Declaration

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This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of International Communication

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis represents my own work;

- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

  Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2011-1224

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The perception and response to change by members of a

multicultural working group:

A case study

By

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Abstract

This research project explores the perception of members of a multicultural working group to communication relating to organisational change, and their response to it. For the analysis the impact of cultural dimensions such as "power distance" and "uncertainty avoidance" on this perception were investigated. A broadly qualitative approach using a case study methodology within a tertiary educational organisation in New Zealand was chosen to address the complex nature of intercultural communication issues implied in this goal.

A mixed-methods two phase design was planned. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through an exploratory survey to provide a general overview of how change communication was perceived, and an indication of possible trends relating to culture. This phase helped conceptualise the second qualitative phase, in which in-depth data were collected through a focus group and individual interviews.

The findings of the study indicate that national culture may play a role in people's attitude towards hierarchy and their perceptions of managers' and staff members' communication style and cultural dimensions appear to be partly relevant. But the findings also illustrate that ethnic culture is not the only influence on an individual's perception and behaviour during change. Organisational culture, for instance, can positively influence whether employees voice their opinion amongst one other and whether they give feedback to their superiors. Moreover, the findings indicate that variations in communication style can lead to differing perceptions of a behavioural response to change. For example, voicing a critical opinion straightforwardly may be viewed as appropriate or inappropriate depending on the cultural background of the receiver. Additionally, the findings show some agreement between members of a multicultural working group such as what is important information during change, which management level should provide this information, and in what way communication should be managed in order to effectively engage organisational members. Importantly, national culture was not viewed as an additional barrier to communication during change implementation. Finally, the findings show that although intercultural communication competence is valued for all members in a multicultural organisation, including managers, other culturally independent characteristics like interpersonal competence were assessed as similar or more important.

The outcomes of this study point to the need for further research to address the complexity of culture in its interplay with other major factors for efficient communication in multicultural settings.

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Abbreviations

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

EDU   Acronym for "education"

GLOBE   Global Leadership Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness

ICC   Intercultural Communication Competence

NZ   New Zealand

PDI   Power Distance Index

UAI   Uncertainty Avoidance Index

UK   United Kingdom

Chapter 1: Introduction

The globalisation of business and increasing immigration has intensified the internationalisation of the work environments where people from different cultural backgrounds work together. Multicultural working groups or teams have long being common in international companies and in countries with high immigration, as for instance New Zealand. Many organisations value the higher level of skills and creativity in multicultural settings as an important factor for innovation which can be a large competitive advantage (Ötztürk & Wheatley, 2000; Pless & Maak, 2004). But culturally diverse teams also bring challenges as values and beliefs emerge that are different to homogeneous teams and that therefore need to be addressed by managers and leaders (Ötztürk & Wheatley, 2000; Pless & Maak, 2004). Research particularly accentuates the differences in communication style across cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hall, 1989; Treven, Mulej, & Lynn, 2008) where cross-cultural communication can cause misunderstandings and misperceptions (Adler, 2002). Therefore effective intercultural communication is often discussed as the key to successful interpersonal relationships (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005; Thomas & Inkson, 2009).

A further driving force which intensifies the challenge of multicultural group settings is continuous organisational change (Liu & Lee, 2008). The crucial importance of communication during organisational change has been investigated in research on organisational change management (Barrett, 2002; Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011; Elving, 2005; Liu & Lee, 2008; Savolainen, 2007). The change intent needs to be communicated to ensure that the reason for the change is accepted and understood well and to reduce resistance to change (Goodman & Truss, 2004; Savolainen, 2007). In contrast, poor internal communication can increase resistance to change (Proctor & Doukakis, 2003), result in rumours (Elving, 2005), and can lead to frustration and insecurity (Langer & Thorup, 2006).

Many researchers (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Michalak, 2010; Treven et al., 2008) emphasise that national culture plays an additional influential role on the success of planned change initiatives when change is implemented in a cross-cultural setting. Differences in communication style and the perception on communication as well as different levels of resistance to change may vary between cultures (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Treven et al., 2008). Additionally, research also recognizes differences in the response to organisational change depending on the cultural background of an individual or group (Michalak, 2010; Treven et al., 2008). Behavioural differences may exist in regard to various levels of

participation during change (Savolainen, 2007). Differences can also become apparent for the way employees finally commit to change, in particular when job satisfaction is low. These contrasting behavioural patterns might result in either active support of, or destructive reaction to the change initiatives (Martinsons & Hempel, 2001; Thomas & Au, 2002).

Although common agreement about the importance of communication during change exists, research on organisational change in a cross cultural setting is limited. This is particularly apparent in a multicultural setting where more than two cultures are presented in a team or working group. The present study aims to explore the impact of culture on communication related to organisational change and the behavioural response of members from a multicultural working group in order to contribute to this important research field.

Rationale and Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to explore the role of ethnic culture on communication during the implementation of a major organisational change in a multicultural work setting and the influence of culture on members' behavioural responses to this change related communication. The review of the literature reveals a lack of relevant studies in the areas of organisational change in a cross cultural setting particularly in a multicultural working group or team setting where more than two cultures are presented among team members. Although extensive research exists on the topics of multicultural teams and the importance of communication during a change implementation in general teams, a gap exists in the combination of both areas. Therefore, more empirical research needs to be conducted to examine communication during a major change implementation in a multicultural setting. Another observation in reviewing the literature is that a gap exists in regard to the evaluation of change communication from a subordinate perspective as most research concentrates on the leader and management perspective. For this reason, this research is focused on the staff members' perspective only.

In detail, this research project seeks to answer the following research question:

How do members of a multicultural working group perceive and respond to communication relating to organisational change?

The following sub-questions guide this research:

What is the impact of culturally dependent dimensions like uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and future orientation on the perception of change communication?

Are there culture based differences in the type of behavioural response (active, passive, constructive, destructive)?

Operational Definitions

Multicultural working group

According to Cheney et al. (2011, p. 232) the notion *team* refers to "a small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach, for which they hold themselves accountable". In contrast, a *group* describes "simply a collection of people with something (often temporary) in common" (Cheney et al., 2011, p. 232). A w*orking group* can be placed between these two definitions and refers to a group that is characterised by individual accountability where the group purpose is the same as that of the overall organisation, and they typically have strong leaders (Cheney et al., 2011). This research uses the notion of working groups because the majority of staff members in the organisation EDU are lecturers who contribute mainly on an individual basis to the organisation.

In the literature the terms *ethnic* and *national* appear to be used interchangeably. Adler (1996), for instance, defines a *multicultural* team as a team where three or more *ethnic* cultures are represented among members. However, Marquardt and Horvath (2001; as cited in Liu & Lee, 2008, p. 140) refer to a multicultural team as a team which is composed of members from multiple *nationalities*. Because New Zealand is a country with high immigration and is therefore characterised by the existence of different ethnicities this research refers to *ethnic* culture and adopts Adler's (1996) definition of a multicultural team in the following way: A multicultural working group refers to a group where three or more ethnic cultures are represented among members.

Perception

"Perception can be defined as a social and cognitive process in which people assign meaning to sensory cues" (Stewart, Zediker, & Witteborn, 2009, p. 197). The definition of culture as "a shared system of meanings" as suggested by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1994) implies that this assigned meaning can differ across cultures. Moreover, "perception is shaped by the perceiving person's experience and understanding of his or her place in the world" (Stewart et al., 2009, p. 197). Perception, therefore, can vary across cultures and is important in the context of multicultural working groups and organisational change as it has an impact on staff members to deal with the change situation and to respond to it.

Cultural dimensions

"A dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures" (Hofstede, 2003, p. 14). "A dimension groups together a number of phenomena in a society which were empirically found to occur in combination" (Hofstede, 2003, p. 14). The idea of the construction of a cultural dimension is to simplify the complex nature of culture and to provide a framework for distinguishing cultures.

Uncertainty avoidance

This research project uses the definition for the cultural dimension of *uncertainty avoidance* given by Hofstede (2001, pp. xix-xx): Uncertainty avoidance refers to the "extent to which a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, different from usual." In particular in the context of change this dimension plays an important role on the acceptance for change (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996) and, therefore, is applied in this study for the analysis of the results.

Power distance

Power distance describes "the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally" as suggested by Hofstede (2001, p. xix). Different levels of power distance lead to different understandings on whether someone expects to participate and to be consulted by managers (Hofstede, 1984). Participation of staff members in the process of organisational change is discussed in the literature as an important concept to reduce uncertainty and resistance to change. For this reason, the dimension power distance is applied for the analysis in this study.

Future orientation

Javidan, Dorfman, de Lupe, and House (2006) define *future orientation* as "the extent to which individuals engage (and should engage) in future-oriented behaviours such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future" (p. 69). As change is future-oriented the degree of future orientation of an individual may influence the understanding for the need of and openness to change. This cultural dimension is, therefore, used to analyse the results of this study.

Organisational change

"Organisational change involves moving from the organisation's present state to a future or target state. The future state can include a new strategy, changes in the organisation's culture, introduction of a new technology, and so on" (Champoux, 2010, p. 455). Change differs on a variety of dimensions, like the degree of change (minor or large), the type (technology, administration) and intentionality (planned or unplanned) to mention only a few (Cheney et al., 2011). In this case study a planned major organisational change which led to a significant restructuring process is explored.

Research Framework

An overall qualitative research approach was chosen to address the complex nature of intercultural communication issues. A case study approach was conducted in order to gain an in-depth assessment of the role of multiple ethnic cultures in the change. Therefore this research is evaluative and descriptive in nature (Bouma, 1994). Because the existing research in cross cultural differences in change communication is limited this is also an exploratory case study.

The case study for this project was undertaken in a tertiary educational organisation in New Zealand which will be referred as EDU in this thesis as an acronym for "education". This research investigated one of the three faculties, which were created after the last major restructuring at the end of 2008. The staff members in each of the eight departments represent a multicultural working group in order to fulfil the department's and faculty's goals. The unit of analysis, therefore, was a working group which represents a department within this faculty.

Due to significant financial issues, EDU has undertaken several restructuring changes over the last nine years. The change implementation at EDU can be divided into two major phases. In the first phase (between 2007 and 2009) a structural change was implemented to introduce a faculty organisational structure. The second phase, which started in 2009, has been characterised by numerous organisational administration change projects to implement centralised organisational processes. This includes schemes to determine staff workloads, increase the student-staff ratio, and centralise administration. This study and the questions referring to change issues focused on the latter period because it was the more recent stage of this organisational change. EDU employs more than 1,000 people from several cultural groups and cultural diversity exists on every organisational level at EDU.

Data collection was divided into two parts. In the first part, quantitative data was collected through an exploratory survey to create a profile of staff members and to identify

trends in terms of perceptions of the implemented change. These results formed the basis for the conceptualisation of the second phase. In the second part, qualitative in-depth data was collected through a focus group and individual interviews.

Hofstede's (1994) cultural dimensions of *uncertainty avoidance* and *power distance*, and GLOBE's[1] cultural dimension of *future orientation* were applied for an analysis of the impact of national culture on the perception and response to change related communication. These dimensions are critical components in a change implementation in a cross cultural setting (Bowen & Inkpen, 2009) and hence important to investigate in a multicultural setting.

The response of staff members to the change was analysed through the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN) model developed by Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, and Mainous (1988). This model provides the possibility to classify behavioural responses in relation to job dissatisfaction (Thomas & Au, 2002). Because low commitment is strongly related to low job dissatisfaction (Farrell, 1983) and research indicates that cultural groups respond differently to low job satisfaction (Thomas & Au, 2002) this model was used to examine culture-based behavioural responses to the change communication.

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one provides an introductory overview about organisational change in a cross cultural setting, and the purpose and research framework of this study. Chapter two presents a review of the current literature on multicultural teams, organisational change in general, and the impact of national culture on organisational change. Additionally, gaps are identified in this research area. Chapter three discusses the research design and methodology and describes the selected data collection methods, analysis of the data, limitations, and ethical considerations of this research. Chapter four presents the research results from the survey, focus group, and individual interviews. In chapter five the research findings are analysed and discussed in the context of the relevant literature. Finally, chapter six ends with a conclusion and suggestions for further research.

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[1] GLOBE is the acronym for Global Leadership Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness and refers to an extensive research program to examine the inter-relationships between societal culture, organizational culture, and organizational leadership (Javidan et al., 2006). The dimension of *future orientation* is one of nine identified cultural dimensions which were identified by the GLOBE study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the relevant literature for this research project. The first section provides a definition of multicultural teams and working groups and their specific characteristics with regard to leadership and the particular role of communication. Further, a brief overview about the general research on organisational change and the factors which need to be considered are described. An investigation about the specific role of ethnic culture when it comes to organisational change follows. Finally, an overview of theoretical approaches in cross cultural settings and applied methodologies in this field is provided.

Multicultural Teams and Working Groups

Multicultural teams are often investigated in research in order to differentiate team outcomes from cultural heterogonous teams and homogenous teams (Joshi & Lazarova, 2005; Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010). A clear distinction exists in the literature between the terms *team* and *group*. This study is not concerned with specific team outcomes but investigates perceptions of individuals with various cultural backgrounds who are working together in a working group. To provide a better understanding of the terminology, the terms *group*, *team*, and *working group* are defined first, followed by a definition of culture.

Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, and Ganesh (2011, p. 232) define a *team* as "a small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach, for which they hold themselves accountable". In contrast, a *group* describes "simply a collection of people with something (often temporary) in common" (Cheney et al., 2011, p. 232). W*orking groups* can be placed between these two definitions and refers to groups "which typically have a strong leader, individual accountability, a group purpose that is the same as that of the organisation, and individual work products" (Cheney et al., 2011, p. 232). Multicultural teams are characterised through an additional component, the diversity of national cultures (Marquardt & Horvath, 2001; as cited in Liu & Lee, 2008, p. 140). Similar to Adler's (1996) definition of a multicultural team, a *multicultural* working group refers to a group where three or more ethnic cultures are represented among members.

Several definitions of culture exist which show the complexity already on this level (Treven et al., 2008). Geert Hofstede (1984) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the member of one category of people from another" (p. 21). Another definition of culture is provided by Sathe (1985, as cited inTreven et al., 2008, p. 28) where he defined culture as a "series of important values and beliefs that are characteristic for

the members of a particular society and are relevant to their view of the world as well as to the ideals worth to strive for". This research uses the definition of culture as "a shared system of meanings" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1994, p. 14). Values, beliefs, norms, and behavioural patterns are shared by people within a national group (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2005). Differences of these characteristics between various cultures imply possible communication barriers for both the communicator and the receiver. Many researchers emphasise that culture also includes values and behaviours which have an impact on team work (Liu & Lee, 2008) and organisational life in general (Erez & Gati, 2004; Fagenson-Eland, Ensher, & Burke, 2004; Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Leung et al., 2005).

Three types of multicultural teams are examined in the literature: local teams and dispersed teams (Ötztürk & Wheatley, 2000), and teams which are partially or totally dispersed but meet regularly face-to-face (Mäkilouko, 2004). The present case study investigates the perceptions of a multicultural working group where all members live and work in one country (New Zealand). Therefore, this literature review focuses only on local teams with regular face-to-face meetings. The term *team* will be used instead of *working group* because research focuses mainly on teams.

Characteristics in Multicultural Teams

This section provides an overview of characteristics in multicultural teams in order to provide a better understanding of how culture influences several levels of organisational life. Because leadership, management and communication play a significant role during organisational change a brief overview about the existing research with regard to multicultural teams in these fields is provided.

Leading and managing multicultural teams

Research on leadership of multicultural teams is limited, which is in contrast to the extensive research on single-culture teams (Joshi & Lazarova, 2005; Mäkilouko, 2004; Zander & Butler, 2010). It is noticeable that most studies undertook a cultural-focused approach where each culture is discussed in isolation (e.g. Hannay, 2009; Mäkilouko, 2004; Ochieng & Price, 2009). Therefore, a generalisation to a mixed multicultural team setting is not possible. One exception is the study from Joshi and Lazarova (2005) where the researchers identified multicultural leadership competencies. They conducted a qualitative study in a multicultural team environment, and interviewed not only leaders and managers, but also team members. Joshi and Lazarova (2005) found that both, leaders and staff

members, agreed about the importance of communication. On the other hand, they also observed that competencies like empowering team members and managing cultural diversity were identified as important by the leaders rather than by the staff members.

Leadership and management practice

A controversy exists in the literature about the *universality* of leadership and management styles (Cheney et al., 2011; Mäkilouko, 2004; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1994). Many authors (e.g. Jackson, 2011; Ötztürk & Wheatley, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1994) argue that most research has been undertaken from a Western perspective. A general agreement exists among scholars that leadership style and practice is cultural dependent, and thus differs across cultures (Collard, 2007; Connerley & Pedersen, 2005; Hannay, 2009; Jackson, 2011; Ochieng & Price, 2009; Prabhakar, 2005; Thomas & Au, 2002; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1994). In particular, Collard (2007) emphasised "contemporary scholars have alerted us to the links between cultural values and leadership practice and warned of the dangers of continuing to operate from monocultural assumptions and frameworks" (p. 744). For example, various studies examine specific leadership styles for their effectiveness in a cross-cultural or multicultural environment (e.g. Mäkilouko, 2004; Matveev, 2004; Ochieng & Price, 2009; Prabhakar, 2005). Although some researchers identify styles that are particularly appropriate in a cross-cultural environment such as the participatory (Matveev, 2004) or the transformational style (Prabhakar, 2005), these authors accentuate the importance of being adaptive and flexible to switch or adapt styles if necessary.

Other studies investigate the appropriateness of general categories of leadership styles in a multicultural environment. For example, Mäkilouko (2004) clusters the leader's perception of foreign cultures into styles, and distinguishes between an ethnocentric (task-oriented), a synergistic, and a polycentric (relationship-oriented) style. His results confirm that the synergistic and polycentric styles are more successful as they are able to maintain team cohesion (Mäkilouko, 2004). However, Thomas (2008) argues that the examination of the two dimensions of leadership behaviour, task and relationship orientation, ignores the influence of subordinates and situations. As a consequence, some scholars stress the need to analyse a specific team composition and project situation (Thomas, 2008; Zander & Butler, 2010) where the selection of a particular style can be seen as a strategic choice (Zander & Butler, 2010). "Leadership should be appropriate to the people, time, place, and cultural context" to be successful (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005, p. 152). Moreover, Collard (2007) emphasises the mediating role of managers when he suggests leaders should be viewed as

cultural agents who mediate between different cultures in order to "build bridges at cognitive, individual and institutional levels" (p. 751).

In sum, although a vague tendency towards a more relationship oriented leadership style seems to be recommended for an effective management in a multicultural setting, most researchers emphasise the need for a flexible and adaptive style depending on the context and the cultural composition.

Leadership communication skills and competencies

A general agreement exists that specific challenges for leadership of multicultural teams arise through the differences across cultural and linguistic borders (Ochieng & Price, 2009; Prabhakar, 2005; Stahl et al., 2010; Thomas, 2008; Zander & Butler, 2010). Therefore, important skills for managing multicultural teams are the ability to motivate people through leading by example, the development of trust and confidence in the team (Ochieng & Price, 2009; Prabhakar, 2005; Zander & Butler, 2010) and the setting of direction and goals (Joshi & Lazarova, 2005). More applied business studies stress the importance of an open and flexible management method accompanied by 'a good communication style' to achieve these goals (Miller, Fields, Kumar, & Ortiz, 2000), but also academic research stresses the importance of flexibility and intercultural competence as essential skills for today's leaders (Irving, 2010).

An enhanced level of multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills to successfully lead in a multicultural setting combined with conflict management as it varies across cultures are necessary (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005). Work within any team demands a high level of communication, whereas communication in a multicultural team is a particular challenge. Thus, the role of cultural competence is an important component to build up interpersonal relationships (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005).

Further, Joshi and Lazarova (2005) observe that team members as well as leadership and management consider communication as a major leadership competency. Thus, *intercultural communication competence*, *intercultural competence*, *intercultural sensitivity* and *cultural intelligence* are important concepts which are discussed in the current literature on effective leadership and management in global teams (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Irving, 2010; Liu & Lee, 2008; Matveev, 2004; Ochieng & Price, 2009). Knowledge about country, culture and language, together with the recognition of a cultural complexity and the acceptance of these cultures, the understanding of one's own culture, as well as interpersonal and communication skills to interact with other cultures, are central to effective leadership. In short the three major components of a leader's cultural competence are awareness, knowledge

and skills (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005). Interestingly the importance of managing cultural diversity is valued as important only by leadership and management but not by team members in Joshi and Lazarova's (2005) research.

Communication among Members of a Multicultural Team

Agreement appears to exist that a diversity of culture enriches team effectiveness but only if the culture related challenges are appropriately and effectively managed (Adler, 2002; Liu & Lee, 2008; Miller et al., 2000; Ochieng & Price, 2009; Stahl et al., 2010; Zander & Butler, 2010). Moreover, according to the literature (Miller et al., 2000; Ochieng & Price, 2009), the existence of a variety of cultures in a team can turn into a serious disadvantage for the organisation if this management fails. Effective communication and communication skills play a major role between team members to create cohesiveness and to manage team dynamics efficiently for a team's overall performance (Cheney et al., 2011; Liu & Lee, 2008; Miller et al., 2000; Ochieng & Price, 2009; Thomas, 2008; Zander & Butler, 2010). However, cross-cultural communication can cause misunderstandings and misperceptions as people from different countries assess and interpret situations differently (Adler, 2002) which might result in conflicts within the organisation. Stahl et al. (2010) explored in their meta-analysis a clear impact of effective communication between team members on processes like conflict resolution and cohesiveness. Consequently, a significant amount of literature examines the role of intercultural communication between team members as an important factor for positive team outcomes (e.g. Arasaratnam, 2009; Liu & Lee, 2008; Lloyd & Härtel, 2010; Matveev, 2004).

It is important to note that in many studies the terms *intercultural* and *cross-cultural* are used interchangeably in the field of communication across cultures which can often lead to misunderstandings (Varner & Beamer, 2011). To clarify the difference, cross-cultural communication involves a comparison of cultures whereas intercultural communication takes place when "people from two or more cultures interact" (Varner & Beamer, 2011, p. 28).

Intercultural Communication Competence

This section provides a closer insight into the concept of *intercultural communication competence* (ICC) because this skill is discussed in the literature as important for leaders, managers and team members of a multicultural team.

Intercultural communication competence has been conceptualised in a variety of ways (Wiseman, 2002). Matveev (2004) stated "an intercultural and communicatively competent

member of a multicultural team establishes interpersonal relationships with other team members through effective and appropriate interaction" (p. 56). Whereas this definition outlines the strong relationship to interpersonal communication the following definition concentrates on behaviour: "A competent communicator is effective in that she is able to engage and manipulate her social environment to accomplish her goals and appropriate in that she is able exhibit behaviour that is both expected, and accepted, in any given interaction" (Arasaratnam, 2009, p. 1). Wiseman (2002) summarised that a general consensus derived in the last two decades on a conceptualisation of intercultural communication competence, which can be identified in the following way: "intercultural communication competence involves the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures" (Wiseman, 2002, p. 208). However, the meaning of effectively and appropriate depends again on cultural perceptions and shows the complexity of this concept (Arasaratnam, 2009; Matveev, 2004; Wiseman, 2002).

