question, this section provides a short analysis whereby the intercultural competence theory will be applied to the communication challenges presented in chapter 3: verbal and non-verbal communication, decision-making, language, group cohesion, and virtual communication.

Section 3.1 presents the challenges in verbal and non-verbal communication. Intercultural competences that can contribute to manage and overcome challenges in verbal and non-verbal communication are tolerance for ambiguity, communicative awareness, and skills in verbal and nonverbal communication. Tolerance for ambiguity is the ability to "manage uncertainty in new and complex situations where there is not necessarily a "right" way to interpret things" (Bird et al. 2010), and can influence members of multicultural teams to reconsider their interpretations of what is communicated by members of other cultures. Communicative awareness can be helpful when there are differences between team members' their verbal communication styles, as well as when team members show different behaviours in their nonverbal communication. It will improve communication when team members are aware of these differences in verbal and nonverbal communication. Skills in verbal and nonverbal communications are obviously contributing to better communication in multicultural teams; when team members have skills in verbal and nonverbal communication, they can change their own way of communicating and adapt to the multicultural environment, and this will improve communication.

Section 3.2 presents the challenges in decision-making. Intercultural competency can contribute to overcome challenges in decision-making in multicultural teams and majority influence. Team members who are interculturally competent, have sufficient cultural knowledge and are aware of the differences in majority influence between collectivistic and individualistic cultures, can contribute to overcome challenges in decision-making and majority influence in multicultural teams. For example, when majority influence on collectivist group minority appears to be strong, an intercultural competent team member from an individualistic culture can decide to give more space to a team member from a collectivistic culture to let them clearly state their opinion.

Section 3.3 presents the challenges in language. Intercultural competent team members can contribute to overcome challenges in communication in multicultural teams due to language. Intercultural competent members who have respect and empathy for others, will be less tended to mistake low language proficiency for a lack of abilities, because they are aware of the differences in language proficiency.

Section 3.5 presents the challenge of group cohesion. Intercultural competent team members are more able to establish interpersonal relationships with foreign nationals, and this can help to contribute to improve (poor) group cohesion. When team members are open to establish relationships with other team members and invest time in the satisfaction of each other's affective needs, this can help to contribute to stronger group cohesion in multicultural teams.

Section 3.4 presents the challenge of virtual communication. Intercultural competency theories are focused on face-to-face communication and contribute to manage and overcome challenges in intercultural communication due to cultural diversity. The main cause of challenges in communication in multicultural virtual teams is the way of communication; so intercultural competency might not be as effective to improve communication. However, virtual multicultural teams do still experience difficulties due to cultural diversity, so even though intercultural competent will not be as effective in the other challenges, it will probably have a small positive effect on communication.

6.5.2 How can leadership challenges in multicultural teams be managed?: an analysis of the leadership challenges and global intercultural competent leadership

Literature does not give exact answer how to manage the specific leadership challenges presented in chapter 4. One could say for this field of study as well, that there might be a research gap. However, literature gives information about global intercultural competent leadership, presented in section 5.2.1. of this thesis. Global intercultural competent leaders

can contribute to manage leadership challenges in multicultural teams. To answer the leadership part of the main research question, this section provides a short analysis whereby global leadership, including the universal desirable attributes presented in Table 4.1, and the intercultural competencies of a global leader presented in Table 5.1., will be applied to the leadership challenges presented in chapter 4: leadership behaviours, leadership style preferences, and leadership styles in multicultural teams.

Section 4.1 presents the challenge of leadership behaviours. A global intercultural competent leader can contribute to higher satisfaction about their (leader) behaviour among team members of a multicultural team. Self-awareness, social flexibility, and being positive, informed and trustworthy are intercultural competencies and global leader attributes that can contribute to generally accepted behaviour of the leader.

A leader who is self-aware of their behaviour and how they come across to others, might be more tended to adapt their behaviour to be accepted by their team members.

Section 4.2 presents the challenge of leadership style preferences, including the power paradox and leadership expectations. A global intercultural competent leader who is communicative and trustworthy can contribute to manage and overcome the challenge of a power paradox. Although it is difficult for a leader to manage this challenge, because the challenge is defined by the view that team members have of the leader, a communicative and trustworthy leader can suggest to discuss their leadership style and what team members think of their legitimacy and authority in the team. Being trustworthy can also contribute to overcome this challenge, because team members may feel that they can openly give their opinion about the leader when they trust them.

Inquisitiveness is an intercultural competency of a global leader that can contribute to fulfil leadership expectations. Inquisitiveness can make a leader willing to learn more about different cultural values and beliefs, and a leader can use this knowledge to fulfil the which expectations of team members.

Section 4.3 presents the challenge of leadership styles in multicultural teams. A global leader who is naturally interested in different cultures might have more knowledge about which leadership style is the best approach for different cultures. This interest in other cultures is referred to as the intercultural competency cosmopolitanism. Relationship interest and interpersonal engagement can also contribute to a leader's knowledge about the preferences of the team members. When a leader invests time in building relationships with their team members, team members might be more open about their cultural background and their

preferences in leadership styles. A leader has knowledge about the differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, and supervises a team consisting of team members from individualistic and/or collectivistic cultures, can adapt their leadership style and approach the team in the leadership style that fits the team best.

6.5.3 Conclusion

The increasing number of the use of multicultural teams in multinational companies brings challenges in communication and leadership, due to cultural diversity of the team members. Team members' different cultural backgrounds influence their own way of communication and how they perceive communication of other cultures. Next to that, culture also influences leadership expectations and leadership style preferences.

It is clear from the analysis in sections 6.5.1. and 6.5.2. that team members and leaders need to develop intercultural competence to be able to manage and overcome the challenges in communication and leadership in multicultural teams.

Further research is required to clarify the effects of intercultural competence of team members on communication in multicultural teams, and how global intercultural competent leadership contributes to manage leadership challenges in multicultural teams.

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