Different frameworks of intercultural communication competence exist and what ICC encompasses (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) developed a model of intercultural communication competence which is based on *interpersonal* communication competence to emphasise the strong relationship between both competencies. They conducted a study with cultural diverse participants to identify important dimensions of intercultural communication competence from a multicultural perspective to create a culture-general conceptualisation. Their aim was to compose a definition of ICC proposed by these individuals with different cultural backgrounds in order to provide a vernacular meaning of ICC which is valid across cultures (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005). Their model encompasses the following five variables: Motivation, experience, empathy towards other cultures, global attitude and the ability to listen well in conversations (Arasaratnam, 2006).

General Research in Organisational Change Communication

This section provides a brief overview about the findings of organisational change in homogenous teams before the influence of national culture on organisational change will be illustrated.

According to Cheney et al. (2011) the extent of *change* differs on a variety of dimensions, like the degree of change (minor or large), the type (technology, administration) and intentionality (planned or unplanned) to mention only a few. Moreover, it is not easy to determine whether a change is successfully implemented or not (Cheney et al., 2011). A

change could be accepted by all stakeholders and the goals of the change intention could be reached, but often many unintended consequences can also be a result of a change process and need to be taken into account (Cheney et al., 2011). Because of this complexity Cheney et al. (2011) concluded it is not possible to describe a single guide for change management.

Communication

The crucial importance of communication during organisational change is commonly emphasised by general research on organisational change management (Barrett, 2002; Cheney et al., 2011; Elving, 2005; Liu & Lee, 2008; Savolainen, 2007). The change intent needs to be communicated to ensure that the reason for the change is accepted and understood, which in turn helps to reduce resistance to change and moreover leads to a general contribution to the change implementation (Savolainen, 2007). But also a continuous communication during change with direct two-way face-to-face communication to create feedback (Barrett, 2002) is central to overcome resistance to change (Savolainen, 2007). The prevailing view is that communication should build up trust of management and reduce uncertainty to increase control over personal circumstances (Elving, 2005; Goodman & Truss, 2004; Peus et al., 2009; Nelissen & van Selm, 2008). It should create openness for change (Peus et al., 2009; Long & Spurlock, 2008), increase motivation (Proctor & Doukakis, 2004) and finally induce commitment to the change initiatives (Davidson, 2002). It is generally acknowledged that organisational change is a sensitive process where a thoroughly planned communication strategy is necessary in order to reduce resistance and create readiness for change (Barrett, 2002; E. Jones, Watson, Gardner, & Gallois, 2004; Nelissen & Selm, 2008).

Resistance to change

Many researchers emphasise that resistance to change is a major obstacle which needs to be overcome (Bruckmann, 2008; Kotter, 2008; Davidson, 2002; Proctor & Doukakis, 2003; Peus et al., 2009; Long & Spurlock, 2008; Goodman & Truss, 2004). They categorise this resistance as a given natural human characteristic and response to uncertainty, anxiety and ambiguity (Michalak, 2010), which a leader and manager needs to address with the help of effective communication. Therefore, poor internal communication can increase resistance of employees to change (Proctor & Doukakis, 2003), result in rumours (Elving, 2005), and lead to frustration and insecurity (Langer & Thorup, 2006).

Leadership and management

Although no universal definition of leadership exists, the majority of scholars agree that the role of leadership involves the aim to influence followers (Cheney et al., 2011; Hannay, 2009). A controversial discussion exists about the question of *what* leadership influences: The achievement of organisational goals or the realisation of a major organisational change which would lead an organisation in a new direction (Cheney et al., 2011). However, it is also commonly accepted that responsibility for organisational change cannot be managed by a small number of managers (Barrett, 2002; Elving, 2005; Goodman & Truss, 2004; Proctor & Doukakis, 2003; Ströh & Jaatinen, 2001). Instead, the role of leadership in a change process is to facilitate participation through dialogue and includes the provision of networking structures with the support of management (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Ströh & Jaatinen, 2001). Therefore, both leaders and managers constitute the organisational change agents who decide and retain responsibility for a successful implementation of an organisational change process (Cheney et al., 2011; Elsey & Leung, 2004; Savolainen, 2007). These agents guide, support and motivate persons to understand and accept the changes, and finally help to implement them in the organisation (Elsey & Leung, 2004; Savolainen, 2007). Also often stressed in the change management literature and by practitioners are the ideas of participation, empowerment and further education of employees to create commitment to change (Cheney et al., 2011).

National Culture and Organisational Change

Many researchers (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Michalak, 2010; Treven et al., 2008) emphasise the need to investigate the role of culture as an additional influential component on the outcomes of organisational change. According to Treven (2008) change becomes more challenging because the typical obstacles to organisational change increase. Harzing and Hofstede (1996) highlight the specific challenge of organisational change in a different culture when they stated "changing an organisation within one's own national culture is already problematic, changing an organisation in another national culture is like black magic" (p. 298).

Communication

Intercultural communication occurs when individuals with different cultural backgrounds meet and communicate (Kim, 1988). Scholars agree that there is a strong influence of culture on communication (Adler, 2002; Applegate & Sypher, 1988; Hsu, 2010;

Kim, 1988; Miller et al., 2000; Treven et al., 2008). Messages are shaped by the sender's cultural views, norms and beliefs and also perceived by the recipient's cultural views, norms and beliefs. Consequently, the process of shared meaning during communication can be complex if the sender and recipient are from different cultures. Differences occur in the verbal style of communication as well as in the exchange of nonverbal messages (Adler, 2002; Treven et al., 2008).

Research accentuates differences in the communication style with regard to the level of directness, which differs significantly between cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hall, 1989; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001; Treven et al., 2008). The characteristic of directness is influenced by the level of individualism within a culture but also by the fact whether a culture is rather low or high context oriented (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hall, 1989; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). More precisely an individualistic and low-context individual tends to be more direct in his or her communication style compared to a person from a culture which is more collectivistic and high-context oriented (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hall, 1989). These differences with regard to directness and openness in communication style are also discussed in the context of conflict situations. According to Gudykunst (1998) and Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) people in individualistic cultures tend to follow an open communication style, whereas people from collectivistic cultures tend to verbal closeness during conflict situations. Therefore, an individualist prefers to confront a conflict in a low-context conflict style (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001), whereas a collectivist individual prefers to avoid the conflict with a high-context mode (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001).

Another culture based difference occurs with nonverbal communication and a higher risk of misunderstanding exists as every ethnicity brings its own standards and norms (Norris, 2009; Prince & Hoppe, 2000). Because usually the nonverbal message wins over the verbal one (Larson & Kleiner, 2004; Remland, 1981) nonverbal communication is an important factor in the communication process.

Even differences exist in the meaning of certain words in one language and people who are from different countries but speak the same language experience misunderstandings (Treven et al., 2008).

Only a few cross-cultural studies (Hsu, 2010; Lin, Rancer, & Trimbitas, 2005; Richmond, McCroskey, McCroskey, & Fayer, 2008) examined communication traits such as communication apprehension, willingness to communicate, and self-perceived communication competence for instance as a further difference between people from different cultures. Lin et al. (2005) argue that further research on communication traits could enlarge

the knowledge of intercultural communication beyond the existing research on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the concept of low-context and high-context cultures. In his quantitative study he examined the relationship between ethnocentrism and the communication trait of *intercultural-willingness-to-communicate*. As a result he found that Romanian students tend to be more ethnocentric and are less willing to communicate interculturally compared to US American students.

Resistance to change

Because it is likely that leadership and management need to address resistance when it comes to organisational change it is important that they understand the source for this resistance. Research analyses a possible impact of national culture on resistance and the general outcomes of organisational change. Harzing and Hofstede's (1996) presumed that their work was the first investigation on the impact of national culture on organisational change. According to the authors, prior investigations have been undertaken about the impact of culture in the field of organisational development but not in the field of organisational change. The authors believed that resistance to change has not only a universal and personal aspect but also a cultural one. This assumption of a strong influence of culture on the level of resistance to change is based on an earlier research which has been undertaken by Geert Hofstede (1984). His comprehensive study examined the degree of influence which culture has on values at a workplace. Hofstede conducted a major survey at IBM in more than 40 different countries. As a result of this study he identified four cultural dimensions which describe "aspects that are statistically distinct" in different nations (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996, p. 309). These dimensions are *power distance*, *uncertainty avoidance*, *individualism/collectivism* and *masculinity/femininity*. In a later study he added a fifth dimension, *long-term orientation*. Power distance refers to the extent to which members of organisations accept and expect an unequal distribution of power (Hofstede, 1984). Uncertainty avoidance describes the extent to which organisational members do not tolerate unpredictability and ambiguity (Hofstede, 1984). Individualism illustrates the degree to which people think they are responsible for themselves in contrast to collectivism which emphasises the goals of the group (Hofstede, 1984). Harzing and Hofstede (1996, p. 315) suggested that "both power distance and uncertainty avoidance increase resistance to change while individualism reduces it". They could not identify any relationship to masculinity.

Treven (2008) confirmed Harzing's and Hofstede's (1996) results that cultures vary on the level of resistance to change and he emphasises the need to appreciate the role of culture

as an influential factor on organisational behaviour in order to obtain a better management. He argued that some cultures value traditional behaviour more than other cultures and, therefore, change more slowly and seem to actively resist change. Other cultures tend to welcome change and some are ambivalent toward change with the result that they welcome, resist and fear the change at the same time (Treven et al., 2008). Treven (2008) referred to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1994) for a possible explanation of these variations in the response to change who identified a culture dependent orientation toward time. Treven (2008) argued, past oriented cultures view tradition and history as very important whereas other cultures are present or future oriented and have other values in regard to traditions.

Leadership and management

Some researchers (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Jackson, 2011; Michalak, 2010) criticise the use of universal approaches and emphasise the need to develop cross-cultural management strategies for organisational change. This criticism refers to the common approach of managers from multinational organisations who apply a successful change strategy from their home country to another country where a subsidiary of the organisation is located. Michalak (2010), for instance, identified a lack of understanding of how change could be successfully managed in different cultural settings when he stated that "culture and its influence on change management performance have not been systematically explored in current economic literature" (p. 34). Moreover, he outlined the importance of understanding the relationship between organisational culture, national culture and organisational change in order to effectively manage organisational change. Another example is illustrated by Rees and Hassard (2010) who pointed out the existence of limited research in the field of organisational change in Asia. Furthermore, Jackson (2011, p. 534) emphasises the context in general and he stated that "the relevance for cross-cultural management theory is the need to incorporate context-specific insight in a multi-cultural and globalized world". These suggestions of taking the contextual and cultural needs into account are in line with the proposition of other researchers in the general field of leadership and multicultural teams towards an adaptive and flexible management style which allows an inclusion of contextual and cultural factors for an appropriate choice of a management style.

Behavioural response

As mentioned above, commitment to change from staff members and management is emphasised in the literature in order to support and successfully implement a change

initiative. Research recognizes differences in this behavioural response in the context of organisational change depending on the cultural background an individual or group belongs to (Michalak, 2010; Treven et al., 2008). As Michalak (2010) outlined: "Individuals or groups can react very differently to change: from passively resisting it, silencing its advocates, refusing to engage in joint problem-solving, refusing to seek common ground, sabotaging, and aggressively trying to undermine it, to sincerely embracing it" (p. 28). Some research indicates that people from different countries respond differently to a change initiative in terms of participation (Savolainen, 2007) but also in the way they finally support a change initiative in an active or passive manner (e.g. Martinsons & Hempel, 2001).

Moreover, Treven (2008) argued that also the attitude towards conflict varies depending on the culture. This is noticeable because organisational change often leads to conflict situations and, therefore, it needs to be considered how different cultures respond and deal with conflict. According to Hofstede (1984) cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance prefer to avoid conflict situations in organisations. Based on Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions and Hall's low-and high-context approach, Stella Ting-Toomey has developed a "face-negotiation" theory which helps to explain how culture influences conflict style (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). One argument of this theory is that individualistic cultures tend to be more "self-face oriented" whereas members of collectivistic cultures tend to have more group-oriented values and are more "other- or mutual-face oriented" (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001, p. 48). Further, people from low-context cultures react actively and are more action oriented which often results in a "direct and confrontational response to conflict" (Treven et al., 2008, p. 35). In contrast, high-context cultures respond to conflict in "evasive" and "non confrontational" ways and therefore react passively which often results in avoiding the conflict (Treven et al., 2008, p. 35).

Finally, research shows that organisational change often leads to a higher level of uncertainty which leads to higher stress levels among staff members and, therefore, increases job dissatisfaction and decreases commitment to the organisation (Parlalis, 2011). Moreover, cultural groups respond differently to low job satisfaction (Thomas & Au, 2002). Thomas and Au (2002) used the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN) model developed by Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, and Mainous (1988) as a framework to examine cultural differences on responses to low job satisfaction. This model provides a possibility to classify behavioural responses in relation to job dissatisfaction (Thomas & Au, 2002).

EVLN (Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect) model

The ELVN-model is illustrated in figure 1 and encompasses four typical response categories: *Exit* resides in the Active-Destructive quadrant. It refers to leaving an organisation, but also to thinking of leaving or looking for other work opportunities. *Voice* is characterised through an active discussion about problems with either management and/or colleagues and is, therefore, considered as an active constructive response. It also includes asking for help from outside like unions for example. *Loyalty* describes an inactive but positive attitude of waiting and hoping for improvement. Finally, *Neglect* describes a passive and destructive response which results in a reduced effort, chronic lateness or an increased error rate for example.
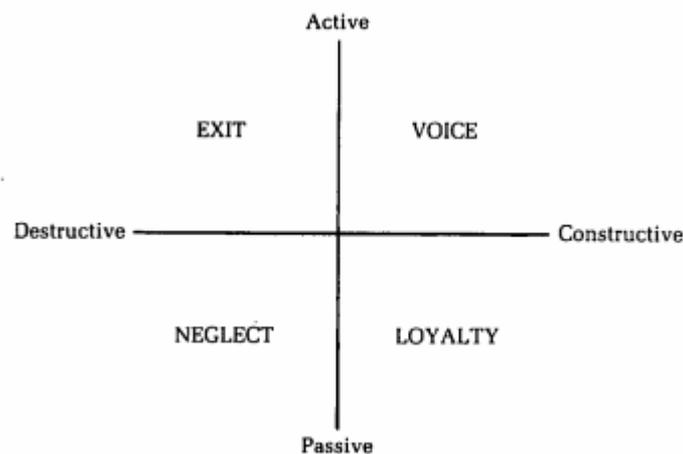
Figure 1*: Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect Typology of Responses
to Job Dissatisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1988, p. 601)*

Thomas and Au's (2002) study investigated the influence of culture in the four behavioural responses as suggested by the EVLN model. They conducted a quantitative study with Hong-Kong and New Zealand employees in order to explore the influence of culture on these behavioural responses. The authors build up their hypotheses mainly on the influence of the cultural dimension individualism-collectivism on these reactions, where Hong-Kong represented the collectivistic and New Zealand the individualistic culture. Thomas and Au (2002) argue that the concept of individualism and collectivism describes the way individuals see themselves as part of a larger organisation and, therefore, have a particular influence on job satisfaction. According to several researchers, individualism and collectivism is the most powerful dimension of cultural variation to describe differences in social behaviour across cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Thomas & Au, 2002). Thomas and Au's (2002) study suggests that cultural groups respond different to exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect in a situation of low job satisfaction.

However, Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) take the view that the interpretation and the meanings of the four identified forms of behaviour reflect an individualistic and Western orientation. They argued that what is perceived as constructive versus destructive and active versus passive underlies already cultural based assumptions which bias the categorisation.

Theoretical Approaches in Cross-Cultural Business Settings

A controversial discussion exists in the literature about how culture should be conceptualised. The traditional approach of cultural dimensions is often criticised by researchers who stress the importance of a complex and multi-layer approach on culture. For a more holistic picture both approaches are illustrated in this section which is accompanied by critics of researchers in this field.

  Approaches based on cultural dimensions

Probably the most known and influential study in management of global business is the work by Geert Hofstede (Collard, 2007; Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006; C. L. Pearce & Osmond, 1996) where he identified five primary cultural dimensions to distinguish cultures. Hofstede (1984) was the first researcher who developed a cross-cultural framework based on his study in a business context (Collard, 2007). This framework describes the prevailing concept of cultural values in organisational behaviour (Erez & Gati, 2004) and many researchers have utilised Hofstede's dimensions in a wide area of empirical research (Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Kirkman et al., 2006; Rapp, Bernardi, & Bosco, 2011). Many studies have confirmed Hofstede's findings (Treven et al., 2008), in particular large-scale studies which were published after Hofstede have not only confirmed but also amplified his results (Kirkman et al., 2006). The strong influence of Hofstede's (1984) work on research and business is widely acknowledged and his work was "instrumental in kick-starting the field" (Leung et al., 2005, p. 374). It is noteworthy that also some critics of his approach recognize his contribution "to critique the universal nature of Western management and organisational principles and practices" (Jackson, 2011).

Additionally, other researchers used this approach of conceptualising culture on the basis of dimensions in their own research. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1994), for instance, identified a set of seven cultural dimensions based on an extensive database with around 30.000 survey results from 28 countries. Another dimensional approach built upon Hofstede's work is the GLOBE study (see study of House, Hanges, Mansour, Dorfman, &

Gupta, 2004), which examined the effect of culture on desired leadership characteristics and identified nine primary dimensions. Finally, based upon the GLOBE study Javidan and colleagues of the Thunderbird School of Global Management have developed the construct of a '*global mindset*' as an "essential key to successful global leadership" (Irving, 2010, p. 5).

Leung et al.'s (2005) review about research on culture in international business shows that most research uses a cultural dimensions approach to examine the influence of culture on organisational research problems. However, present researchers claim that traditional approaches using cultural dimensions underlie strong limitations for gaining in-depth understanding because they reduce culture to a few dimensions (Jackson, 2011; Jacob, 2005; Leung et al., 2005; C. L. Pearce & Osmond, 1996). Harzing and Hofstede (1996), argued that their approach of constructing "artificial dimensions" is helpful in order "to simplify a whole that is too complex to be understood (p. 309). Furthermore, they emphasised that the significant correlations which Hofstede (1984) has found between the IBM survey data and culturally relevant data confirm that an analysis on national level is valid. Many critics (Collard, 2007; Jackson, 2011; Jacob, 2005) pointed out that the positivistic approach used by Hofstede (1984) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1994) is not questioned by many researchers, although the approach of "describing groups and nationalities in essentialist terms of contrasting beliefs and values as a form of generalisation should be treated with scepticism" as Collard (2007, p. 745) argued.

Multilayer approaches on culture

Many scholars emphasise the complex nature of culture where culture is a factor among others which are all interwoven, and where culture cannot be examined separately. Jacob (2005), for instance, stressed the importance of observing the "complex interplay between culture and management in terms of a constantly evolving dynamic, because both are constantly evolving" (p. 2). Likewise Jackson (2011) suggested a focus on both organisational and individual level as the main unit of analysis as opposed to a concentration on cultural differences only. Also less critical researchers towards the cultural dimensions approach suggest a more complex approach on culture for future research. For instance, Fagenson-Eland et al. (2004), confirmed an impact of Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions on organisational development and change practices in their study. But at the same time, they outlined that others factors like organisational culture and an interaction of both could influence organisational development and change.

Many researchers claim that the cultural dimension approach is too static and does not consider other contextual variables and cultural elements (Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Jackson, 2011; Leung et al., 2005). Consequently this approach lacks consideration of a multi-layered, multi-influenced and multi-cultural context (Jackson, 2011). The need to conceptualise culture in a more complex way is stressed by many researchers (Erez & Gati, 2004; Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Jackson, 2011; Jacob, 2005; Leung et al., 2005; Craig L. Pearce & Osmond, 1999) in order to respond to globalisation which has a strong impact on society and organisations (Erez & Gati, 2004; Craig L. Pearce & Osmond, 1999). Culture must be viewed as dynamic, always changing and multi-layered as opposed to a static reality (Collard, 2007; Jackson, 2011; Jacob, 2005; Leung et al., 2005). According to Collard (2007) a multi-level approach on culture "acknowledges that all cultures are constantly subjected to pressure for change from both internal and external factors" (p. 745). Therefore, present research highlights the importance of considering other external influential factors on the concept of culture like socio, economic, and political variables (Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Jackson, 2011; Leung et al., 2005; Rees & Hassard, 2010; Treven et al., 2008). Fagenson-Eland et al. (2004) suggested that future research should investigate concurrent influences of factors like national and organisational culture, economics, and politics. Further, research should also explore whether some factors are more influential than others (Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004).

Moreover, Leung et al. (2005) argue if culture is conceptualised as a more complex model it will also expand the investigations on the effects of culture. That implies a view of culture as "an antecedent, a moderator or a mediator, and a consequence, and its effects may be domain-specific and are subjected to boundary conditions" (Leung et al., 2005, p. 374). According to Leung et al.'s (2005) possible moderators or amplifiers of cultural impacts in a work environment are social identification, stage of group development, and technical uncertainty. Social identification, for example, refers to the extent to which an individual identifies herself as being a member of her national culture. If culture is viewed as an important factor in one's self-concept then culture will have a strong influence on this person's beliefs as Leung et al. (2005) argued. Another example of an amplifying the influence of culture can be identified on group level in the sense that the stage of group development can either amplify or mitigate the impact of culture on a member in a group (Leung et al., 2005). More precise, Leung et al. (2005) suggest that national culture may play a more important role for a member of a group as long as the characteristics of this group are

not manifested. Once, the group characteristics become more valuable for group members, the role of culture may become less important the authors argue.

The conceptualisation of culture where national culture is viewed as a dimension among others which affect behaviour and situations is illustrated in the multi-level approach of Erez and Gati (2004). These researchers developed a multi-layer model within a work context which emphasises the dynamic nature of culture and the fact that culture itself changes over time (see figure 2).
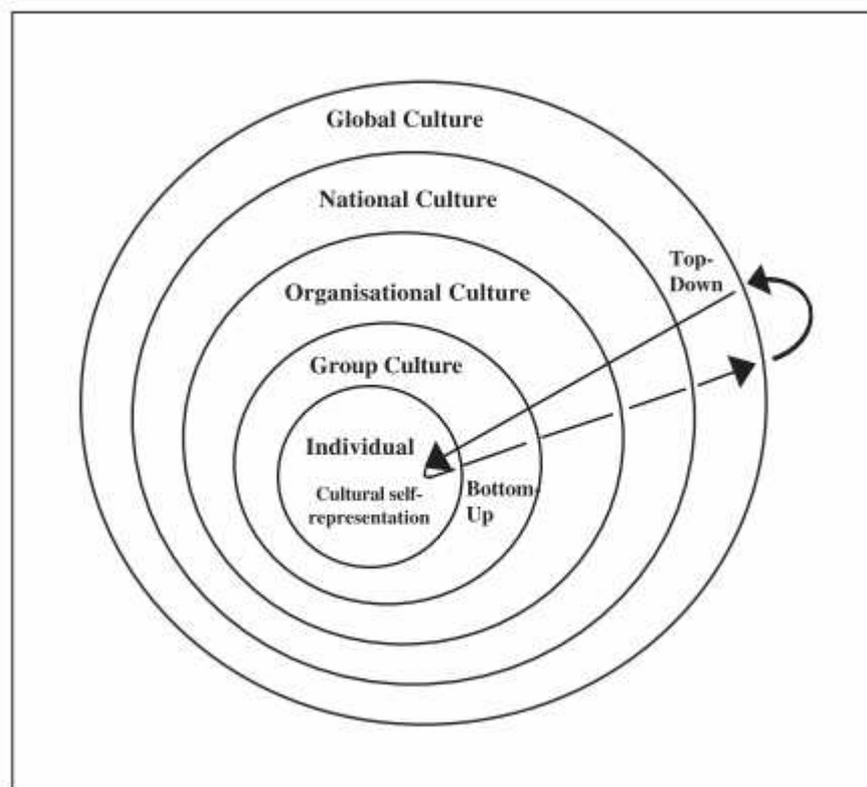
Figure 2*: The Dynamic of Top-Down-Bottom-Up Processes across Levels of Culture (Erez & Gati, 2004, p. 588)*

Erez and Gati's (2004) model illustrates the hierarchy of cultural levels nested within one another, whereas the most internal is the individual level. This layer is nested within the group culture, followed by organisational, national, and the global culture. The dynamic nature of culture is characterised by the interrelationships among the levels which are described by top-down or bottom-up processes to illustrate their mutual influence. Socialisation, for instance, describes a top-down process and stimulates a process of adaptation (Erez & Gati, 2004). Behavioural changes on the individual level can influence the group level by a process of interacting and sharing (Erez & Gati, 2004).

Additionally, Leung et al. (2005) suggest that a complex and multilayered view on culture would also lead to a multi-method approach in research of culture. The authors

emphasise the need towards more experimental research in the field of international business in order to gain a better understanding about causal correlations between various factors.

Crossvergence and acculturation

Another critique of the cultural dimension approach is that it fails to deal with a multicultural context (Jackson, 2011; Jacob, 2005). This is noticeable as often many sub-cultures exist even within one nation which often forms a greater variation within single cultures than across cultures (Kirkman et al., 2006; Treven et al., 2008). For instance, Jackson (2011) refers to the difficulty of identifying culture in cities like Hong Kong, which is strongly influenced by Western and Chinese cultures. He criticized the approach of "divergence" which believes that national culture is the primary influence on values, beliefs and attitudes. Crossvergence, in contrast, describes a fusing process where management practices from various cultures become merged in order to offer a practice appropriate for a heterogeneous culture (Jacob, 2005). Jackson (2011) argued that globalisation cannot be ignored and, therefore, this view is no longer valid. In contrast, crossvergence theory suggests a tendency towards cultural convergence for all societies and emphasises the importance of several factors interacting at different levels as Jackson (2011) argued. Furthermore, this interaction produces "hybrid social forms of organisation and multiple forms of individual cultural identity" (2011, p. 538). Similarly, Jacob (2005) suggests that a "hybridisation of management practices" (p. 2) , which describes a combination of successful management methods from several cultures, is a holistic approach to face a complex cultural environment.

Another possibility for how an individual's cultural values, beliefs and behaviour can change is demonstrated by Hsu's (2010) work. This research in the field of acculturation explored how sojourners and immigrants from China adapt to their new host environment in America. According to Hsu (2010) acculturation defines a process of change within individuals who adapt to a new cultural environment over time. Hsu explored change in the communication trait "willingness to communicate" among Chinese people who work in America. The researcher found that the longer Chinese people worked and lived in America the more they identified with the American culture and became more willing to communicate as a consequence. As Erez and Gati (2004) pointed out, very little research recognises that culture underlies change itself over time in particular when one culture comes into contact with other cultures. They argued that acculturation occurs when people open up to other cultures and they are willing to loosen their own cultural identity.

Finally, Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, and Gibson's (2005) review of research in the field of international business confirmed that convergence in some domains like in consumer values and lifestyles exists, but at the same time he states that significant divergence of cultures continues. Furthermore, according to Leung et al. (2005) it is noticeable that some Western countries develop toward cultural convergence, whereas other countries have a tendency to reject globalisation. Therefore, the authors concluded that "the assumption of cultural stability is valid as long as there are no environmental changes that precipitate adaptation and cultural change" (Leung et al., 2005, p. 361).

Research on Organisational Change in a Cross-Cultural Environment

Although the major role of communication during change is highlighted in the literature and the particular challenges of conducting change in a multicultural setting are acknowledged, very little research addresses this fact. In the identified studies many researchers use cultural dimensions to either examine or develop management practices or leadership styles appropriate to the investigated culture. Elsey and Leung (2004), for example, conducted an action research study in an international company which illustrates the successful application of Hofstede's dimensions into the practical management concept to implement a change strategy. Another example is the work undertaken by Bowen and Inkpen (2009) who applied GLOBE attributes and Javidan's global mindset to a completed change process in an international company to explain its success.

Other studies explored participation and commitment to change in different countries where cultural based differences are explained through the application of cultural dimensions. For instance, Savolainen (2007) examined Hofstede's dimensions and observed a contradiction to his power distance dimension in the results of her study. She observed that Chinese managers emphasised feedback from their subordinates during a change project, which is in contrast to Hofstede's large power distance noted in Chinese culture. On the other hand, Martinsons' and Hempel's (2001) study of a change implementation in a global bank in the United States and China confirmed that Chinese staff members participated significantly less compared to staff members in the American branch. Another difference the researchers observed was that on the one hand the level of resistance was much lower in the Chinese branch but on the other hand the realisation of the change initiative took more than double the time in the Chinese branch compared to the subsidiary in the United States. Martinsons and Hempel (2001) concluded that factors like power distance and uncertainty and a preference

for explicit or implicit communication (low versus high context), for instance, need to be considered during organisational change.

Another interesting study has been undertaken by Aldulaimi and Sailan (2012) who investigated the impact of Hofstede's five dimensions on commitment and readiness to engage with organisational change. In their quantitative study the researchers conducted a survey with around 1000 employees of Qatar's public organisations. Aldulaimi and Sailan (2012) suggested that power distance, individualism and masculinity have a significant relationship with commitment to change. According to Aldulaimi and Sailan (2012) uncertainty avoidance increases the fear of change which is in line with Hofstede's (1984) suggestion.

Also Rowlinson's (2001) study confirmed that Hofstede's power distance and individualism clearly have an impact on the change process. They conducted a questionnaire followed by interviews in a government department in Hong Kong. As a result, the authors suggested that the concept of "face" as a deep-seated, traditional cultural value could be the underlying element of power distance and individualism. They based their arguments on the fact that "face" is a strong issue in Hong Kong which was also confirmed in their research. Similar, Fagenson-Eland et al. (2004) referred to the value of "face" in Taiwan which is more "powerful than the value of receiving feedback from subordinates" (Yang, 2002; as cited in Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004).

Finally, Raz (2009) identified several cultural dimensions as relevant in the context of organisational change. These dimensions also included power distance, uncertainty, and collectivism and individualism, which were identified as influencing factors during organisational change by Harzing and Hofstede (1996). Raz's (2009) findings suggest that many cultural dimensions are relevant on the one hand, but at the same time they are "loaded with ambiguity, being multifaceted and connotative rather than clear-cut and denotative" which is in contrast to the attempt to measure cultural dimensions with objective scales (Raz, 2009, p. 299). As a consequence, Raz (2009) doubted the validity of measuring cultural dimensions through standard questionnaires and positivistic scales. Raz (2009) concluded "that cross-cultural [change] acts as an arena for negotiating a work-place culture that mediates between global corporate culture and national cultures" (Raz, 2009, p. 286).

Research in the field of change implementation across cultures is generally investigated in cross-cultural rather than intercultural environments. This means, the different cultures that are affected by the change are identified and analysed to assess the

communication and change strategy. No single study could be identified which explored a change initiative in a multicultural team or working group.

Often a case study of a multinational company which needs to implement a change process in one or more of its international subsidies is examined (e.g. Bowen & Inkpen, 2009; Geppert, 2005; Martinsons & Hempel, 2001; Raz, 2009; Savolainen, 2007). Savolainen (2007) for example identified in her qualitative study that national culture (Finnish and Chinese) has an impact on the local change implementation as people are influenced by values and beliefs of their culture which also directly influences the organisation's activities (Savolainen, 2007). Likewise Martinsons and Hempel (2001) examined differences between parallel change implementations within a multinational organisation in China and the United States. Raz (2009) investigated the change approach in an organisation in Israel and its subsidiary in South Korea. Finally Bowen and Inkpen (2009) analysed a case study of a US company with subsidiaries in Brazil where a major change was implemented to address economic issues in Brazil. Other researchers conducted a case study but focused on one country only and applied cultural dimensions in order to verify the influence of the investigated cultural dimensions on the overall change process (see studies of Aldulaimi & Sailan, 2012; Rowlinson, 2001).

As already mentioned earlier in this review, research on culture often isolates national culture from other factors and, therefore, much research focuses on the main effects of culture only (Leung et al., 2005). One earlier study from Pearce and Osmond (1996) could be identified which approached culture on several levels (not only national) as an influence on organisational change. The researchers illustrated a metaphorical approach to change management with their *Access Leverage Points* (ALP) model. This three-step model suggests the creation of an overarching metaphor to describe the target culture for the creation of a fresh perspective. The next step identifies potential powerful opportunities to support the change process. The last step specifies the change strategy depending on the results in step one and two. This model helps to understand to build up a cultural mindset according to Pearce and Osmond (C. L. Pearce & Osmond, 1996).

Research Methods and Methodologies

Most studies of change communication in a cross-cultural environment reviewed for this research are qualitative research analyses. Many researchers evaluate case studies where data are collected through in-depth interviews with managers from the affected national

cultures (e.g. Bowen & Inkpen, 2009; Geppert, 2005; Raz, 2009; Savolainen, 2007) or key informants (Raz, 2009). The study of Rowlinson (Rowlinson, 2001) used a mixed-method approach and, therefore, he implemented qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Only a recent study (Aldulaimi & Sailan, 2012) could be identified which used a quantitative methodology where data was collected through a survey.

It is noticeable that often subordinates are not included in the data collection. Thus the effectiveness of the change communication is assessed mainly from one part of the communication flow. One exception is the study of Rowlinson (2001) who applied a triangulated methodology and who conducted several in-depth interviews with respondents from the previously undertaken questionnaires. Another exception is the work of Aldulaimi and Sailan (2012) who distributed a survey to employees of a public organisation in Qatar.

Many researchers use cultural dimensions, often either Hofstede's or GLOBE's dimensions, to identify cultural differences and perceptions for the analysis of a change implementation. They identify dimensions like power distance, uncertainty avoidance, future direction, individualism, masculinity and future orientation as critical components which need to be considered for implementing change (Aldulaimi & Sailan, 2012; Bowen & Inkpen, 2009; Martinsons & Hempel, 2001). Some scholars also emphasise other cultural based concepts like low-high context (Martinsons & Hempel, 2001) and the concept of "face" (Rowlinson, 2001) as crucial factors on the success of a change implementation. But also some research explores contradictions to the assumptions made by Hofstede (e.g. Savolainen, 2007). However, Bowen and Inkpen (2009) argue that more case studies where both successful *and* unsuccessful change processes are included need to be explored to allow generalisation of research results.

Need for Further Research

The importance of communication is highlighted in the general research of organisational change and the specific challenges of communication between staff members and management with different cultural backgrounds is recognised. Research has also explored differences in the behavioural response to change with regard to resistance, the role of participation and the level of support for a change initiative. Although culture is identified as an important factor which needs to be considered for a successful change initiative, research on organisational change in cross-cultural and multicultural settings is limited.

A further outcome of reviewing the literature on organisational change in a multicultural environment is that research appears to focus on monocultural teams where

either two or more different countries are compared or managers face another culture than their own when processing a change initiative. Therefore, the literature reveals a clear lack of studies which explore a change initiative in a multicultural team or working group where three or more ethnic cultures are represented among team members.

Most studies apply cultural dimensions in order to explain differences in the investigated cultures. Although there is no doubt about the value of the cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede and others it remains questionable whether they can be applied in a multicultural team setting, where multiple cultures are combined within one team.

Most studies concerning leadership and communicating change appear to be qualitative. Thus quantitative approaches may complement research in this area.

Finally, the available research mostly does not include data collected from team members. Therefore, a focus on this group would provide a more comprehensive overview of leadership and effective change communication in multicultural teams.

Due to a lack of sufficient research on organisational change in a multicultural setting, particularly on multicultural teams or working groups, this research project aims to provide rich and in-depth data in this field where the focus will be on the perception of staff members. This study also applies the concept of cultural dimensions as defined by Hofstede which might provide valuable insights with regard to their relevance in a multicultural working group.

This chapter has focused on reviewing the relevant literature in the context of organisational change in a cross cultural setting revealing several gaps. These gaps address a lack of studies on organisational change in a multicultural setting where two or more cultures are presented among team members, and a focus of data collection on staff members. The relevance of the application of cultural dimensions in a multicultural team setting reveals another lack in the literature review. Finally, only few studies include quantitative data collection methods.

The next chapter will focus on the way the research design for the presented study aims to address the identified gaps. For this, an overview of the purpose and rationale, methodological approach, and the methods of data collection and analysis will be presented.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter presents, evaluates, and discusses the chosen methodological approach for this study and provides a description and justification of the research methods selected. The procedures for analysis of results, limitations, and ethical considerations as they pertain to this investigation are also discussed.

Methodology

Research describes a process of investigation which is implemented in a systematic and methodical way with the purpose of increasing and generating knowledge (Collis & Hussey, 2009, p. 3). The nature of this research project, its purpose and the advantages and disadvantages of the different research paradigms have been considered for the choice of an appropriate methodology and these will be illustrated in this chapter.

Two frameworks exist to conceptualise research, the positivistic or quantitative, and the phenomenological or qualitative approach (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Each arises from different philosophical understandings of the world which include diverse ontological and epistemological assumptions and, therefore, they have different implications for the implementation of research design. The ontological assumption of a positivistic view, for example, is that there is one external objective reality which needs to be investigated. Therefore, quantitative research methods identify a theory or theoretical framework first (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Collis & Hussey, 2009), and test this theory by collecting large volumes of numerical data to allow for a generalisation from the sample to the population (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Collis & Hussey, 2009). The phenomenological perspective, in contrast, implies that reality is socially constructed and is, therefore, subjectively understood as well as contextually and environmentally dependent. As a consequence, qualitative research methods are concerned with collecting rich subjective data and a theory is developed from observations of empirical reality.

The positivistic and phenomenological approaches can be viewed as the two extreme points of a continuum, which exist simultaneously and differ in their preferred methods and methodologies (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Along this continuum various approaches for research methods and methodologies are possible, such as a mixed-method approach, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, for example. Similar to Collis and Hussey (2009), Bergmann (2010) argues that many research questions can be investigated using either qualitative or quantitative, or both perspectives. This research project was

conducted from a broadly phenomenological perspective. However, data collection includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. The next sections of this chapter provide detailed discussion of the rationale behind this approach.

Methodological Considerations

The decision to conduct this research from a phenomenological perspective aligns with the currently observed paradigm shift away from a positivistic approach in the field of intercultural communication (Martinez, 2008; Shenkar, Luo, & Yeheskel, 2008; Yoshitake, 2004). Positivism is often criticised for its separation of people from their social context. As this is naturally not possible in the social sciences (Collis & Hussey, 2009), people's perceptions need to be taken into account to obtain a full picture of what is examined. In particular, in the field of intercultural communication the social context of communication between cultures constitutes complexity in this research area and, therefore, cannot be ignored (Yoshitake, 2004). For this reason, the positivistic intercultural communication model limits the outcomes because it fails to acknowledge the dialectic nature of communication as well as the dynamic nature of culture (Yoshitake, 2004). In contrast, a phenomenological approach accentuates the context of intercultural communication and aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of social phenomena (Martinez, 2008).

Another major difference between the two approaches is that qualitative research aims to explain outcomes of individual cases (Cochran & Dolan, 1984; Mahoney & Goertz, 2006; Reinard, 2008). A qualitative analysis is explorative in nature (Cochran & Dolan, 1984) where theories ideally explain the outcome of each case within the examined population. In contrast, quantitative research describes an "effects-of-causes" approach (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006, p. 230) following a confirmatory analysis (Cochran & Dolan, 1984). For this reason a qualitative approach was chosen in the present study to explore possible underlying cultural values and beliefs of participants on their perception of and response to change related communication.

This research uses a case study approach to explore possible culture-related perceptions on change for several reasons. Firstly, according to Yin (1994), case studies are often used in social science as they contribute in a unique way to our knowledge of organisational, social, and political phenomena. Secondly, a case study is a method that investigates a single phenomenon in a natural setting where the context is of particular importance (Collis & Hussey, 2009). On the other hand, many researchers (Cheney et al., 2011; Goodman & Truss, 2004; Pettigrew, 1987) stress the importance of analysing the

organisational context as a crucial parameter for the outcome of change communication. Therefore, implementation of change cannot be separated from the organisational context and the case study method is particularly suited to investigations in the framework of change implementation.

Limitations of the chosen methodology

According to Collis and Hussey (2009), one limitation of case study research can be that access to suitable cases is difficult to negotiate, and this form of research is very time-consuming. The latter can be confirmed as an outcome of the present study. The initial time frame was to conduct the focus group and individual interviews before the end of the academic year but this could not be achieved. The delay in the conduct of the survey, the aim to finish analysing these data before the start of the qualitative data collection, and the fact that staff were stressed out at this time due to their heavy work load shifted the process to the beginning of the new academic year. The focus group and individual interviews were arranged at the end of January and beginning of February 2012 and conducted within two weeks until the 22nd of February.

A further limitation is that it is impossible to generalise from one single case (Wisker, 2001). This necessitates a careful description of the context of the given case to allow its usefulness to be evaluated in other contexts (Wisker, 2001).

Another limitation is the fact that it is usual for many employees to leave the organisation during a major change implementation (which did happen in the EDU case study setting). This results in a restricted range of views from the remaining staff members being accessible to the researcher.

Data Collection

In this research project, a mixed-methods sequential design was applied, which implies the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study (Ivankova, Creswell, & Sheldon, 2006). In the first phase quantitative data were collected through a survey and analysed before the start of the second phase. In the second stage qualitative data were collected through a focus group, followed by individual in-depth interviews using the results of the quantitative part as a guideline.

When a case study is undertaken, a variety of data collection methods should be used not only to obtain in-depth knowledge, but also to gain credibility and evidence for the examined phenomenon (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Yin, 1994). Therefore, data triangulation, a

combination of multiple data collection methods in one study, was used. Triangulation allows a broader range of investigation and facilitates the possibility of developing a better understanding of the research problem (Ivankova et al., 2006). Another advantage of using multiple collection methods is that cross-checking of findings from all collection methods allows more confidence in the results (A. Jones & Bugge, 2006).

Because multiple methods for data collection are characteristic in case study research (Collis & Hussey, 2009), both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this research. This also allows the conception of a more detailed research design throughout the study by using results from one data collection to define the next steps in detail (Benoit & Holbert, 2008). In this study the results of the survey build the basis for the conceptualisation of the second part which explored the participants' views and investigated trends in the survey in more depth through focus-groups and interviews. Furthermore, according to Benoit and Holbert (2008), the possibility of combining both methods leads to an enhancement and a clarification of outcomes, which generates a higher quality research compared to the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods only.

Many authors (Benoit & Holbert, 2008; Levine, Park, & Kim, 2007; Mahoney & Goertz, 2006; Yoshitake, 2004) argue that this constructive collaboration between both paradigms enriches not only the understanding of a given phenomenon but also enhances the credibility of qualitative research notably in the field of intercultural communication. In this research, use of quantitative data collection in the first step enhanced the potential to identify trends with regard to the perceived change related communication. The aim of the survey was not to create generalisations from the sample to the examined population, which is the approach from a positivistic perspective, but to identify trends for the conceptualisation of the second qualitative part of data collection. For this reason, this quantitative method can be used also in an overall phenomenological approach (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

Survey

At the beginning of the research project an exploratory survey in the form of an electronic questionnaire was distributed by email to the whole faculty consisting of 311 employees of whom 64 participated. This survey provided insights on the staff members' perceptions of change communication at EDU and an indication of their behavioural response. The aim of the survey was to achieve a general overview of how change communication has been perceived at EDU and to identify possible culture-related trends.

The survey constitutes the quantitative part of data collection of this research and its results form the basis for the conceptualisation of the second part, the qualitative data collection.

Survey conceptualisation

According to recent literature several factors are relevant to the issue of creating readiness for change, such as communication, managers who act as change agents, commitment, and participation. For this reason, the survey was conceptualised to reflect these factors and was divided into the following sections: Communications/Information, Management Support, Commitment, and Participation. Questions were asked about people's perception of communication during the change implementation and the expectations of leadership and management as change agents to create readiness for change. Further, respondents' level of participation in the change process and their degree of willingness to support the change implementation was asked. In the section "Attitudes towards Change" the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN) model developed by Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, and Mainous (1988) (as explained in the previous chapter) was used as the basis of questions with the aim of examining whether participants' responses to the change communication tended to be passive, active, constructive, or destructive in nature. The last general section of the questionnaire, the "Individual Profile", gathered demographic information such as the participant's ethnic background and period of employment at EDU.

Information relevant to culture was gathered using questions and statements which focused on cultural aspects in each section. These statements are derived from a detailed study of Hofstede's cultural dimensions of *uncertainty avoidance* and *power distance* which according to Bowen and Inkpen (2009) describe critical components in a change implementation in a multicultural setting. Hofstede (1984) identified additional characteristics which he linked to either low or high uncertainty avoidance and power distance. These characteristics were used to create statements in the survey in order to examine the relation between the participants' cultural background and these cultural dimensions. Data about participants' level of tolerance of uncertainty when facing organisational change and a possible relationship between this and culturally influenced views of leadership and management (power distance), for example, were collected. The objective in collecting this information was to obtain valuable clues about possible culturally based perceptions of change.

The questionnaire included mainly closed questions measured by a five point Likert-type scale. A few open-ended questions were included to offer the participants the possibility of bringing in their personal opinions.

Survey procedure

All questions and statements were integrated in the online questionnaire tool Survey Monkey.

Before the survey was sent to all staff members in the faculty a pilot was conducted in order to test the clarity, logic and suitability of the questions and statements. The pilot was undertaken in two steps. In the first phase, three academic staff not included in the sample checked the statements in terms of clarity, suitability, and logic. After this stage was complete, four staff members of the faculty where the case study took place filled in the online survey and gave feedback in terms of the phrasing and clarity of statements. They constituted a mixture of academic and administrative staff, where for some English was not the first language. Both pilot groups provided valuable feedback and the survey was refined and rephrased several times until the survey was launched at the beginning of November 2011.

An email with an introduction letter about the project including a link to the survey was sent from an administration support staff member within the faculty to all staff members in the EDU faculty. The introduction letter also contained information about the confidentiality of the project and a note that the completion and submission of this survey is taken as informed consent (see Appendix B). A week later a reminder was sent to the staff members with the objective of increasing the response rate. Because the response rate of 10% was still low after 11 days, hard copies were distributed in the internal mailboxes in the departments to all staff members. A sealed drop-off box for responses was provided on top of the letter boxes. In view of the fact that the staff members had their busiest time of the semester at this point in time and they were also asked to fill in a couple of other surveys recently, the willingness to respond was not very high. It was hoped this medium would be accepted as more convenient by the staff members and increase the response rate sufficiently. Because this was not the case and many staff members confirmed that the timing of the initial survey was not perfect due to a strong work overload at this time, a final reminder for the online survey was sent at the beginning of December, one month after the initial launch of the questionnaire with a request to fill in the survey within one week.

The survey was finally closed 5.5 weeks after the initial launch. The response rate was 20.6%, 64 respondents out of 311, fifteen participants filled in the hard copies, and 49 filled in the survey online. Five online responses could not be considered valid because the participants did not finish the survey and crucial information about the cultural background was not filled in.

Survey analysis

The survey data were analysed with the software analysis tool SPSS 18.0 immediately after the survey was closed and before the qualitative part of data collection started. The data collected with Survey Monkey were coded and exported automatically into Excel by Survey Monkey. The data collected via the hard copies were coded identically to the Survey Monkey coding and the data were filled into the Excel sheet manually. In the online survey most statements were mandatory and could not be skipped by a participant. In case a hard copy had a missing answer this field was left empty which means "missing" for the analysis tools in SPSS. The Excel file was loaded into SPSS using the import feature of SPSS to avoid typing errors. However, because the data of the hard copies were coded and typed in manually all data were checked several times in order to validate them.

According to Hofstede (1984) cultural values are manifested early in childhood. Therefore, an additional variable, "CULTURE", was constructed in order to identify cultural groups and to examine potential differences between these identified groups. This variable was set to the country in which a participant grew up. However, the characteristic of a cultural dimension is based on a cultural group and does not necessarily represent each individual of this group (Hofstede, 2003). Therefore, the variable "CULTURE" was set to "others" if only one participant of the survey represented a country. The size of these defined cultural groups varied between three and 36 participants.

The choice of an appropriate statistical test depends on the nature of the collected data, the design of the research, and the research question (Paul & Colin, 2010). The present study is undertaken from a phenomenological point of view and asks about perception and behavioural response, the aim is not to generalise from the sample to the examined population. The researcher concluded that the most useful approach would be to summarise and describe data in a compact form where the identified groups can be compared with each other with the aim to identify trends, patterns, or differences within these groups. This approach of summarising and presenting data in form of graphs like charts and tables can be categorised as descriptive statistics (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

Every single statement and question was summarised so that frequencies of answers were demonstrated as a percentage for every identified cultural group, and also for the data as a whole. Results from these groups were compared with each other and with the total result to identify possible differences and trends. However, because the response rate was not as high as anticipated the relatively low numbers of the two identified cultural groups "Indian" and "Australian" with three and four members made it impossible to identify trends that could conceivably be linked to culture rather than individual differences. Nevertheless the survey findings gave valuable insights into how the change has been perceived generally, which in turn influenced the way the interviews have been conceptualised.

The statements in the survey were measured with a 5-Likert scale from "strongly disagree", "disagree", "undecided", "agree", to "strongly agree". For the analysis the number of answers of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" are summed together and displayed as "Sum disagree". Likewise the answers of "agree" and "strongly agree" were summed up and displayed as "Sum agree". The reason for this summation is that no clear significant results can be observed between the cultural groups for the individual scales because the number of responses was not high enough for this detailed categorisation of the scale.

Survey limitations

A limitation for the conduct of online surveys is that it may take a considerable amount of time to obtain sufficient responses and the results may be biased towards people who are available and willing to answer the questions in an electronic way (Collis & Hussey, 2009). It can be confirmed that it took double the amount of time to accomplish data collection using the survey to what was initially planned. Another problem is the non-response rate of surveys which may limit the representation of views because strong views may dominate (Collis & Hussey, 2009). But an unbiased sample for this survey is not crucial (Collis & Hussey, 2009) because this research project is an interpretivist study aiming to gain insights from individuals. Therefore a generalisation to general populations is not the aim of this study, thus removing the necessity for an unbiased sample.

Another restricting factor is the timing of the distribution of the survey, which had a significant impact on the response rate. Because the launch of the survey fell in a high work peak, the response rate was not as high as the researcher had anticipated. This was unsatisfactory as a higher response rate might have created bigger numbers of responses for each cultural group, which in its turn might have helped identifying clearer trends. However, as the aim of the survey was not to generalise to the examined population, but to identify

trends and to conceptualise the subsequent qualitative data collection, this restriction was not critical to this study.

Focus group/individual interviews

According to Yin (1994), interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews are appropriate to gain an understanding of the interviewee's world view and her biased context, which formulate the basis for the interviewee's opinion (Collis & Hussey, 2009). In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted in form of a focus group and 11 individual interviews with staff members.

Focus group

The group interaction is highlighted in the literature as a facilitator of an open and honest discussion of the examined phenomenon (Reinard, 2008; Wisker, 2001) because participants are often willing to voice their opinion within a group (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Reinard, 2008). Additionally, focus groups allow more flexibility because unexpected views can arise (Reinard, 2008). These advantages of focus group effects were of particular importance to this research project. The group dynamics of the focus group led to vital and in-depth discussions on the topic which also brought up unexpected issues. At the same time the group discussion clarified the significance of these issues through the fact that all participants commented on it in a reflective and critical way. Furthermore, it was certainly the case that some perspectives and perceptions which might not have been presented on an individual base came up in particular through the comparison with the other participants' views. Therefore, the expression of culturally influenced attitudes from one participant exposed new views and ideas from another participant. This provided the researcher with most useful insights into participants' underlying values and beliefs. [See Appendix G for the question guideline for the focus group.]

Individual interview

In-depth interviews were conducted in order to obtain detailed information about the staff members' perceptions. The aim of the individual interviews was particularly to focus on the more sensitive topic of behavioural response to change related communication. This encompasses information about whether interviewees tended to think of leaving the organisation during the change, to voice their opinion, to respond in a quiet but loyal way to

the organisation, or to react in a way which could be seen as neglecting the change initiatives. Because an interviewee may be unwilling to be honest about this topic in a group, a confidential one-to-one interview might create more efficient and open expressions of the participant's reaction to the change (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Savolainen, 2007). Furthermore, an openly expressed opinion about this sensitive topic could create confrontations between group members. Hence, individual interviews are more appropriate than group interviews to examine the behavioural response to the change communication. The experiences in the interviews and focus group confirm that interviewees were more likely to comment more openly in a one-to-one interview when it came to behavioural response.

Additionally, the researcher expanded the individual interviews to include the whole guideline questions applied in the focus group to get as many cultural views as possible. This was also important because the findings from the survey did not clearly display differentiated trends.

Another advantage of an individual interview is that it allows the interviewee to add further information if she prefers to add more points to a topic in a one-to-one conversation. This can be confirmed for this case, as the individual interviews provided more room for extra topics in contrast to the focus group which was very time limited and focused.

In retrospect, it can be said that both interview types were appropriate for this sensitive study and the researcher was able to use the advantages of both methods. Therefore, the interviews supported the focus group results and provided further in-depth information about the influence of culture on participants' perceptions, views, and behavioural response.

Focus group and individual interviews conceptualisation

The same question guideline was used for the focus group and individual interviews and was derived directly from the results of the survey. As recommended in the literature (Collis & Hussey, 2009) this guideline opened with a broad and open question where the participants were asked what could have been done better in terms of communication during the change process at EDU. The question guideline was structured in a similar way to the survey and covered most sections developed for the survey. The "commitment" section was not included in the interview guideline and not investigated further in the interviews and focus group because it became apparent that the statements in the survey overlap with other sections like communication, behavioural response, and participation and, therefore, were covered in these sections.

Depending on the survey results, questions were created to either follow up results in more depth, or to explore possible cultural influences in perception and behavioural response to change related communication. Participants were asked whether they have experienced differences in communication styles and reactions which they would associate to culture. [See Appendix G for the question guideline for the interviews.]

Focus group interview and individual interviews procedure

The recommendation for an appropriate group size for a focus group is typically five to ten participants (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Collis & Hussey, 2009). But, if the participants might be emotionally preoccupied with the topic and each participant is likely to contribute extensively, smaller groups are recommended (Bryman & Bell, 2007). According to Bryman and Bell (2007) also four participants per focus group can be seen as sufficient, in particular if the topic is complex and needs to allow for in-depth discussion. Therefore, the size of the focus group was planned to be four to six participants to allow the collection of more in-depth data.

A self-selected sampling method was applied for the recruiting of volunteers for the interviews. The survey contained a question regarding whether participants are interested in volunteering to take part in a focus group and/or individual interview and provide their contact details if this was the case. Additionally, the recruitment process involved the supply of flyers which were distributed in two departments first. The flyers gave information about the research project, the topic, location, date and timeline, and provided the researcher's contact details. As this method was not very effective, the researcher made a couple of phone calls in order to inform staff members about the project and ask them for participation in a more personal way. Because staff members appeared to be over surveyed during the change period and, therefore, were reluctant to participate in either a focus group or individual interview, the researcher decided to not further approach people randomly. Instead of following this method of recruitment, the researcher applied the technique of "snowball sampling" and used established personal contacts within EDU to recruit staff members to increase the numbers of potential volunteers from the survey. Participants in the individual interviews were asked whether they knew someone in their department who might be interested to be part of an interview and who the researcher could approach. This was a very useful approach because the interviewees knew not only the cultural background of their colleagues but could also assess who of their colleagues might be willing to participate. In particular, the number of participants could be significantly increased for the cultural groups

other than New Zealand Pakeha (Pakeha describes New Zealanders who are of European descent). This approach also ensured that it was possible to conduct at least one individual interview with a staff member representing one of the identified cultural groups in the survey.

Initially it was planned that the focus group represents a working group within the faculty, e.g. a department that would comprise at least three different ethnic cultures. However, not enough staff members volunteered within one department to follow this approach. Also the sensitivity of the topic became clear when one volunteer mentioned that his willingness to participate depends on who else is participating in the focus group. For these unforeseen reasons the focus group does not represent a single working group in this study. Nevertheless, the results of the focus group provided valuable data about possible cultural variations in the participant's perception of and response to change related communication.

In order to avoid any concerns and prejudice, the researcher invited only one staff member from one department and made sure also no participant has either a management position or worked closely with management. Although it is recommended in the literature to invite and get acceptances from more participants (Collis & Hussey, 2009), only five staff members were asked to take part in the focus group because of the above mentioned reluctance of staff to participate in a focus group. The researcher made sure every participant confirmed the appointment for the focus group clearly. A reminder for the focus group with an additional request to be on time was sent one day before the scheduled appointment and was also confirmed by the participants. Only one participant could not attend because an urgent short notice meeting meant he would come very late and he did not want to interrupt the session. However, the remaining "mini focus group" with four people was sufficient and in retrospect it can be said that not all sections of the guideline-questions could have been covered with additional participants.

The individual interviews were arranged with the volunteers by email or phone. They were conducted after the focus group took place except for one interview, which was accomplished before the focus group took place in order to pilot the focus group. Time, date, and location were arranged with every interviewee individually to suit the participant.

Focus group and individual interviewee composition
The focus group was composed of two administrative staff members and two academic staff members. All participants were female and none of them were New Zealand

European or New Zealand Pakeha[2], which forms the biggest ethnic group in New Zealand. In retrospect, the fact that only female and non New Zealand Pakeha participated in the focus group turned out to be ideal as sensitive issues emerged with regard to gender and minorities in New Zealand.

Four male and seven female staff members participated in the individual interviews, of these four members hold an administration position, five an academic position, one an academic and management position, and one a pure management position.

In order to ensure confidentiality for the participants only broad information about their cultural background can be provided as displayed in the following table 1.

Table 1:Background of Interview Participants

Ethnic/cultural affinity	Management role	Gender
New Zealand/ Pakeha	No	female
New Zealand/ Pakeha	partly	male
New Zealand/ Pakeha	No	male
South Africa	No	male
UK	partly	female
Central Europe	No	female
India	Yes	female
Central Europe	No	female
South-East Asia	No	female
India	No	male
Australia	No	female

Conduct of focus group and individual interviews

All participants in the focus group and individual interviews were asked to read the information sheet and sign a consent form before the focus groups and the individual interviews started (see Appendices D, E, and F). All participants gave their consent to be audio-taped during the focus group and individual interviews and the audio records were transcribed in the days after the interviews were completed.

At the beginning of the focus group the researcher gave a brief introduction to the research, the change related context within EDU and an outline of why culture is in particular examined in this study. Then each participant in the focus group and interviews was asked to introduce themselves to give information about their personal background, how long they

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[2] Pakeha is the Maori language word for New Zealanders who are of European descent.

have been in New Zealand, and how long they have worked for EDU. The researcher asked the participants to see themselves as a representative of their cultural group and to answer the questions also for their cultural group as a whole, although they might not perceive themselves as typical in terms of perception and behaviour for their cultural group. During the interviews the researcher asked clarifying questions to understand whether a participant's view could be related to her cultural background. Two participants noted that they cannot put themselves fully in one cultural group anymore because they were exposed for many years to other cultural environments. Furthermore, some argued, their idea about their cultural views and values is not up to date because they have left their home country many years ago. However, as Hofstede (2003, p. 238) points out, "value differences between nations described by authors centuries ago are still present today, in spite of continued close contacts. For the next few hundred years countries will remain culturally very diverse".

The focus group and individual interviews were conducted in the form of a controlled group discussion with open-ended questions to guide the discussion. Careful planning of the focus group and individual interviews and a thorough outline of guideline questions was crucial for this study. For this reason, the results of the survey were examined prior to the focus group and interviews and the findings were used to conceptualise the question guidelines for the in-depth interviews. On the one hand, the questions were semi-structured in the sense that they provided a strong focus. On the other hand, the researcher added or adapted questions to obtain more detailed information and questions were utilised to clarify issues, which were raised during the interviews. Additionally, the researcher provided the interviewees with examples in case a question was unclear or very sensitive. For instance, in the section of behavioural response interviewees were asked about typical reactions by members from their cultural group in case the job satisfaction went low during the change. It clearly helped some interviewees to get over their initial reluctance to answer this question when the researcher gave an indication from her own cultural group as an example.

The questions were piloted with another researcher first to test the clarity, logic and suitability of the guideline questions. Additionally, one individual interview was conducted as a pilot prior to the focus group, which helped to further clarify the questions. Moreover, this earlier conducted interview created a realistic estimation about the time span which would be necessary to cover all areas of the question guideline during the interviews and focus group. This was particularly important as a preparation for the focus group to ensure all parts of the question guideline would be covered in the planned 90 minutes.

Focus group and individual interview analysis

The qualitative data were analysed as soon as the process of data collection started and has been continuously carried out until the end of the research project. Analysis of qualitative data is challenging in so far as no clearly defined strategies and techniques for this process exist (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Yin, 1994). According to Yin (1994), data analysis encompasses examining, categorising, and tabulating the case study evidence. The data were immediately transcribed after the collection from the focus group and individual interviews, and therefore available in an electronic form. The prompt transcription of the data allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data and unexpected topics of relevance could be identified and verified in the remaining interviews.

The next step in data analysis is to reduce, restructure, and de-textualise the data if applicable (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Because the interviews followed a guideline which worked along categories identified by the undertaken literature review, all data were well-arranged in the sense that relevant information was already bundled within these defined categories. Therefore, the amount of data seemed to be manageable and the researcher abandoned the original idea of using a software tool like NVivo for the analysis of qualitative data. Moreover, the researcher wanted to make sure of having detailed knowledge about the original data and according to Collis and Hussey (2009) relying on a software tool often leads to a mechanical approach of interpreting data which can be a typical pitfall for inexperienced qualitative researchers.

Because the emphasis of this research project lies on a phenomenological approach, only non-quantifying methods of data analysis were used for the data. In qualitative research, analysing data is the process of identifying themes and categories and how they relate to each other (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Keyton, 2006). According to Keyton (2006), one analysing technique for qualitative data is to reread the literature that guided the research which will suggest themes or broad categories. The conceptualisation for the interview guideline questions derived directly from the survey structure which itself was based on the literature and the emerging categories. Therefore, the key categories "communication", "management", "intercultural communication competence", "participation", and the four dimensions of the EVLN model "exit", "voice", "loyalty" and "neglect" formed pre-categories. The cultural dimensions "uncertainty avoidance", "power distance", and "future direction" which are crucial in the context of organisational change communication (Bowen & Inkpen, 2009) were used for the interpretation of data as part of the analysing process. However, it became clear

during the interviews that also the cultural dimension "individualism/collectivism" needs to be used for the interpretation of the data.

The data were reduced by summarising each answer within one category from each participant and themes were immediately identified and coded. After the summary for every question of each interviewee, a concentrated summary over all answers was undertaken to identify key themes. Furthermore, personal interpretations from the researcher for a tentative first analysis followed immediately after this summary.

The findings were compared with each other in order to identify potential similarities or differences by applying cultural dimensions. Overall, an iterative process of reading and rereading the summarised data but also raw data was undertaken. This allowed a cross-checking of results and to establish emerging themes. Additionally, the findings of the qualitative data were used to revisit the quantitative data to cross-check initial results of the survey with the qualitative results. Finally, the findings are discussed in the context of relevant literature.

Limitations of interviews (individual and focus groups)

One limitation can be seen in the researcher's own cultural background and experiences, and the chance that data might be interpreted in a subjective way. This aspect is a clear limitation in any intercultural research, a study of "culture" cannot be value-free and objective (Yoshitake, 2004). However, to address this limitation, the researcher repeated questions and asked for clarification until there was a mutual agreement what the interviewees were saying. In fact, this was a vital part of the reflective discussion between the researcher and the participants in order to understand views and perceptions potentially related to culture. Additionally, the review of the research instruments, pilot testing of the interviews and focus group, the process of ethical approval, and close supervision were used to mitigate subjectivity.

Another limitation can be identified in the fact that only one focus group has been undertaken and comparisons between the groups were not possible. However, this aspect is not crucial for this study, because the aim for the focus group is not to compare groups but to make use of the advantages of a group discussion as mentioned above. Moreover, it was challenging to organise another group because the staff members in a tertiary educational organisation have different time schedules and it is very difficult to arrange a date and time which suits everyone. Nevertheless, to gain many different cultural views the number of individual interviews conducted was high with eleven in total. Instead of the initially planned

short interviews where the researcher wanted mainly to focus on the behavioural response, the interviews were expanded and used the same question guideline as applied in the focus group to gain additional information. Therefore, the length of the individual interviews ranged between 25 and 55 minutes depending on the input of the participants.

In total, the interview question design was suitable for this research project. However, the interview guideline was comprehensive and some questions seemed to be rather difficult to answer for some participants in the sense that they found it difficult to think of cultural specifics. Additionally, some participants felt uncomfortable with the questions regarding the behavioural response, particularly with questions referring to neglecting behaviour. In these cases the questions were not further investigated and skipped.

Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical considerations influenced this research, from the planning through the conduct of it to the final writing up of this research study.

Firstly, because this research is a case study, prior to the approval and conduct of it, the Dean of the Faculty of EDU was informed about the planned project and approval to conduct this study was obtained from him. Secondly, ethical approval was gained from the Unitec Research Ethics Committee prior to the start of the project because this research involved humans. Thirdly, strict confidentiality was absolutely vital for this research project because change is a sensitive process and the present leaders and managers were assessed by staff members who hold a work position in the examined organisation. Therefore, all information has been treated with strict confidence and best possible anonymity was ensured in order to preserve the identity of the participants. All participants were appropriately informed about the aim of this research project prior to the conduct of the survey, focus group, and individual interviews. During the recruitment process, it was emphasised that participation is purely voluntary. The survey was conducted anonymously and the participants were informed that they give their consent through submitting the survey. In the case a survey participant wanted to volunteer in a focus group or individual interview, the researcher asked for an email address for contact reasons. However, the email addresses were separately processed and not linked to the rest of the survey data.

Prior to the interviews every interviewee gave consent to audio-tape the interviews as well as the authority to use the content of the interview for the purpose of the study. Moreover, the participants of the survey and the interviews were informed that there might be a potential to identify an individual through the information a participant gives by identifying

her cultural background. However, only summarised data of the data collections were accessible to others. Additionally, to ensure a participant can not be identified only broad information is given with regard to an interviewee's cultural background in the written thesis.

Also the participants of the focus group were informed of the confidential nature of this research and they committed to treat all gained information in the focus group as highly confidential by signing the consent form. It was also outlined that there exists the possibility that the study will be published later.

All data and consent forms will be stored in a locked cupboard at Unitec Institute of Technology for five years.

Finally, all information which could identify the organisation was also made anonymous. Because the survey included statements and questions which assessed management the survey was explicitly approved by the Dean.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the survey, the focus group and individual interviews. Although the size of the survey sample and, in particular, the number of members for each identified group is too small to derive general conclusions, a brief presentation of the survey results is given to indicate trends and differences in the participants' perceptions of the EDU change process. This provides a general overview about how the change communication has been perceived at EDU, and what trends were identified and used to conceptualise the interview question guidelines. Therefore, the survey results will be presented first followed by the focus group and interview results, which are presented together. The sub headings in this section reflect the survey categories which also formed the basis for the interview questions guideline. All detailed tables presenting the survey results are provided in the appendix.

General Findings

This section presents general results in regard to the size and composition of the samples in the survey, focus group and interviews.

Survey

The survey was sent to all 311 staff members in one of three faculties at EDU including full-time and part-time employees. The response rate was 20.6 % with 64 responses and 59 fully completed questionnaires. The distribution of roles of the respondents is as follows: 18.6% are involved in management tasks, 25.4% have administration responsibilities and 55.9% do teaching. The majority (61%) of participants have worked for 5-20 years at EDU. Based on the country a participant grew up, five different cultural groups can be identified for the set of respondents. These groups are New Zealand (NZ) (including Pakeha and Maori), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, India, and "others", which was used to group together the participants who were the sole representatives of a country. The "others" group comprises three Asian staff members (all from different countries), one South African, one North American, one Central European, and one Eastern European staff member. Table 2 illustrates the distribution of participants across the cultural groups.

Table 2: *Overview of the Identified Cultural Groups*

Cultural group	Total number of participants	Percent
New Zealand	36 (34 NZ Pakeha, 2 Maori)	61%
United Kingdom	9	15%
Australia	4	7%
India	3	5%
Others	7	12%

As already mentioned the comparison of results between the cultural groups needs to be done carefully because the sample size is too small to allow for generalisation. In particular, the "Indian" and "Australian" groups are very small with three and four members. However, the findings for these groups are still outlined in this chapter because the researcher was able to recruit an Indian and Australian interviewee to follow up trends identified in these groups. Generally, it was possible to find at least one volunteer for an individual interview for each cultural group identified in the survey.

No complete information exists at EDU to identify the ethnical cultural group or country of birth of an employee. However, 42% of staff members voluntarily provided EDU with this information in their employment form. Although it is not possible to extract the exact distribution of ethnicities within EDU it is still possible to make some observations. A particularly interesting fact is that a few ethnicities, which constitute a recognisable proportion of staff members, are not represented in the sample of the survey. For instance, no Chinese staff member filled in the survey although 7.4% of staff members in the examined faculty of EDU indicated their ethnicity as Chinese in their employment form. However, other Asian staff members coming from countries different to China and India and representing at least 3.7% of the employees did respond to the survey. Likewise, none of the Pacific staff members answered the survey despite the fact that at least 2.7% of employees belong to this cultural group. Although this is not a large proportion members from other ethnicities who constitute a smaller proportion among staff members did fill in the survey.

Focus group and individual interviews

An under representation of some ethnic groups is reflected also in the individual interviews. Throughout the interviews, the Asian group and in particular staff members with Chinese cultural background were often mentioned as a contrasting cultural group. Therefore, the researcher tried to recruit Chinese staff members for an individual interview to get the

point of view of this cultural group. However, it turned out to be impossible to recruit Chinese people, although only people were approached who were named by other interviewees as someone who might be willing to participate. One Chinese staff member, for instance, referred very politely but repeatedly to managers who – in his opinion - would be more useful for this research. As for the survey the researcher was not able to recruit any Chinese staff members for an individual interview.

The four focus group participants and the eleven interviewees are coded according to their ethnic/cultural group and interview dates as indicated in table 3. The letters at the beginning stand for the participant's ethnic and cultural affinity. NZP stands for New Zealand and the ethnic group Pakeha, NZM for New Zealand and ethnic group Maori, UK for England, A for Australia, SA for South Africa, SAM for South America, and I for India. Because a more detailed disclosure of the cultural background of the Asian, European, and East European participants would not ensure the anonymity of the participants, only the broad continental areas are named where the participants come from. SEA stands for South East Asia, CE means Continental Europe, and EE stands for Eastern Europe. The second part of the code illustrates a number and refers to the order of interview date (1-11) or the letter "F" for focus group. One participant's role in the organisation was purely a management role (I-1) and two were partly involved in management functions (NZ-3 and NZ-4). Four of the 15 interview participants were male, eleven female. All focus group participants were female, none had a management role at this time, and none belonged to the majority group of New Zealand Pakeha in EDU. An overview of the distribution of participants in the individual interviews and focus group is presented in the following table 3.

Table 3: *Interview Participants Coding Table*

Interview Type	Ethnic/cultural affinity	Management role	Gender	Code
Individual Interview	New Zealand/ Pakeha	No	female	NZP-1
Focus Group	South-East Asia	No	female	SEA-F
Focus Group	South America	No	female	SAM-F
Focus Group	Eastern Europe	No	female	EE-F
Focus Group	New Zealand/Maori	No	female	NZM-F
Individual Interview	New Zealand/ Pakeha	Partly	male	NZP-2
Individual Interview	New Zealand/ Pakeha	No	male	NZP-3
Individual Interview	South Africa	No	male	SA-4
Individual Interview	UK	Partly	female	UK-5
Individual Interview	Central Europe	No	female	CE-6
Individual Interview	India	Yes	female	I-7
Individual Interview	Central Europe	No	female	CE-8
Individual Interview	South-East Asia	No	female	SEA-9
Individual Interview	India	No	male	I-10
Individual Interview	Australia	No	female	A-11

Communication/Information

This section was designed to investigate participants' perceptions of change related communication and to explore differences that might be related to culture.

Survey

The results of the survey indicate that communication during the change initiative in EDU has been perceived as not so effective by the majority of staff members across all cultures (>60%). This includes the perceived clarity of information as well as the provision of continuous and timely information. Some slight culture-related trends could be identified in a few statements but only in the smaller cultural groups "Australia" and "India" where the communication has been perceived more positively compared to the other groups. Further, three out of four of respondents in the Australian group also hold a management role within EDU and, therefore, might have been exposed to another level of communication and information. Therefore, it can be assumed that communication during the restructuring initiatives has been perceived similarly across the participating cultures in this study. Further, independent of participants' culture, for the vast majority (91.5%) it is important for the

employee's personal job satisfaction to understand the intent of the restructuring initiatives. A detailed overview of the results in this category is presented in table 5 of the appendix.

Focus group and individual interviews

In order to get more in-depth information about the perceived communication two questions were asked in the focus group and individual interviews. The first question aimed to generally introduce the whole topic and asked: What could have been done better in terms of communication? Three participants, two with New Zealand Pakeha ethnicity and one South East Asian ethnicity (NZP-1, NZP-2, and SEA-9) said that the communication was good and they saw the responsibility on the staff members' side to become involved in the communication process. "They did include all of us and it was on us as individuals to come … on board" (NZP-1). Interviewee NZP-2 commented that only one-to-one discussions could have improved the communication because "people had every opportunity to hear what is going on and to give input into it". However, later when a question was asked to investigate in more detail an influence of culture on how people want to be involved, the same interviewee revised his initial answer and saw the potential for improvement of the implemented change communication. He said: "I do think that staff members do expect managers to come to them". Likewise, the South East Asian participant SEA-9 emphasised that there was sufficient information through emails and meetings, and she criticised the fact that staff members did not read their emails. But in this context she also made the observation that people tend to absorb information better in small "social meetings".

Although many participants acknowledged that the amount of information was appropriate they criticised the content of this information in the sense that it was not detailed enough (NZP-3, UK-5, I-10, A-11, SA-4, and SEA-F). It was not transparent how the change would be realised and it was also unclear how the change affected each staff member. Nevertheless, some participants (CE-8 and SAM-F) complained about the amount of information, the enormous number of emails, and the timing of sending which was often in the busiest working times. Moreover, one interviewee pointed out a general absence of clarity in terms of goals for the change intent, and about the final vision EDU intended to establish, existed (NZP-3).

The interview findings generally confirm the results of the survey that many staff members across all cultures did not feel positively about the communication, but also some experienced it as satisfactory.

The second question in this section addressed the ethnic affiliation of the interviewees and asked whether they think that their cultural background has an influence on the way they perceived this communication. In the answers, most interviewees outlined differences by either identifying specific characteristics in their own culture or observing attributes in other cultures.

For instance interviewee NZP-1 said "I am very easy going" and identified this characteristic as typical for New Zealanders. Another interviewee from Continental Europe (CE-6) observed that she personally and people from her cultural background tend to worry about almost everything which leads to a high level of initial mistrust. Interviewee CE-8 was not sure whether her preference to be more actively involved and considered by management is a personal or culturally dependent preference. Both interviewees from South East Asia (SEA-9, SEA-F) pointed out that people with their cultural background tend to adapt to change relatively easily.

> I think people in South East Asia are generally very susceptible to changes. When they say there is redundancy, ok we go on. We have to survive somewhere else. Not to say to bring it on, but this is what happens in life. And they deal with it (SEA-F).

Likewise interviewee SEA-9 stated:

> In [home country] we tend to accept things. We tend to make ourselves fit into change than making things big for us. … We never complain we just make do it. … People do complain too much here. [In] our culture we are thankful of what we get. We tend to fit ourselves into things than making things difficult. We tend to accept things naturally.

Similarly, interviewee A-11 with an Australian background recognised a lot more "cynicism" and "negativity" in the New Zealand culture compared to the Australian culture. She also confirmed that in New Zealand many people tend to "complain" and expect the company to adapt to the individual needs of staff members because they think "I own my office". In contrast, she believed some cultures are "a lot more forthright" like Australians and Americans, and "Europeans would actually stand up and say 'we don't agree with this'". In contrast, New Zealanders "have a resignation" when they do not agree and stay quiet. She observed this also for Asian cultures.

The interviewee from the UK (UK-5) identified similarities between her and the New Zealand culture and stated "I think the culture here is very similar to that in the UK". Interviewee SA-4 pointed out that there are probably differences but he could not identify

them because his own close team is very homogenous with three other South Africans and one Australian colleague (SA-4).

Interviewee EE-F who worked closely within a multicultural team observed that people perceived the communication differently. For instance, her Japanese colleagues struggled to deal with the change in general. One of her Japanese colleagues said that if you were working for an organisation in Japan for more than ten years it is very likely that you work for this company for your whole life. Consequently, it is very difficult to accept change and take responsibility for yourself and do something different (EE-F). On the other hand, Interviewee EE-F observed that for instance German speaking cultures are "more straight forward".

Few interviewees saw cultural differences as relevant. For instance, interviewee NZP-3 did not recognize any cultural differences and argued the importance of "leadership", "trust", and "honesty" as "human" and "social values". Interviewee I-10 strongly believed that it is more organisational culture than ethnic culture which influences communication within an organisation.

In sum, a key finding in this section is that although culture did not influence respondents' perception of what is important communication during change, it had an impact on the way staff members from different cultural groups responded to this communication. This finding will be addressed as a key area in the discussion chapter.

Management Support

This section was designed to evaluate how management and leadership have been perceived during the change communication.

Survey

The survey contained several sub-sections in this category. It started with a general part and asked whether management was perceived to be committed to the change, to what extent management was approachable for staff members, and the extent to which management was convincing in communicating the need for change. Furthermore, another sub-section investigated who can be identified as "the primary leader". Finally, staff members were asked what they regard as valuable information in a change context and from whom they expected and finally received this information. The results of the survey are presented in these sub-categories.

General management support

The results of the survey display a range of answers distributed from agreement to disagreement with a significant number of "undecided" in some statements in this section. The participants of the survey were informed that management are considered as the CEO, Dean of the Faculty, and Head of Department. Later in the interviews some staff members explained that they perceived differences in the quality of information between their direct managers and higher management. Consequently, they found it difficult to assess management as a whole.

The statements about the consistency of management behaviour, the accessibility and friendliness of management vary between agreement, undecided, and disagreement across all cultures. Most respondents (54.2%) indicated that not enough information was provided which affected them directly and 48.3% found that the restructuring activities were not tied to EDU's overall vision. Also, a slight majority of participants (54.2%) did feel that management had been personally committed to the restructuring initiatives. An overview of these results is presented in table 6 in the appendix.

No cultural differences could be identified in most statements of this section. The last statement in the survey was composed to identify cultural trends based on Hofstede's cultural dimension "uncertainty avoidance" (UAI). It investigated how comfortable staff members feel with a manager who has another cultural background. According to Hofstede (1984) a low UAI index indicates a better acceptance of foreigners as managers. The UAI of the identified nations vary slightly between 35 (UK) to 51 (Australia) and scale on the lower to middle range of uncertainty. The results displays that a clear majority of staff members (62.6%) across cultures feel comfortable with a manager from another nation.

The statement whether staff members feel afraid of disagreeing with their managers showed some differences in the cultural groups, which will be addressed in the Participation section where this statement is repeated.

Primary Leader

For the specification of a staff member's primary leader the participants had the choice between the Head of Department, the Dean of the Faculty and the CEO which presents the hierarchical structure of the organisation. The Head of Department is the direct manager for most staff members. Because additional management positions within the departments exist in the organisation the opportunity to name an "other" management position was given. The

findings of the survey indicate that the large majority of staff members identified the Head of Department as their primary leader (69.5%), followed by the Dean (18.6%), others (10.2%) and the CEO (1.7%). Therefore, it can be concluded that for a clear majority of staff members the direct manager (HoD or line manager) plays a major role in leadership for staff members and no significant cultural trends could be identified, because the numbers based on the cultural groups fit mostly into the general results.

Valuable information during a change period

Across all cultures the following information was assessed as most valuable information by the participants of the survey:

- Information about the overall vision of the change initiative
- Information about my personal role in the change initiatives
- Clear instructions about the change initiatives.

Slight variations exist about the order of importance between the cultural groups. An overview of these variations is presented in table 7 in the appendix.

Furthermore, the participants were asked from whom they expected change related information. The results indicate that across all cultures the expectation is that change related information is provided by all three management levels, the HoD, the Dean, and the CEO.

Finally, the participants were asked from whom they got the most valuable information during the change. The majority of participants indicated independent of their cultural background that they got the most valuable information mainly from their colleagues (40%) and others (20%), whereas "others" includes information through other faculties, rumours, and internal communication channels like the intranet.

In sum, similar to the communication section no differences could be identified for the cultural groups in regard to the perception of general management support during the change initiatives at EDU. Moreover, the results indicate that across all cultures the same kind of information was assessed as valuable and no differences could be identified for the question which management level should provide this information. The majority of participants indicated that the primary leader is the Head of Department, followed by the Dean. These findings will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

Focus group and individual interviews

During the change initiatives all interviewees were exposed to communication coming from management and leaders with a different cultural background to their own. Therefore,

interviewees were asked whether the cultural background of a manager can be related to her communication style during the change initiatives in a supporting or inhibitive way for staff members to give feedback. Additionally, the interviewees were asked to comment whether their own cultural background influenced the way they perceived this communication.

Every interviewee confirmed that culture was an important factor which not only influenced the way a manager communicated during the change initiatives but also how staff members perceived this communication. Some interviewees referred to the Dean of the faculty when they formulated an example. The reasons for this are firstly, he held an important management position during the change initiatives and secondly, he has a South African cultural background which is different to most of the interviewed participants.

Communication style

Various interviewees emphasised the difference in the style of communication in particular in regard to the existence of diverse levels of "directness" in different cultures. For instance one interviewee with an Indian cultural background observed that:

> People from South Africa really have a very straight forward communication style which is pretty much 'This is this situation, We need to get this done, this is how it is going to happen' … I also find the NZ culture as such to be a little more laid back, a little more happier, a little more relaxed in the approach and people might say that 'we can all eat that tomorrow before we get the work done'. So, the culture really does kind of make communication a little more ineffective at times (I-7).

This observation that controversial expectations on communication or leadership style can lead to a conflict between culturally diverse groups was also expressed by another interviewee from Eastern Europe, when she said "this kind of control and very strong leadership really is what we observe here. And sometimes it obviously does not meet the NZ or Maori style of leadership" (EE-F). Another interviewee had a similar experience with his Head of Department who is from Europe:

> They are very straight forward. You know very down the line, they don't negotiate anything. … I probably appreciate this more than probably an Asian point of view which is kind of several times you can actually walk around until you get to it (SA-4).

Some participants (New Zealander and European) had experiences with managers coming from the United Kingdom and they referred their management and leadership style as a "colonial" style of management if their experience was negative:

> He (an English manager) certainly had a different cultural background to communication style to kind of the Kiwis and other colleagues. And especially academics commented on that disparagingly, that arrogant, disconnected, clueless, does not understand what is going on, culturally does not get it, … no cultural awareness, using his narrow small British Empire view of the world and trying to apply this to this country and the things are done in this organisation. That was quite noticeable (NZP-3).

Another interviewee from Continental Europe who was exposed to a number of English managers in the past summarised her experiences as follows:

> They [the English managers] still come with this 'we are colonising you, you need help, and we need to help you' … there was a big resentment amongst staff … In NZ things are more relaxed and we have got the Maori culture, we have got the Pacific culture, we have a lot of Asian culture (CE-8).

Attitude to hierarchy

Another difference identified by the participants was the attitude to hierarchy in various cultures which results in a different form of "respect" subordinates show for their superiors. One participant of the focus group described her manager who is from the Middle East as follows:

> He has adopted in the NZ culture pretty well but there are still certain elements that you can see that this is pretty much a Middle Eastern thing. For instance building trust, the respect of hierarchy is very different (SEA-F).

In an outraged tone she also stated that there is "no respect for hierarchy" in New Zealand and at EDU. Another New Zealand interviewee called this New Zealand attitude to hierarchy "a healthy disrespect for hierarchy". But he also outlined the complexity of this topic and the danger to generalise because "at the same time Kiwis can also be very subservient in certain contexts". This matches the observation of another New Zealand interviewee (NZP-1) who outlined that her manager who is also from New Zealand would not question any higher management decisions because of her respect for hierarchy. An Indian interviewee (I-7) identified a clear difference to the New Zealand culture when she said that people in India usually do not speak up to their boss, whereas in New Zealand "no one stops you from thinking basically". In contrast, in New Zealand people are "more open" and they listen to others' opinions, even if you do not have the "seniority" to do so.

Stereotyping

Some participants mentioned that there is already a perception that people coming from different countries will have a different style (NZP-3 and CE-6) and "stereotyping" plays a significant role when a staff member faces a manager from another culture and vice versa (UK-5 and EE-F). As an example, interviewee UK-5 pointed out the strong character of the South African Dean at EDU on the one hand and the fact that many other South Africans have a totally different character. Therefore, she concluded, people have to be careful with stereotyping based on culture. This argument was supported by some other interviewees. In particular taking the Dean as an example they emphasised other potential influences on his management style like his strong business and management background but also his military experiences.

Other factors

Some participants emphasised that also "gender" plays a significant role in the context of communication style on top of culture (NZP-1, EE-F, CE-6, and A-11). For instance the Australian interviewee (A-11) illustrated the following example:

> She [a NZ female manager] has got an apologetic way of speaking. She was at a faculty by the time of the change and she did not promote confidence and I would say, my feeling is that is actually a very NZ female way of being. The Dean is a male, so that is already something different and perhaps it is to do of being a White South African. However the thing about [the Dean] is that he has a confidence rather than arrogance. I wouldn't say this is different because he is South African, but because he is male.

Another example was outlined in the following way by a European interviewee (CE-6):

> There is sort of camaraderie amongst guys and they seem to be the mates. He [the manager] loves rugby. … It was just bent amongst the guys and we [the women] went like 'oh gone'. There is a bonding through sports maybe and an understanding and the banter and the jokes which is not available to women who are not that into that.

An Indian male interviewee (I-10) also mentioned the 'rugby' topic but related it to cultural differences:

> Sometime you can feel it [the cultural difference]. For example, with [the manager] I can feel that rugby thing that comes out very strongly when he is talking and the analogies he produces when he is talking and the go-out-do-it kind of things. So you can see that, it comes from that culture rugby dominant environment.

In both cases the interviewees confirmed that they felt excluded in the way the rugby topic was used by the manager because they were not interested in it. Likewise, another interviewee (NZM-F) referred to an example where she felt excluded because of the similarity in the communication style within one cultural group. She described a particular example as follows:

> We have quite a number of South Africans in our department and I see some similarity in their communication style among them all as a whole. I wonder, because we had a meeting with [the South African Dean] yesterday and he was addressing a number of things but the ones with the most outspoken with him were all South Africans. They seemed to be having this conversation between one and another and the rest of us were like 'oh they have got some sort of rapport going on' and they were very comfortable in talking (NZM-F).

Opposing perceptions

A lively discussion arose in the focus group in this section and some opposing perceptions on the communication style experienced from management and leadership were described. For instance, the participant with South American background in the focus group described the Dean as "very strong" and "overwhelming". In contrast, the New Zealand Maori participant confirmed that Maori people need "strong leadership" and an "absence of really strong leadership wears a lot of uncertainty and unrest" in particular in a change situation. Another oppositional example came up when the Eastern European participant raised the "level of directness" staff members and managers have in their communication style depending on their cultural background. In her experience New Zealanders are not as direct as for instance German people, and that Japanese people are much more indirect than New Zealand people. In contrast, the South American participant assessed the New Zealand communication style as "very honest" compared to her experiences in South America where neither managers nor staff members are honest about their feelings in a work environment. She stated "here I find every day I have honest conversations and I get to say how I feel and I get told how the other party feels as well. And it really helps me grow". This view was also confirmed by an Indian interviewee (I-7) who found that Indian people are "very sensitive about how they share information" in contrast to New Zealand. In another more critical way the South East Asian participant assessed the New Zealand style as direct in particular when they "demand for something". She perceived that "bullying is high".

Another point was made by an Indian interviewee who argued being in a minority group has an impact on an individual's perception. He observed that because he belonged to a minority group in his home country, India, this makes it easier for him to belong to a minority group here in New Zealand once more. In contrast to Indian colleagues who came from a majority group in India, he found himself to be "more conscious of proposing things", he "stands back a little bit more", and he tries to interpret issues from business logic rather than culture.

In sum, all interviewees agreed that culture influenced the way managers communicated during the change but it also had an impact on how staff members themselves perceived this communication. The findings demonstrate that differences between cultures were observed in particular in the communication style and the attitude to hierarchy. Some interviewees pointed out that stereotyping influence the way other cultures are perceived. These different perceptions can lead to a feeling of being excluded for some cultural groups, but also other factors like *gender* and *sports* might have an influence on communication and whether someone feels included or excluded during a conversation. Another finding is that differing perceptions of someone's communication style exist depending on the staff members' experience in their home country. These findings will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

Intercultural Communication Competence

To explore the role of a leader's intercultural communication competence and its importance during change, an additional sub-section in the management category defined this characteristic and asked about its influence on the perceived change communication.

Survey

The participants in the survey were offered the following definition of *intercultural communication competence* (ICC) provided by Wiseman (2002, p. 208): "Intercultural communication competence involves the knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures". Although most staff members (73%) indicated that their primary leader is aware of the existence of several cultures in their department, only 45.6% found that their primary leader has a high intercultural communication competence. Furthermore, this characteristic has been perceived by only 25% as supportive for staff members in the particular context of change

communication. A detailed overview of the results in this category is presented in table 8 of the appendix.

Some variations between the cultural groups could only be identified in the statement with regard to whether a staff member's primary leader has a high intercultural communication competence. All Australian participants indicated their primary leader has a high competency, and a clear majority of the Indian and "others" group indicated the same. In the NZ and UK group, only one third of staff members agreed that their primary leader has a high intercultural communication competence. Table 9 in the appendix illustrates these trends. However, no differences could be identified in the interviews and focus group which would support this trend. Therefore, this finding will not be further addressed in the discussion.

Focus group and individual interviews

The interviewees were also introduced to the definition of ICC as suggested by Wiseman (2002) and they were asked about the importance of this competency for communicating change in a multicultural working group. Most participants in the focus group and individual interviews agreed that it is important and necessary that a manager of a multicultural working group has a high intercultural communication competence to support organisational change. Two interviewees acknowledged the importance of this competency but they highlighted other characteristics as more important. More precisely, one interviewee (SA-4) had the view that intercultural communication competence is important in that sense that a manager needs to understand a specific culture-related behaviour such as, for instance, the fact that Pacific peoples look down when talking to a manager as a sign of respect. The other interviewee (I-7) proposed that the focus should be more on personalities rather than culture and "managers need to learn to be more intuitive to personalities first and then cultures second".

The argument that interpersonal competence is a very important characteristic as well was also raised by other interviewees (UK-5, SA-4, NZM-F, and NZP-2). In the focus group this point was discussed as important as many different cultures exist in New Zealand which makes it almost impossible for management to address all cultures in an appropriate way. Therefore, a manager's sensitivity on a personal level always supports subordinates independent of their cultural background. As one interviewee (UK-5) stated: "some have excellent interpersonal skills and some do not regardless whether they are Kiwi born and bred or from the States or Africa or India or Egypt".

The interviewees were also asked whether they think a good manager in one country can be a good manager in another country. The importance of training for a manager before he or she works in another country as a manager was stressed by all participants. One interviewee (NZP-2) stated that such training needs to be "actively [and] almost aggressively attended". Trainees would learn about other cultures and their perceptions "to recognise the invisibilities" (NZP2) but also to learn obvious differences in the body language for example. For instance Indian people "do a lot head nodding but it doesn't necessarily mean the same thing" (I-7). Language was mentioned as another possible barrier which needs to be addressed when a manager's first language is not the same as in the country he or she is working in (I-7, UK-5, and NZP-2).

Many participants emphasised that intercultural communication competence is a mutual competency which is not only important for every manager on each management level but also for every single staff member working in a multicultural environment as well (EE-F, SEA-F, and UK-5). This facilitates an organisational environment of cultural awareness and sensitivity where people are respected. One interviewee accentuated the importance to acknowledge New Zealand already as a multicultural country where not only "white" people but also other indigenous people live, like the Maori and Pacific peoples. Some interviewees (UK-5, SEA-9, and EE-F) additionally mentioned the importance of length of experience someone has been exposed to other countries and cultures increases intercultural awareness and communication competence. One focus group member (NZM-F) agreed with this statement when she described her observation that many international students "are much more mature and have a global perspective" in contrast to New Zealanders.

Examples

Several interviewees were able to find an example where they perceived either a good intercultural competency from their manager or a lack of it. Although the interviewees were asked to think of an example during the change communication it is noticeable that most examples can be transferred to a general work situation independent of the change initiative. For instance, the Australian interviewee (A-11) outlined the way staff and managers independent of their cultural background often make jokes about other cultural groups which might be perceived as offensive. Although she classified these comments as "flippant" she experienced them as culturally insensitive and unpleasant for people.

The interviewee with European background (CE-8) whose managers always came from England missed cultural sensitivity in most cases. She stated: "I don't think it is a good

idea to transplant people who are in such a power position then so quickly from that culture into this culture". But she also mentioned one exception which she experienced as especially positive and supportive during the change initiatives:

> It was definitely a person that came across as being culturally, socially and culturally very sensitive. He was English, but I know that everybody felt very good about that and could deal with the changes in a less freaked out manner (CE-8).

Another interviewee (NZP-3) who also experienced an English manager lacked some cultural awareness and he stated: "I think my experience was that my manager was frustrated we did not get it, that it is our problem".

A positive example was experienced by an Indian interviewee (I-7), where she felt that her manager, who is culturally and personally very aware in her opinion, strongly encouraged and supported her to voice her opinion so that she was able to overcome her culture-related reluctance. She observed that she adapted to the local culture and she stated: "As long as the manager is constantly on your side I think it brings out the best in you".

Another positive example was mentioned by the interviewee with the South East Asian background (SEA-9) who worked for several managers. She experienced support with her current manager who is from another non-Asian country because of his intercultural and interpersonal awareness and communication competence. She felt that her manager is not only interested but also understands her culture which led her to feel very comfortable and valued.

One notable comment was made by the interviewee with the English background (UK-5). She experienced strong differences when dealing with staff members with an Asian background. She found that Asian people relate differently to people, work in a different way, have a strong reticence, and sometimes have the tendency to "just to say yes because they want to please you". These characteristics were observed by many interviewees throughout the interviews and Asian staff members, Chinese in particular, were named as an example where the communication style and the behaviour differs significantly from many other cultures within EDU. These differences are also confirmed by an Asian point of view (SEA-9):

> There definitely are a lot of cultural differences … [This New Zealand] culture is so different in a sense that is all about themselves. For me, is all about making everyone happy, not just you. My feelings are irrelevant as long as I can make 10 people happy. I find that some people are quite self-centered, knowledge they keep to themselves, not so much of sharing. I come from a culture where friendship, … , sharing and helping each other is important. I can remember the times when I worked in [South

East Asia], we are so close with our colleagues, we have lunch together, and we do shopping together … very very close. But here everyone is more or less quite private, they do their things and they go home. Even though you know them in the office you do not really know them. So sometimes you are not sure what is safe to approach, what is safe to talk. They sometimes misinterpret you in a different way.

In sum, the main finding in this section is that although most interviewees agreed that intercultural communication competence is important, many mentioned interpersonal competence as another important skill as same as or more important than intercultural communication competence. Further, many stressed that this is a mutual competency for staff members and managers across all levels of an organisation. Finally, there was a general agreement that training with regard to specifics of cultures, confident usage of the host language and experience with other cultures are supportive for this competence. These findings will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

Participation

This part of the study was designed to collect data on the role of participation in the change process.

Survey

The statements in the survey enquired whether the possibilities to participate through consultation, email and staff meetings were known and used during the change process. Additionally, participants were asked whether staff members expected to be involved in the change communication. The results indicate that the negative assessment (65.5%) with regard to the provision of appropriate training and support during the change initiative confirms the general results from the "Communication" section. Further, the majority of staff members (67.8%) were aware of the opportunity to place feedback. No differences between the cultural groups could be identified in these statements (see table 10 in the appendix for detailed results).

Two statements in this category are based on Hofstede's (1984) study and his cultural dimension power distance. Hofstede (1984) examined a close relationship between a low power distance index (PDI) and the perception that management is seen as making decisions after consulting with subordinates which is in contrast to countries with a high PDI where management is perceived as making decisions autocratically and paternalistically. New Zealand has a very low PDI (22), followed by UK and Australia with a low PDI of 35 and 36,

whereas India scores high with 77. Surprisingly, the clear majority of staff members (98.3%) across all cultures stated that they prefer to have an input on decisions and actions that affect their job. In particular for the Indian group this result appears to be in contrast with their high PDI.

The second statement asked whether staff members feel afraid of disagreeing with their manager and is repetition from the "Management" section of the survey. Again, the result for this statement is noticeable for the New Zealand group which indicates the same numbers (38.9%) of answers for agreement and disagreement. This is in contrast to what one would expect for the answers of members of a group with a low PDI. A detailed overview of these results is provided in table 11 in the appendix.

Some slight differences in the cultural groups were identified in the statements whether staff members question management decisions and they are confident that their suggestions are considered. The majority of staff members (71.2%) stated that they question management decisions. A comparison between the cultural groups indicates different levels of agreement (see table 12 in the appendix). The Indian group agrees with 100% that they question management decisions and the New Zealand and Australian group clearly agree with around 75%, whereas the UK group agrees with only 44.4%. With the exception of the Indian group the majority of staff members (63.8%) were not confident that their suggestions were considered. Although the participants of the Indian group were not sure whether they feel afraid to express disagreement with their managers or not (100% undecided) they questioned management decisions and were positive that their suggestions were considered. A detailed overview of these results is provided in table 11 and 12 in the appendix.

In sum, the main finding in this section is that across all cultures a clear majority prefers to have an input on decisions that affect their job, but the majority of staff members were not confident their suggestions were considered. Further, the fact that all participants in the Indian group stated that they prefer to have an input on decisions which affect their job seems to contradict their high PDI. These findings will be further addressed in the results of the interviews below. Also the result of the NZ group that many staff members indicated they feel afraid of disagreeing with their manager is unexpected because of their low PDI. This finding will be further addressed in the "Voice" part of the "Attitudes towards change" where the interviewees provided more in-depth detail with regard for this result.

Focus group and individual interviews

The vast majority of staff members (98.3%) across all cultures indicated that they prefer to have an input in decisions which affect their job. But the results of the survey also indicate that only 54% used the consultation possibilities which were offered by EDU before the change initiatives took place. Likewise only 59% of staff members discussed change related issues with their managers (see also findings in section "Attitude towards Change"). To investigate this inconsistency in detail the question was asked in the focus group and interviews how the participants expected to be involved. Furthermore, questions were asked which investigated the reason for possible culture based differences in objections to the participation in the change process. In particular, interviewees were asked how employees in their home country are engaged to participate during a change initiative.

Most interviewees (NZP-1, NZP-3, NZP-2, UK-5, CE-8, CE-6, I-7 and I-11) emphasised that they expect to be involved actively. The accentuation was on "actively" where the participants emphasised that they should have a say, and a manager would need to listen to their concerns but also to their suggestions. Moreover, they expected that management would come back to staff members in order to inform them why or why not their feedback has been considered. This expectation is in contrast to how the form of participation offered during the change initiative at EDU has been perceived. For instance, one New Zealander (NZP-1) found that the "meetings did tend to waffle on and so you got nothing out of them" and she suggested smaller group discussions would have been very helpful because everyone could have mentioned their concerns but only if the facilitator of these groups would "be quite on to it". She pointed out further that "Kiwis" want not only be fully informed but also heard. Another New Zealand interviewee (NZP-3) went further stating that "Kiwis" do not want to be "just involved in the communication, I think actively involved in the process of scoping those roles, deciding or help to decide all those important things". This opinion was also confirmed by the final interviewee with a New Zealand background (NZP-2). He stated that "participation is doing" and a good way to realise this in the past change initiatives would have been to say:

> We are facing these problems. These are some possible ways for us that other institutions have used. What do you think?" rather than employing a "consultancy agency to undergo a report on what [EDU] should be now [and to ask] 'what do you think of that?' (NZP-2)

As a consequence, if staff members feel not to be actively involved, they would not go to the meetings or not participate in the consultation period (NZP-1, and NZP-3) and this also led to demotivation (NZM-F).

The interviewee from the United Kingdom (UK-5) confirmed this expectation on participation from the New Zealand interviewees by pointing out that New Zealander and people from the UK are very similar. She found that "New Zealand has not grown sufficiently different from England even though it likes to think it is".

Another interviewee with European background (CE-8) pointed out that EDU has "very strong hierarchical structures" and she expected a more "honest way to be consulted". She illustrated her former example with the manager from the UK during the change initiative whom she experienced as very supportive:

> He was totally honest, and he said 'Look, this is the system we are working in. If you do not get enough students you are going to lose your job, this is just how it works'. He was truly kind of affected on a human level by that, I do believe him that. I did not think he was kind of pretending or something and he would listen and he would come 'back and say 'Look, this is just how it is'. But there was this, probably empathy, there was that thing that there was not a hierarchy, he was to any staff the same, no matter where they are on the ladder and empathy, you know a concern for the situation and honesty and transparency (CE-8).

The term "honesty" and "mistrust" as a consequence of a "dishonest" consultation period was also used by other interviewees (NZP-3, and CE-6). Many staff members perceived the consultation process as a mere formal routine, because they felt the decisions were already made by management (NZP-3, CE-8, CE-6, EE-F, SEA-F, and A-11).

The two Indian interviewees (I-7 and I-11) also expected to be actively involved in the change initiatives although both confirmed that in India staff members often will not get this option. Interviewee I-10 said in a very disappointed tone that he expected that people from management level would come into the departments and talk to staff members and get their professional expertise. The reason he expected this was because it was not just promised by the CEO it was "a declaration". Therefore, he felt frustrated when it did not happen. Referring to his home country, where most of the business is still run by government he said that "India behaves in a colonial way most of the time" and only in the private sector he observed some form of consultation with staff members. When he was asked whether Indian people expect to participate he found "if it happens they are fine they are happy with that but if it does not happen they do not much complain about it". In contrast the other Indian interviewee I-7, who had a lot of experience in the private business in India, strongly believed that Indians want to

express their opinion although they often refrain to do so because of their "respect for hierarchy". She concluded that this leads to a lot of "frustration" "because people are not able to voice their opinion but they want to". Furthermore, she indicated that organisational culture "promotes this kind of conversation" and, therefore acts as a facilitator to welcome feedback. Like most interviewees she accentuated the importance of the way managers listen to feedback and whether they "honestly" want to hear it as a factor for an active involvement in the communication process. The findings of the interviews and survey are consistent in that sense that Indian employees expect to be involved in the change process. But they tend to react passively and quietly if they are not offered feedback, which might lead to the assumption they do not question management decisions as much as a high PDI would suggest.

As already mentioned above, many interviewees found that group discussions would have been very helpful to address the short-comings of the consultation process (SA-4, A-11, NZP-1, and NZP-3). Across the cultures the interviewees highlighted the importance that change related communication should have been implemented on a department level (NZP-2, NZP-3, SA-4, A-11, I-7 and I-11) rather than big meetings. The idea of department group meetings was also shared by the South African interviewee (SA-4). However, he focused mainly on the quality and detail of information and the importance to efficiently address the affected audience. He did not stress the importance of being heard and giving feedback.

Another interesting cultural-related point was raised by two New Zealand interviewees (NZP-2 and NZP-3) who confirmed the idea that "Kiwis" might prefer that managers come to staff rather than asking employees to come to management. Interviewee NZP-2 developed the idea that because Kiwi's have a "healthy disrespect for authority" they might perceive it as a level of "control" when managers invite them to come to a meeting. Therefore, he concluded that "maybe in the Kiwi mind the manager should come to me". When another New Zealand interviewee (NZP-3) was asked whether he thinks "Kiwis" expect management to come to them he felt emotionally very strongly about this referring to the Kiwis' history of being "independent" and being "pioneers" and they also "do value feeling included as part of". Consequently, he concluded that someone cannot expect that they "take the initiative and find about things".

Interestingly, the interviewee from South East Asia (SEA-9) was surprised at what people in New Zealand expect in terms of participation, which confirms the view of the New Zealand interviewee above. She referred to the consultation meetings that were offered and commented in the following way:

> People say they want to be consulted, they want to give input but you do not see anyone [in the meetings]. … How else are they going to have an input if they do not attend a meeting? (SEA-9)

When she was asked how a consultation is conducted in her home country she laughed and said:

> There is no consultation. It is the top-down approach. There will be a one in a month kind of meeting and the supervisor will say what is being done but people just accept it. People do not challenge the management. That's a different culture. Where here people will challenge "why have we to do this, why have we to do that?" (SEA-9)

One New Zealand interviewee (NZP-2) commented on this "Kiwi's" attitude towards involvement and participation as follows: "I think Kiwis in particular are skeptical and need to somehow engage with it to get there, especially if there is no vision that hasn't been communicated clearly then".

The top-down approach of conducting change in South East Asia was confirmed by the other South East Asian participant (SEA-F) of the focus group and she pointed out that management cannot serve so many different opinions.

Also the focus group member with the South American background mentioned that there is no consultation process in her country, but people still expect to be fully informed.

Some participants commented on their perception of how other cultural groups participated in change communication. Often Asian people but also Indian staff members were perceived as more "cautious" or "not so outspoken", and "somewhat more reserved" (NZP-3). Likewise, some interviewees described their Asian colleagues as "a lot more reserved" and they "try to fit in". One observed that Asians "are a lot more uncritical of authority" (CE-8). Another cultural group which was mentioned as colleagues who do not give any feedback was the group of Pacific staff members (CE-8). One interviewee referred to her personal and close relationships with Pacific peoples and stressed that they "were raised in such a strong hierarchy". Another aspect proposed by one interviewee (CE-6) reflecting her experience with Pacific students was that Pacific peoples might expect a more collective decision and involvement in the change communication.

In sum, one finding is that the interviewees (I-10, SEA-9, SEA-F, SA-4, and SAM-F) who experienced no consultation back in their home country during a change initiative have a different understanding about what participation constitutes to members of groups with active participation. As a consequence, they do not expect to be heard and to give active feedback

unless it is promised as one Indian interviewee stated. But they still expect to be fully informed in order to understand what the change will bring in detail and how the change influences their job. All other interviewees stressed the importance of an "honest" way of communication and process of consultation where staff members have real opportunity to place feedback. Further, there was a general agreement from the focus group members and interviewees across all examined cultures that smaller meetings on a department level, for instance, would have been more effective and appropriate in contrast to the big meetings conducted during EDU's change period. Another finding is that often Asian and Indian staff members are perceived as not so participative with regard to giving input to change related issues. For the Indian group a high PDI suggests high respect for hierarchy which is pointed out by both Indian interviewees. On the other hand, despite their high PDI Indian staff members indicated that they do question leadership decisions and they expect to have an input and give feedback. These findings will be addressed as a key area in the discussion chapter.

Behavioural Response

In the survey section of "Attitudes towards change" the EVLN model (Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect), which is explained in chapter 2 (see figure 1), was applied with the aim of exploring behavioural response to the change communication. Therefore, the survey contained statements to investigate whether the staff members' response to the change initiatives tended to be either passive or active and constructive or destructive. In order to get more in-depth information in regard to the results of the survey interview questions were designed to get more detailed information about each suggested behavioural response of the EVLN model. The results of the survey and interviews (individual and focus group) are presented together in this section for each category of the EVLN model. A detailed overview of the survey results in this category is presented in table 13 of the appendix.

Exit

Some minor differences between the cultural groups were found in the "Exit"-related statement of the survey which explored whether staff members were thinking of leaving (see table 14 in the appendix). None of the three Indian group members agreed that they were thinking of leaving and also the Australian group members intended to stay. In contrast, clearly more participants in the NZ and UK group indicated that they were thinking of leaving.

In order to follow up these results of the survey the interviewees were asked whether they observed behavioural differences with regard of leaving the organisation during the change process which they would relate to culture. The New Zealand Pakeha interviewee NZP-3 found that "Kiwi people leave more" if they feel they are not valued anymore and that "they are quite more ready to leave and go somewhere else" compared to other cultural groups. Another New Zealand interviewee (NZP-1) generally observed that many New Zealanders left in the past and the number of Indian staff members increased significantly who joined the organisation.

The focus group member EE-F observed that in particular male and people from German speaking countries but also from England tended to leave the company rather than participating in the consultation process. In contrast she stated a Japanese staff member would not leave the organisation because of their sense of loyalty to the organisation. The interviewee from England (UK-5) described the English people as staff members who "give the management and the whole change process quite a considerable degree of time and good will" and if it is not working well and it exceeds a certain point of their acceptance they would decide to leave.

In contrast, one Indian interviewee (I-10) observed that in India staff members would "wait to the end" during a change initiative because of their reputation and "they want to be seen as loyal to the organisation". This assessment confirms the survey results, where none of the three participants were thinking of leaving the organisation. Interestingly, the other Indian interviewee (I-7) described Indians as "a bit more selfish" who would "look for another option" but only if they feel very unsatisfied over a significant period of time.

The Asian interviewee (SEA-9) clearly identified differences between cultures and stated that "the NZ culture and some other Western cultures, they are quite fast moving" whereas the majority of people with her cultural background would not "job-hop" and they tend "to be happy with what [they] have so long as [they] are not abused at work".

Some interviewees believed that the intention to leave the organisation rather earlier than later is motivated by personal and individual reasons (NZP1, SA-4, and UK-5) or whether people had other options (I-10). Others (CE-6, SA-4, and A-11) did not observe any differences which they would refer to culture.

In sum, the survey and interview results illustrate minor differences in this behavioural response that can be related to culture. For instance, the South East Asian interviewee observed that Western cultures are "fast moving". Likewise, other interviewees observed that members from European countries tend to leave the organisation rather earlier compared to

other colleagues during the change initiatives at EDU. But at the same time also personal reasons or the options for a job change were observed by some interviewees as important factors influencing this decision. Also some interviewees were not able to identify any cultural based differences. This finding will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

Voice

The first four statements of the survey addressed the behavioural response to change communication through "Voice". More than the half of the staff members across all cultures voiced their opinion and discussed their concerns with their managers (59.3%) and the clear majority discussed their concerns with their colleagues (81.3%). Furthermore, slightly more than half of the staff members (54.2%) gave feedback and made suggestions for improvement with regard to the change initiatives. No differences between the cultural groups could be identified in this section of the survey.

In order to get more in-depth information about the relationship between voicing an opinion to management and culture, the interviewees were asked whether they think that they are coming from a culture were people voice their opinion to their manager even when it comes to contentious issues. One New Zealand Pakeha interviewee agreed that Kiwis voice their opinion but not openly, "they get into a little group and discuss … and actually don't go out to the people concerned and voice their opinions" (NZP-1). Another interviewee from this cultural group found that Kiwis voice their opinion if they feel safe and not "threatened". He argued that he and many of his colleagues did not feel secure enough to voice their opinion during the change initiatives and they worried to loose their job if they speak up.

The English interviewee (UK-5) found that members of her cultural group express their opinion if they "feel they need to make a point", but it also depends on the individuals. Both European (CE-6 and CE-8) interviewees found that their cultural groups clearly voice their opinion; one stated they are very "loud" and "outspoken". The focus group member with the South East Asian background (SEA-F) also perceived Europeans and in particular people from Great Britain as "very vocal" who complain a lot.

The Australian group was described as people who "voice their opinion very clearly" which the Australian interviewee perceived as different to the New Zealand style. Also South Africans voice their opinion and "are a little more direct" compared to the New Zealanders (SA-4).

The Indian interviewee (I-7) observed that people from her culture voice their opinion but not in a "straightforward way". In contrast, the other Indian interviewee found that Indians

want to be perceived as "loyal to the organisation", therefore they will not voice their opinion and "not make the first move". When it comes to contentious issues with management he declared "You will not get much, they will wait, they will sit out, they will see. That's a real cultural thing".

As already mentioned above in the "Participation" section the two Asian interviewees confirmed that people from their culture do not voice their opinion. Likewise, the interviewee with the South American background stated that people with her cultural background do not discuss any concerns with management.

Furthermore, because the clear majority of staff members (81.3%) discussed change related issues with their colleagues the questions was asked in the interviews whether staff members discussed these topics with all their colleagues regardless of their cultural background. In this case it was further asked whether they perceived different views which they would relate to culture rather than personality.

In the focus group the participants had very different experiences with regard to the cultural grouping of staff members. The South East Asian participant (SEA-F) commented that in her department it is clearly observable that people group together. When she was asked who groups with whom she said "the White with the White" and

> In my environment I work with there are the Whites, there are the Indians, and there are Chinese. You do not see the Chinese group together but you often see Whites and they chat all the time. But this is just a specific environment, it cannot be generalised (SEA-F).

The participant with the New Zealand Maori ethnic background (NZM-F) also confirmed that in her department people are "very cliquey" because the organisational atmosphere is not very good. She stated that firstly women and men tend to separate and secondly within these male or female groups cultural groups "stick together". Another focus group member who worked for several departments agreed that on the one hand she observed some groupings based on culture. On the other hand, she experienced that some people also grouped depending on their personal preferences and closeness to colleagues. Finally, the participant from South America described the "morning tea culture" in her department which was strongly established and where people come and chat together every morning:

> I would say (in) my department, they all hang together. …I do not think there are many interpersonal issues. I think they accept and like each other very much in our department. This is what I can perceive. But I do not mix with them because I am very shy and coming from South America (NZM-F).

When she was asked whether this inviting tradition could be somehow related to the cultural sensitivity of the HoD she agreed, but she and another focus group member mainly highlighted the good organisational culture in this specific department which has been established many years ago.

None of the individual interviewees experienced any groupings cultural wise during the change initiatives. If they observed any separation then it was based on their colleagues' job roles like administrative or academic staff (NZP-1, A-11, and NZP-3). Some interviewees were asked whether the organisational culture was good in their departments and they clearly confirmed this (NZP-3, A-11, I-10, and CE-8). They commented on it like "we are all very close" and "honest to each other" (CE-8), or "I like it here because of that sort of thing because we do not read ethnicity, race or to much cultural engravings in decisions (I-10)". Others talked in a way where it was obvious that staff members respect each other and value different views (NZP-3). One interviewee (A-11) experienced several departments where she worked with many cultures including Asians and Pacific peoples and in all these departments the organisational culture was very good in that sense that colleagues appreciated each other. Some pointed out that the closest teams they are working with are small with up to four members and are mainly mono-cultural (NZP-1 and NZP-3). Therefore, they did not make any observations with regard to separation.

Although initially all participants of the individual interviews denied a culture based grouping in the context of the discussion of change related issues at the same time many mentioned during the interviews that some cultural groupings are generally observable. For instance, some found that Asian groups tend to group outlining that English is not their first language (NZP-1 and I-10). One interviewee (I-10) stated: "The Chinese people are comfortable with their group, and regardless of who else is in the room they still start talking in (their own language) which is quite offensive sometimes". Another Indian interviewee (I-7) acknowledged that within EDU everyone "mixes up" but also outlined that people tend "to float towards their own culture still". When she was asked whether the reason behind this is a language barrier she said "I could also speak in English but it just picks up a natural fit" and "you just don't have to think twice about what you are saying basically". This issue of being careful, sensitive and very conscious when communicating with other people from other cultural groups was also mentioned by the Asian interviewee SEA-9 who described that people in the Western culture are "more private" where people come to work and "do their things and they go home". Therefore, she found that "sometimes [she is] not sure what is safe

to approach what is safe to talk" with Western colleagues. Another interviewee with a European background was very aware of her specific cultural based characteristic in having a very direct communication style and she stated "I am still so paranoid about being too outspoken or being too direct". Likewise the South African interviewee assessed his communication style as more direct compared to the New Zealand style where people can feel offended. Another example was made by one Indian interviewee (I-7) referring to her general experience outside EDU when she emphasised that "sarcasm and skepticism" is differently used in various cultures and can be "totally misinterpreted" by different cultures. She said "I have seen people get offended because of what some people have said whereas the intention was never to offend someone, just a minor sense of humor".

In sum, although the survey results did not identify any culture related differences with regard to voicing an opinion to management and/or colleagues, the interviews revealed differences in the way people from different countries voice their opinion. These differences address the level of directness as well as the level of openness. For instance, the New Zealand interviewees describe a more reserved way of voicing their opinion where trust to management and a feeling of "safety" are important factors to place feedback. This might be the reason for the unexpected result that despite the low PDI many members of the NZ group indicated in the survey that they feel afraid of disagreeing with their managers. Furthermore, although the participants acknowledge that they generally feel more comfortable in their own cultural group in that sense that the chance of misunderstandings is less, most staff members discussed change related issues with their colleagues across cultures in their work environment. There seems to be a link between these discussions and a "good" organisational culture, which invites discussions and respects other colleagues. Groupings of staff members into cultural groups were only observed if this organisational culture was perceived as not so well. These findings will be addressed as a key area of this study in the discussion chapter.

Loyalty

The staff members' assessment whether they trusted the organisation to do the right thing varied between agreement and disagreement across cultures. The survey results indicated that a clear majority of 88.1% of staff members stated that they had no choice but to go along with the change initiatives. In order to follow up this question and to find out whether this response was a sign of loyalty in the organisation the interviewees were asked whether they think that some cultural groups are different in so far as they tend to trust the organisation rather than seeking confrontation with management.

The interview findings indicate that a number of interviewees observed that their Chinese and Asian colleagues tended to trust the organisation (NZP-1, CE-8, and CE-6). They were perceived as "fairly quiet" and "did not participate as much". Furthermore, their behaviour was described as compliant as they "just go on with their job and do not complain", they "observe" and they are "sitting and waiting without being very vocal". This observation was confirmed by the Asian interviewee (SEA-9) who said that members of her cultural group tend to trust and "we seem to accept always, we do not question". Some recognized this behaviour also for the Pacific peoples (CE-6 and CE-8), emphasizing that it might be not only trust into the organisation but also their respect for authority.

One focus group member noticed that her Japanese colleagues were exposed to a cultural based conflict during the change process. She recognized that Japanese staff members allow and expect the organisation "to take control" over their staff members in order to "direct" and "support" them. Because this did not happen in this case her Japanese colleagues felt "left lone" and struggled to cope with the change situation.

Two interviewees did not observe any cultural based differences with regard to trust (NZP-2 and A-11).

In sum, some cultural groups, like Asian cultures for example, were perceived as more loyal to the organisation during the change at EDU. Whether this can be related to loyalty could not be explored further because most results are based on observations of individuals from other cultural groups. This finding will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

Neglect

The survey results indicate that for more than the half of the staff members across cultures (59.3%) the change initiatives had a negative impact on their motivation level. Some minor differences in the cultural groups could be identified in the last statement with regard of the appropriateness of opposing the change initiatives as illustrated in table 15 of the appendix. The New Zealand group indicates a broad variety of answers from disagreement to agreement about the appropriateness of opposing the restructuring initiatives. The UK members clearly indicated that this form of behavioural response would be inappropriate, whereas the Australian and Indian group members tended to either disagree or being undecided.

In order to get an understanding what "appropriateness" means for people from different cultures the interviewees where asked what kind of action would be accepted or not accepted in their cultural group in case people become frustrated during the change

communication. Because this was a very sensitive question and many interviewees initially reacted reluctantly to this question the researcher offered an example by describing her own experiences for the German cultural group.

Many interviewees mentioned negative talking about the change initiative as a typical reaction. For instance, interviewee NZP-1 stated that "Kiwis generally support change if it is for the better" but it would not be acceptable to be "rude" or "just not doing it". The need for a New Zealander to understand the change intent as an improvement for the organisation was also emphasised by another New Zealand interviewee:

> I think there is probably some negative questioning [and] talking amongst their teams. Well I think that is perhaps a natural thing and this is because people are curious. … if I understand how it is going to be better I get on board … If its uncertain why it is going to be better then I think they disengage because they cannot see any value or benefit.

Interestingly, the English interviewee perceived the New Zealand European attitude to change as a "victim mentality" which caused some people "being ill with stress related illnesses". She further stated that their "good will is slowly eroded and the person is physically incapacitated so they lose the ability to make any changes to do anything about it". Additionally, she observed, this behaviour influenced other staff members' motivation level because they were still working but also complaining at work about the change initiatives. In contrast, the English interviewee described people from her culture as persons who would not oppose to change but rather "accept change" because they like to "please" and they are not "rocking the boat". If a level of acceptance is exceeded English people would leave the organisation she concluded. Almost in the same manner the Australian interviewee believed that people from her cultural group are rather relaxed when it comes to change. They voice their opinion and if it does not work they leave the organisation.

The two interviewees with the Continental European background suggested that people from their cultural group would start "talking negatively" about the change initiatives, "work to rule", and "doing their job slow". But it would not be acceptable to actively undermine a change initiative with "that kind of really back-handed, weak undercover sabotage".

Likewise to the Continental European interviewees, both Indian interviewees said that if Indian staff members get frustrated with their work situation their "work would slow down", there would be "a lot of negative talking amongst them", and people would "fall sick quite often". But one interviewee (I-10) emphasised at the same time there exists an "unsaid

protocol" which would require Indian people to "keep their and the groups face" even if they are very upset, and they would not show their feelings to the outside.

The South East Asian interviewee confirmed the general impression the interviewees often outlined during the interviews that people in her cultural group "would not react strongly" and "accept management decisions".

An interesting finding is that the interviewees who named negative or critical talking as a typical reaction did not assess this as inappropriate. On the other hand, many interviewees observed that a specific level of negative talking has a strong influence on other staff members which can lead to frustration and demotivation (UK-5, SEA-9, and SEA-9). The Asian interviewee (SEA-9) perceived that in particular people who are highly vocal and talk negatively about the change can demotivate people. Moreover, one participant of the focus group (NZM-F) described "a breeding of negativity" within the organisation where in particular "predominantly male, older, (white from somewhere else) European, South African or Kiwi's or English people … actively undermine all the change and everything and it can grow and it impacts on you". Another interviewee also emphasised that in particular the young people where the age refers to the time of being in the organisation, "support change much better" (NZP-1).

A few interviewees perceived some opposing behaviour from administrative staff but not from academic staff (UK-5 and EE-F). Interviewee EE-F and SAM-F observed a lot of "criticising" but "it didn't impact their performance and their relation to their work versus students."

The South African interviewee could not link any kind of behavioural response to culture but only to personalities.

In sum, voicing a negative opinion amongst colleagues was named as a form of neglect by many interviewees from different cultures as a typical reaction in case people did not agree with the change process, but the way this talking was transposed into the work environment was described and perceived differently. While an Indian interviewee, for instance, confirmed negative talking amongst each others he emphasised the need to save face of the whole group. In contrast, the NZ and Continental European interviewees described critical and negative talking in a more open way. An interesting finding is that the interviewees who named "negative talking" as a typical reaction in their culture did not assess this as inappropriate. On the other hand, colleagues from other cultures perceived them as "loud" and they emphasised the strong negative influence of negative talking on others. The English and Australian interviewees perceived themselves as relaxed towards change. They

would voice their opinion or leave the organisation if it does not work. Finally, the South East Asian interviewee confirmed the overall impression of staff members from other cultures that people from her culture would not react strongly. These findings will be addressed as a key area of this study in the discussion chapter.

Individual Profile

Survey

The survey contained several statements which were based on cultural dimensions in this section, mostly based on Hofstede's (1984) uncertainty avoidance. The main finding in this section is that on the one hand some results tend to confirm Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance as an influential factor on peoples views. On the other hand some results do not confirm the implications of this dimension and sometimes tend to be in contrast to what was suggested by Hofstede (1984). This observation confirms the findings in other sections of this study. However, because the size of the survey sample and, in particular, the numbers of members for each identified group is too small to derive general conclusions and the fact that there was not enough time to address these observations in more depth in the interviews, the results of this section will not be further displayed. An overview of the survey results is provided in table 16 in the appendix.

The statement with regard whether an employee believes in the long-term success of an organisation was created to explore the impact of the cultural dimension "future orientation", which was identified by the GLOBE study on the acceptance for change. The survey results show that with 91.5% the majority of participants believe in the long-term success of EDU. All participating cultures in the present research score in the mid-range of this dimension. Therefore, no further investigations were undertaken in the interviews with regard to this dimension.

The last statement in this section was created to get an impression how staff members assess the impact of culture during a change period. Interestingly, a clear majority (71.2%) stated that it would not be easier to implement change in mono-cultural compared multi-cultural working groups.

To sum up, because of the small size of the survey the results with regard to the cultural dimensions will not be further addressed in the discussion section. An interesting finding that will be addressed as a key finding in the discussion chapter is that across cultures

the majority of staff members did not assess culture as a factor that complicates a change implementation.

Focus group and individual interviews

The interviewees were not asked a specific question in this section. However the topic of adaptation to the host culture came up during the interviews and will be outlined in this section.

It became quickly apparent during the focus group and individual interviews that the participants who were originally from another country adapted to some extent to the New Zealand culture. For instance, the participants of the focus group were asked to introduce themselves illustrating to which cultural group they belong and for how long they have been in New Zealand and at EDU. Two out of the three participants who were not born and educated in New Zealand named their country of birth but also emphasised that they have left their country many years ago and additionally lived in other countries like Japan, for instance. One of those two laughed and she pointed out that she adopted her behaviour because of her broad experience with other cultures during her life time and she is not able to refer herself to one culture only anymore:

> Because of me living in different cultures and environments, I actually try to look at others reactions. I just try to be quiet to a certain point in a multicultural environment and observe others. But then I do form my strong opinion and I would voice my opinion. And I think this would be very different compared to [the country] where I grew up. But I shaped my ethics by being outside of that country (EE-F).

Two other interviewees explained that they have adapted to the New Zealand culture. They were both aware of their strong roots of cultural based values and views and explained how difficult they found it to overcome these deeply ingrained behaviours. For instance, the interviewee with South American background (SAM-F) described the work situation in her home country in the way that managers and staff members are not honest about what they really think and staff members do not voice their opinion. She also described herself as "very shy" because of her cultural background and she compared it to her actual situation at EDU as follows:

> But here I am different. When for example I have something to say to my boss I say it and I feel respected in that sense. I am not very opinionated because of my cultural background and my boss and the other staff always wants me to corporate more with opinions (SAM-F).

Likewise the other Indian interviewee (I-7) described her adaptation to the local culture where she had to learn to voice her opinion in the following way:

> But here people are a little more open, they listen to opinion. …. No one stops you from thinking basically. I like that here and that is not a barrier but it is a difference and it took me a lot of time to adjust to it. …. Well quite honestly, initially it is a bit [difficult], you are totally encouraged to [voice your opinion] but you cannot do it. So I had this barrier upfront saying "Do I want to say it? But I cannot say it. How do I say it?" But once you have done it, once, twice, and you do need a support of a manager and as long as the manager is constantly on your side I think it brings out the best in you. It becomes easier to adapt to it (I-7).

Interestingly both interviewees highlighted that they assessed this adaptation to the local culture as enrichment for their personal development.

The other Indian interviewee (I-10) who referred to himself as being from a minority group in India stated:

> I think if I were in India I was thinking very differently. [India is] dominated by the colonial culture. When I came here, although it was a previous colony, it was all different. You don't feel the colony as much.

Another interviewee with European background (CE-6) also illustrated that she has partly adapted her respect for authority:

> Anyone that has got authority we were told and we did respect them. And there is probably still a bit there. … I mean the respect is still there, I respect my partner, I respect my kids and I respect authority. … But if I notice that they do not deserve their position than I can pipe up absolutely.

Two interviewees (CE-8 and SA-4) stated that they have adapted their former direct communication style to the more indirect New Zealand style because they do not want to offend people.

The South East Asian interviewee (SEA-9) emphasised a strong difference between Asian and Western cultures which she assessed as very contrasting. But she also explained that she, for instance, changed part of her non-verbal communication style to the local culture:

When I was brought up we tend to look down when an older was talking to us. That is a respect. I do not do it anymore because I am here. But still in lots of Asian countries the respect is so important that we do not look up when they are spoken to (SEA-9).

In sum, all interviewees who lived for a long time in New Zealand or left their home country many years ago emphasised the time they have been away from their home culture as a factor why and to what extent they have adapted their former communication styles. This finding will be addressed as a key area in the discussion chapter.

Summary of the Key Findings

This section provides an overview of the key findings of this study. The findings will be addressed and discussed in relation to the relevant literature in the discussion chapter (chapter 4).

Communication

The main finding in this section is that culture did not influence respondents' perceptions of what is important communication during change but it had an impact on the way staff members from different cultural groups responded to this communication. For example, some interviewees identified people from their culture as "easy going", others stated they adopt easily to change, whereas in contrast some classified themselves as "worrier" who tend to initially mistrust rather than trust with regard to change. Further, the perception of how other cultural groups responded to the change with regard to their communication differed between members of one cultural group and others. For instance, the New Zealand staff members described themselves as "very easy going", but others perceived this cultural group as people who "complain" a lot.

Management

Culture was experienced as an influential factor for the way managers communicated during the change but it also had an impact how staff members themselves perceived this communication. These differences between cultures were observed particularly in the communication style where, for example, diverse levels of directness between various cultures were experienced. Further, many interviewees observed diverse forms of "respect" for hierarchy. Again, a difference between self-perception and awareness of others could be observed. For instance, the New Zealand attitude towards hierarchy was described as a

"healthy disrespect for hierarchy" by a New Zealand interviewee, whereas in contrast a South East Asian interviewee experienced this as "no respect for hierarchy". Further, staff members from Asia were described as people who are "a lot more uncritical of authority".

Not only differences in self-perception and awareness of others was observed, but also people with different cultural backgrounds and work experience in their home country have opposing perceptions on someone's communication style. For example, the New Zealand style was perceived as "not so direct" from interviewees who experienced a more direct style in their home country, but was observed as "direct and honest" by interviewees who come from a less direct country.

A reflective point raised by the interviewees is that stereotyping based on nations biases the way other cultures are perceived. Furthermore, some interviewees outlined that additional factors like gender and specific communication topics like sports influence communication style and the fact whether someone feels included or excluded during a conversation.

Interestingly, no major differences between the cultures could be found in regard who describes the primary leader, from whom change related information is expected and what is valuable information. Across all cultures, the majority of staff members indicated that their primary leader is their direct manager which is the Head of Department or line manager. Information is expected from all three hierarchical levels, the CEO, the Dean and the Head of Department.

Intercultural communication competence

Intercultural communication competence of a leader or manager of a multicultural working group was assessed as important by staff members across cultures. However, many interviewees mentioned interpersonal competence as another important skill that might be more important than intercultural communication competence. Generally it has been agreed that training in regard to specifics of cultures, confident usage of the host language and experience with other cultures are supportive for this competence. Finally, this competency is assessed as a mutual competency which not only addresses managers and leaders but also staff members because it facilitates an organisational environment of cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Participation

The results of the survey clearly indicated that across all cultures a clear majority (98.3%) prefers to have an input on decisions that affect their job, but a great deal fewer participated in the consultation opportunities offered (54%) or discussed change related issues with their managers (59%). In the interviews, it became apparent that staff members who experienced no consultation back in their home country during a change initiative have a different understanding about what participation constitutes, in contrast to employees who are used to being consulted. The first group mainly expects to be fully informed in order to understand what the change will bring in detail and how the change influences their job. In contrast, staff members who are used to consultation stressed the importance of an "honest" way of communicating and process of consultation where staff members have the opportunity to "actively" place feedback. Interestingly, the staff members of the Indian group who are not necessarily used to consultation back in their home country but who were offered consultation also stressed these terms.

It was noticeable, that many interviewees perceived that mainly Asian and sometimes Indian staff members are not so participative and do not give input to change related issues. For the Chinese group this is confirmed by the fact that no Chinese staff member was willing to participate in the survey and interviews. The Indian interviewees confirmed this observation on the one hand when they pointed out that a high respect to hierarchy leads to less direct feedback. But on the other hand all Indian participants of the survey and interviewees indicated they prefer to have an input on the change process.

Finally, across all examined cultures, smaller meetings on a department level were suggested as effective and appropriate in contrast to the conducted large meetings during EDU's change period.

Attitudes towards change

The results of the survey illustrates that for more than the half of staff members (59.3%) the change initiatives had a negative impact on their motivation level. This section aimed to investigate the behavioural responses as according to the EVLN model (see literature review) through exit, voice, loyalty and neglect.

Exit

The survey and interview results suggest minor differences in the attitude of leaving an organisation during change which can be related to culture. For instance, the South East

Asian interviewee observed that Western cultures are "fast moving" and members from European countries were observed to leave the organisation rather earlier compared to other colleagues. This was confirmed by the English and Continental European interviewees. In contrast, none of the Indian participants of the survey indicated that they did think of leaving EDU and one Indian interviewee stated that Indians would "wait to the end" because they want to be seen as "loyal" to the organisation. Likewise one interviewee observed that Japanese staff members would not leave the organisation because of their sense of loyalty to the organisation. However, many interviewees also related reasons for leaving the organisation to personal reasons or the options someone would have to change jobs. However, some interviewees were not able to identify any cultural based differences.

Voice

The main finding in this section is that although the survey did not identify any culture related differences with regard to voicing an opinion to management and/or colleagues, the interviewees identified differences in the way people from different countries voice their opinion. These differences address the level of directness as well as the level of openness. For example, the Continental European, UK, and Australian interviewees described themselves as people who voice their opinion "open" and "clearly". In contrast the New Zealand interviewees described themselves as more careful where they prefer to voice their opinion in smaller groups rather than openly, and the Indian interviewees indicated that they voice their opinion but not in a "straight forward" way.

Furthermore, although members of one cultural group generally acknowledge that they feel more comfortable in their own cultural group in the sense that fewer misunderstandings occur, most staff members voiced their opinion and discussed change related issues with their colleagues across all cultures in their work environment. In this case study a link could be identified between these discussions and organisational culture, which the interviewees perceived as "good" and which generally acknowledges and respects colleagues from all cultures. Organisational culture also has an impact on whether staff members mix with other cultures or whether they prefer to stay in their cultural groups.

Loyalty

The results of the survey do not indicate clear differences across cultures in regard to loyalty to an organisation. However, many interviewees perceived some cultural groups like Chinese and other Asian groups as more loyal to the organisation during the change at EDU

because they were perceived as "more quiet", "did not participate as much" and they "just go on with their job and do not complain". Whether this observed behaviour can be related to loyalty could not be explored further because most findings are based on observations and assessments of others. Therefore, no clear finding can be reported on an impact of culture on loyalty to an organisation during change.

Neglect

Voicing a negative opinion amongst colleagues was named as the main form of neglect by many interviewees from different cultures who perceived this behaviour as a typical reaction in case people did not agree with the change process. Interestingly, minor differences between various cultures were perceived by the way how negative talking was used in a work environment. While an Indian interviewee, for instance, confirmed negative talking amongst each other he emphasised to save face of the whole group at the same time. In contrast, the NZ and Continental European interviewees confirmed the usage of critical and negative talking without mentioning the impact on the group.

An interesting finding is that the interviewees who named "negative talking" as a typical reaction did not assess this as inappropriate. On the other hand, other colleagues from other cultures perceived this behaviour as "loud" and they emphasised a strong negative influence on others. The English and Australian interviewees perceived themselves as relaxed towards change; they would voice their opinion or leave the organisation if it does not work. Finally, the South East Asian interviewee confirmed the overall impression of staff members from other cultures that people from her culture "would not react strongly" and "accept management decisions".

Individual Profile

The survey indicated that across all examined cultures the majority of staff members do not assess culture as a factor which complicates organisational change.

Another interesting finding of this study is that staff members who lived for many years away from their home country adapted to the New Zealand culture where, in particular, the change in the communication style was mentioned.

These key findings will be discussed fully in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter 2 in the following Discussion chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis

This chapter discusses and analyses the key findings and relates them to the literature presented earlier. The discussion and analysis is based on the research question which aims to explore the perception and response of members of a multicultural working group to communication related to organisational change. For this, also the impact of cultural dimensions on the perception of change communication will be addressed and discussed in this chapter. First, the main findings are discussed within the categories that were used for the survey and interview questions guideline. An overall summary addresses and answers the research question and the two sub-questions at the end of this chapter.

Communication

The key finding in this section provides interesting implications on the general perception of the change communication at EDU and the influence of culture on this perception. It became apparent that culture did not impact the perception of what is important to communicate during change but it had an impact on the way staff members from different cultural groups responded to change related communication.

Shortcomings in the change related communication at EDU were consistently mentioned by the participants independent of their culture, which are also emphasised in the general literature of organisational change. For instance, most participants described a lack of clarity about how the change would be realised in detail and who would be affected by the change. Research stresses the importance of detailed and comprehensive communication which directly addresses the interests of staff. According to Peus, Frey, Gerkhardt, Fischer, and Traut-Mattausch (2009) and Larkin and Larkin (1996) "quality communication", which describes timely, accurate and useful communication during change, is essential to create an environment of fairness where also negative information needs to be included because employees want to know how they are affected through change. "It comes down to open and transparent discussion" one interviewee said in summarising the basics of change related communication. Furthermore, Peus et al. (2009) emphasise that communication which seeks to provide an understanding for a change initiative provides a feeling of control for the participants and reduces the employees' uncertainty. This viewpoint appears to be confirmed by data in the EDU study that shows, independent of the culture, the majority of the survey participants (91.5%) indicated that it is important for their job satisfaction to understand the intent of the restructuring initiatives.

Impact of the uncertainty avoidance dimension

Although culture did not influence people's perception of what is important to communicate during change it had an impact on the way staff members from different cultural groups responded to this communication. Differences were evident in the way people coped emotionally with the change and the way they talked about it.

According to Hofstede (1984) countries with a low uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) have a larger degree of acceptance for change and cope more easily with it compared to countries with a high UAI. Moreover, Harzing and Hofstede (1996) state that uncertainty avoidance increases resistance to change. This appears to be supported in this study by participants of the South East Asian country that according to Hofstede (1984) has a very low UAI. Both interviewees stated that people from their culture accept and adapt to change easily. New Zealand has a higher UAI than this South East Asian country but it is still comparatively low and one interviewee described people from her culture as "easy going" and relaxed when it comes to change which again aligns with Hofstede and Harzing's (1996) observation. Likewise in accordance with Hofstede and Harzing (1996) the UK and Australian interviewee described people from their culture as persons who are relaxed when it comes to change. Another interviewee from Europe with a clear higher UAI compared to New Zealand found that people from her culture have a "high level of initial mistrust". One intense example was mentioned for Japanese staff members who seriously struggled to cope with the change situation because they expected the organisation to look after them. Japan is one of the highest scoring countries with regard to Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance. The following figure 3 illustrates the cultural dimension uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede (2001) for the examples mentioned above.
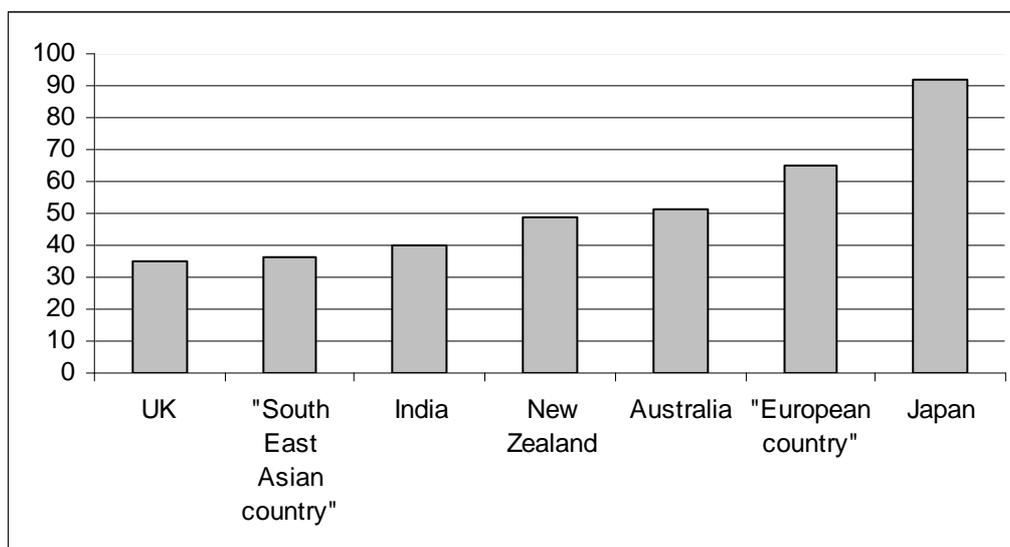
Figure 3: *Dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance*
(on the basis of Hofstede, 2001): UAI by participating countries.

All these findings suggest an impact of the cultural dimension "uncertainty avoidance" for these cultural groups for the way they cope with a change initiative as suggested by Hofstede and Harzing (1996).

Opposing perceptions

A difference between self-perception and perception of others became apparent throughout the interviews in the response of staff members to the change communication. For instance, a New Zealand interviewee described people from her culture as "easy going" and relaxed, but at the same time other staff members from a different cultural group perceived New Zealanders as people who rather complained and talked negatively. Many interviewees contrasted this behaviour with other cultures who voice their opinion in a forthright manner, such as many Europeans, Australians, and Americans. The fact that communication does not necessarily result in understanding across cultures is also emphasised by Adler (2002) when she outlines that cross cultural communication is characterised by misperception, misinterpretation, and misevaluation. The finding in this study supports Adler's argument and illustrates that someone's intentions is not necessary perceived by other cultures in the same way.

Impact of the individualism-collectivism dimension

The interviewees from an individualistic culture often named colleagues with a collectivistic cultural background, like Asian and Indian staff members, as members of a contrasting group in regard to behaviour during the change process and vice versa. Differences were perceived mainly in social behaviour, which is in line with the suggestion of several researchers that individualism and collectivism is the most powerful dimension of cultural variation to describe differences in social behaviour across cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Thomas & Au, 2002). For instance, the South East Asian interviewee observed that New Zealanders are "more private" and "self-centred" compared to people of her culture. Likewise an English interviewee found that many of her Asian colleagues relate differently to people, are more "reticent" and have a tendency to "just to say yes because they want to please". In this study it was not possible to make an in-depth investigation to explore whether this cultural dimension has an influence on the perception of change related communication because of the under-representation of staff members with a collectivistic cultural background. However, it would be very worthwhile to undertake a

further in-depth investigation of the impact of collectivism-individualism on organisational change communication.

Management

The findings in this section revealed a number of differences in perception of communication which can be related to culture, which are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Communication style

The key finding in this section shows that culture was perceived as an influential factor on the way managers communicated during the change initiative and it also had an impact on how staff members themselves perceived this communication. This finding is not surprising because the strong influence of culture on communication for both the sender and recipient of a message is generally acknowledged in research (Adler, 2002; Applegate & Sypher, 1988; Hsu, 2010; Kim, 1988; Miller et al., 2000; Treven et al., 2008).

Differences were observed in communication style where, for example, varying levels of directness between various cultures were experienced. In the literature of cross cultural communication different levels of directness in communication are discussed where this difference between cultures has an impact on the perception of level of directness, and influences the impression of appropriateness (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Lewis, 2005). The definition of a direct and indirect communication style given by Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey's (1988) illustrates a conflict in these different approaches which can lead to possible misunderstandings between cultures. According to Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) messages from cultures with a direct communication style "embody and invoke speakers' true intentions in terms of their wants, needs, and desires in the discourse process" (p. 100). In contrast, an indirect communication style can be described as aiming to "camouflage and conceal speakers' true intentions in terms of their wants, needs, and goals" (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988, p. 100). Consequently, many interviewees in this study perceived the South African Dean's direct communication style for example as "straight forward", "strong" and "overwhelming".

Attitudes towards hierarchy and impact of the power distance dimension

The results show that many interviewees observed differences in the attitude towards hierarchy and diverse forms of "respect" for hierarchy. Hofstede (1984) introduced a scale for

these differences with his cultural dimension power distance and power distance index (PDI). Figure 4 illustrates a comparison of this dimension for some cultures included in this study.
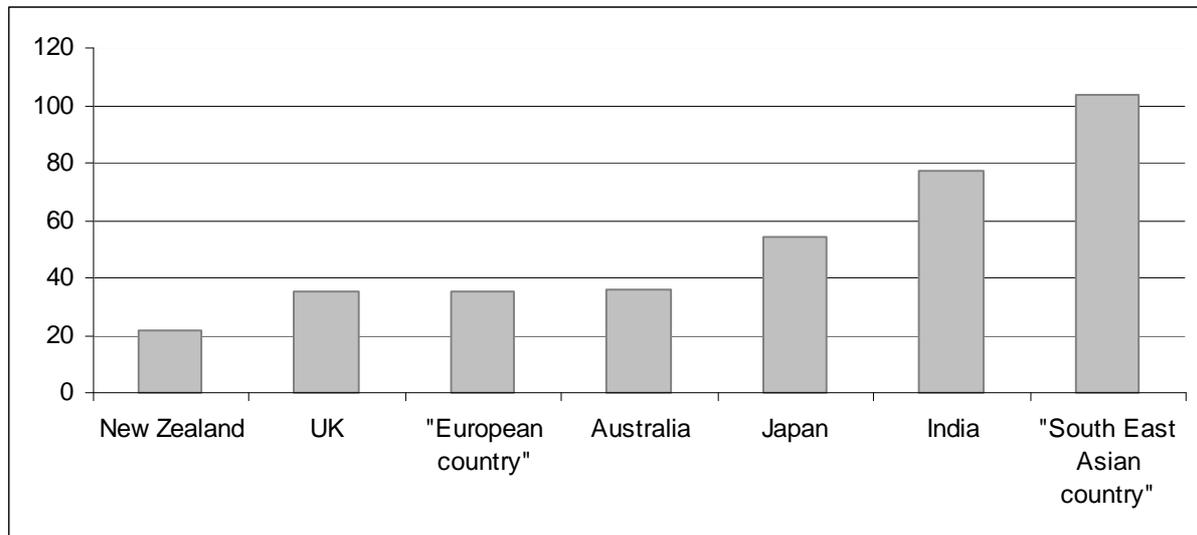
Figure 4: *Power Distance Index for the Participating Countries (on the basis of Hofstede, 2001*

New Zealand scores very low with a PDI of 22 and the home country of the South East Asian interviewees scores very highly with over 100. Hofstede (1984) suggests that cultures with a high PDI accept and expect an unequal distribution of power, and managers are seen as making decisions autocratically and paternalistically. In contrast, cultures with a low PDI like New Zealand see management as making decisions after consulting with subordinates. Consequently, the positive assessment of "a healthy disrespect for hierarchy" from a New Zealand interviewee or as being "more open" from an Indian interviewee and the more critical assessment from a South East Asian interviewee who finds "no respect for hierarchy" in New Zealand is in line with Hofstede's suggestion in regard to differences in power distance across cultures. Likewise many interviewees described staff members from Asia as "a lot more uncritical of authority". These contrasting expectations on the attitude towards hierarchy suggest an impact of the cultural dimension power distance on individuals as proposed by Hofstede (1984). On the other hand the complexity of power distance existing within one country became apparent when a New Zealand interviewee outlined the "healthy disrespect to hierarchy" on the one hand but on the other hand "at the same time Kiwis can also be very subservient in certain context". This matches the observation of another New Zealand interviewee who described her manager as a person who would not question any higher management decisions because of her respect for hierarchy. Therefore, although

cultural dimensions have an impact on an individual's attitude, a variety of facets of a cultural dimension exist and a clear line cannot be drawn (Raz, 2009).

Stereotyping and other factors

Some interviewees expressed the view that staff members will have a change of perception when they face managers or colleagues from other cultures which is based on stereotyping nations. One example referred to by the interviewees was the South African Dean, generally perceived as a leader with a strong management style that was related to the South African culture. But throughout the interviews many participants also emphasised other potential influences on his management style like his strong business and management background but also his military experience. Another example is that it was noticeable during the interviews that often English managers were described as having a "colonial" management style when their style was criticised by staff members. This stereotypical approach that all members of one nation will behave in a predictable way based on nationality can lead to dangerous mistakes (Leung et al., 2005). Furthermore, the problem of stereotyping is that people maintain it even if they experience contradictory situations (Adler, 2002). Interestingly, the interviewees who brought up this topic were aware of this danger and emphasised that also other factors influence someone's management style. For example, many interviewees stated that additional factors like gender and specific communication topics like sports influence a communication style and whether someone feels included or excluded during a conversation.

Finally, it was also observed that the duration of employment in an organisation influences openness to change. For instance, middle aged or older staff members, who have been in the organisation for a long time, were perceived as employees who had "a negative voice" and caused "frustration" with their behaviour. The assumption was that the longer someone is in the organisation the more this employee rejects organisational change.

General observations from the survey results

The survey results suggest that the overall expectation of managers who guide through the change process and who provide staff with change related information is viewed similarly across the examined cultures. Across all cultures the majority of staff members indicated that their primary leader is the direct manager which is the Head of Department or line manager. However, no main differences between the cultures could be identified in terms of who should provide change related information. The findings illustrate that this information was

expected from all three hierarchical levels, the CEO, the Dean and the Head of Department. This is reflected by the organisational literature (Cheney et al., 2011; E. Jones et al., 2004; Peus et al., 2009) where often a cascading approach to communication from higher management over middle to frontline management is recommended. This involvement of dialogue on all levels decreases the pure dissemination of information and constructively integrates all participants (E. Jones et al., 2004; Peus et al., 2009).

Moreover, the findings of this study illustrate a consensus across the examined cultures about what type of information is important during organisational change. The overall vision as well as information about how the change will have an impact on staff members personally, accompanied by clear instructions about the change initiatives, are valued as the most important information by the participants of this study. The majority of researchers recommend a careful usage of mission and vision statements whereas a clear formulation of a vision and the strategic intention for a major change can support the readiness for change (Applebaum, St-Pierre, & Glavas, 1998; Barrett, 2002; Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2005; Peus et al., 2009; Ströh & Jaatinen, 2001). Others, like Larkin and Larkin (1996), for instance, hold the opinion that only facts should be transmitted and argue that employees prefer actions rather than values. However, the prevailing view is that communication should build up trust towards management (Elving, 2005; Long & Spurlock, 2008; Peus et al., 2009) and reduce uncertainty to increase control over personal circumstances (Elving, 2005; Goodman & Truss, 2004; Nelissen & Selm, 2008). In this study the participants across all cultures considered both types of information to be of similar value in order to create trust, as well as an the understanding of a new vision for EDU and how the change is going to be realised in practice. During the interviews it was often mentioned that staff members expected an "honest" and transparent conversation which would also include negative information, in accordance with Peus et al. (2009) who stressed the importance of quality communication during change to create an environment of fairness, where also negative information needs to be included. This is supported by the investigation of Larkin and Larkin (1996) as employees want to know how they are affected through change.

Many scholars criticise that research in leadership and management practice has been undertaken mainly from a Western perspective (Jackson, 2011; Ötztürk & Wheatley, 2000; Rees & Hassard, 2010; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1994). Therefore, the consensus across the examined cultures in this study, which includes Western and Eastern cultures, regarding what information is important, who is the primary leader, and who should provide change related information is an interesting observation. Further, a general agreement exists

among scholars that leadership style and practice is cultural dependent, and thus differs across cultures (Collard, 2007; Connerley & Pedersen, 2005; Hannay, 2009; Jackson, 2011; Ochieng & Price, 2009; Prabhakar, 2005; Thomas & Au, 2002; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1994). Most researchers (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005; Thomas, 2008; Zander & Butler, 2010) emphasise the need for a flexible and adaptive style depending on the context and the cultural composition. Because the management and leadership style itself was not raised as an issue by the interviewees it appears that in this case the leadership style experienced by the participants was perceived as appropriate across the investigated cultures. Differences were mainly perceived in the communication style and the attitude towards hierarchy as discussed above.

Opposing perceptions

An interesting outcome noted in the findings of this section of the study, which is similar to the finding in the communication section, is that people with different cultural backgrounds and work experience in their home country have different perceptions of other people's communication style. For instance, an interviewee from South East Asia critically perceived New Zealand managers' communication style from managers as very direct, in particular when people demand something. On the other hand, a South American interviewee positively assessed this style of communication as "very honest" compared to the communication style in her home country. Likewise managers with a direct communication style like the South African Dean and a European HoD were perceived as "very straight forward", "overwhelming", and "strong" with a "strong leadership" by interviewees who were not exposed to this level of directness in their home country. Therefore, an interesting finding is that the perception and assessment of directness also depends on one's own cultural background and experiences.

Intercultural Communication Competence

The notable finding in this section is that although intercultural communication competence was generally acknowledged by all staff members across the examined cultures as important for a manager of a multicultural working group, many interviewees emphasised other characteristics that are independent of culture like interpersonal skills as equally important.

The fact that many interviewees found either a positive example of a manager, who they perceived as a person with a good intercultural competence, or a negative example (see

pp. 63 in chapter 4), where a lack of this competency during change was observed, illustrates the importance of the cultural component of this competency for management as suggested by many scholars (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Connerley & Pedersen, 2005; Irving, 2010; Liu & Lee, 2008; Ochieng & Price, 2009). Furthermore, for most interviewees cultural awareness and sensitivity towards other cultures is important which is in line with the literature (Arasaratnam, 2006; Connerley & Pedersen, 2005). Moreover, the general agreement among the interviewees (see p. 63 in chapter 4) that knowledge about a country, the recognition of the knowledge of cultural complexity, and language are important supporters for an effective leadership in a cross cultural context is in line with research (e.g. Connerley & Pedersen, 2005).

The interviewees were offered a definition of intercultural communication competence (ICC) provided by Wiseman (2002), which led to a discussion of what is important for a person with this characteristic. Although many interviewees agreed that intercultural communication competence is important as discussed above, this competence for leaders managing cultural diversity was not thought to be the major characteristic of this competence by the interviewees (see p. 62 in chapter 4). This observation matches Joshi and Lazarova's (2005) findings, where team members also did not value the management of cultural diversity as highly as leadership and management did. Instead, most interviewees in the present study emphasised that interpersonal competence, which encompasses sensibility towards others, is as important, or more important than ICC.

The idea of a close relationship between intercultural and interpersonal communication competence matches the suggestion of Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) who have provided a framework of ICC which is based on interpersonal communication competence. They showed in their study that variables that contribute to interpersonal communication competence contribute to ICC as well. The finding of the present study EDU supports the close relationship between interpersonal and intercultural competence as suggested by Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005), as it is noticeable that this link was mentioned by interviewees across different cultures. Therefore, this finding suggests that Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) model should be further investigated in order to provide a conceptualisation of ICC that is valid across cultures.

Finally, another finding in the context of ICC is that many interviewees pointed out (see pp. 63 in chapter 4) that this characteristic is a mutual competence, which is not only important for managers and leaders but also for staff members. It is important because it facilitates an organisational environment of cultural awareness and sensitivity which creates

an atmosphere of regard and respect towards others. This finding is in line with the literature where intercultural communication skills are emphasised as an important factor for positive team outcomes and team cohesiveness (e.g. Arasaratnam, 2009; Cheney et al., 2011; Liu & Lee, 2008; Lloyd & Härtel, 2010; Matveev, 2004; Ochieng & Price, 2009; Zander & Butler, 2010). Moreover, it illustrates the influence of this characteristic on organisational culture.

Participation

As shown in chapter 4 the results of the survey clearly indicate that across all cultures the vast majority (98.3%) prefer to have an input on decisions that affect their job. On the other hand people's actual participation in the consultation opportunities was much less (54%) and also only 59% of staff members discussed change related issues with their managers. It became apparent during the interviews that those staff members who were consulted back in their home country during organisational change have a different understanding about what participation involves compared to those who were not consulted. The latter group mainly expected a provision of full and clear information about the change purpose and how this would affect their individual work situation. This provision of detailed and comprehensive information which addresses the needs of staff during change is emphasised in the literature (Larkin & Larkin, 1996; Peus et al., 2009) as one main part of communication during organisational change as already discussed in the communication section above.

However, the interviewees who expected consultation from management expected a more active role and stressed the importance of an "honest" way of communication and a consultation process in which staff members can "actively" place feedback. The role of active participation of employees in the communication process during organisational change is emphasised in the organisational change literature and by practitioners as a critical element of creating openness for change (Long & Spurlock, 2008; Peus et al., 2009), increasing motivation and finally inducing commitment to change (Cheney et al., 2011; Proctor & Doukakis, 2003).

Impact of the power distance dimension on participation

Hofstede (1984) suggested the cultural dimension power distance has an impact on employees' participation which includes placing critical feedback to management. According to him countries with a high PDI like India are more reluctant to express disagreement with their managers compared to countries with a low PDI like many Western countries. Strong organisational hierarchies exist in countries with a high power distance, and participation of

staff members in management decisions and placing feedback is usually not requested by management (Hofstede, 1984). This leads to the conclusion that employees do not expect to be consulted, which the comments of the South East Asian and Indian interviewees confirmed in this study. In particular, both South East Asian interviewees who come from a country with a very high PDI (over 100) did not expect any active participation in the change process and argued they adapt easily to change. Further, many interviewees perceived that their Asian and Indian colleagues (Asian countries and India score high on PDI) are not so participative with regard to having input on change related issues. Therefore, Hofstede's (1984) suggestion appears to be confirmed for this case.

However, the in-depth interviews of the Indian staff members illustrated that the offer of consultation at EDU led to an expectation of active participation for these employees which is in contrast to their high PDI. Both Indian interviewees explained that Indian staff members want to voice their opinion, but the way of giving feedback differs from the New Zealand style as it is not "very straightforward". This matches the observation of colleagues from other cultures who also perceived their Indian colleagues as quieter and less participative as mentioned above. Nevertheless, the Indian participants indicated that they question management decisions, and both interviewees stated that they expected to be actively involved during the change process. This observation matches Rees and Hassard's (2010) finding where the researchers found that in India encouraging employees to participate was supportive to provide a successful change implementation despite the fact that organisations usually operate with a strong hierarchical structure. Therefore, it appears that not only culture but the practice or offer of consultation is also a factor which influences the expectation of staff members to be actively consulted. This is in line with the suggestion made by Michalak (2010) that the relationship between organisational culture and national culture for effective management of organisational change needs to be investigated.

The difference of the findings of the present EDU study in regard to the implied impact of the cultural dimension "power distance" on participation during organisational change are in line with other studies (e.g. Martinsons & Hempel, 2001; Savolainen, 2007). The researchers applied Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimension of power distance to discuss their findings and some confirm Hofstede's (1984) suggestion while others do not. For instance, Martinsons' and Hempel's (2001) study of change implementation in a global bank in the United States and China found that Chinese staff members participated significantly less compared to staff members in the American branch. The relationship between power distance and participation seems to be confirmed in this study because China has a much

higher PDI of 80 compared to the United States which scores on the lower middle-range with 40 in this dimension. In contrast, Savolainen (2007) found a contradiction of Hofstede's (1984) power distance dimension in the results of her study. She observed that Chinese managers emphasised feedback from their subordinates during a change project, which is in contrast to Hofstede's (1984) examined large power distance in China.

To sum up, the findings of this study only partly confirm Hofstede's (1984) suggested relationship between power distance and an active participation during organisational change. Moreover, it appears that in particular organisational factors play a crucial role which influences whether employees participate regardless of their cultural background.

Other influential factors on participation

Another noticeable finding in this section is that equal numbers of the New Zealand group (38.9%) agreed and disagreed with regard to the statement about whether they feel afraid of disagreeing with their managers. According to Hofstede (1984) people who are from a country with a low PDI feel less afraid of disagreeing with their managers compared to individuals who are from a country with a high PDI. Because New Zealand scores very low on their PDI with 22 this is a surprising result. One possible explanation for this finding is that other factors might have influenced the fact that New Zealanders did not participate so much. This suggestion is in line with recent research that stresses the need to acknowledge the complexity of culture where not only culture but also other factors have an effect on organisational life (Collard, 2007; Erez & Gati, 2004; Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Jackson, 2011; Jacob, 2005; Leung et al., 2005; Rees & Hassard, 2010). In particular the interviews in the voice section provide useful insights for this behaviour of the NZ group. It became apparent that this cultural group has a more reticent way of voicing their opinion where "trust of management" and a feeling of "safety" are important for placing feedback. The survey results illustrate that 63.8% of the staff members were not confident that their suggestions are considered by managers. Also many interviewees reported that the consultation period was perceived as a formal routine where decisions had already been made. Therefore, the NZ group might have been reluctant to participate actively because they did not perceive the organisational environment as trustworthy enough for them to do so.

Small meetings

Another point raised in this section is that most interviewees across all cultures suggested that the communication should have been established in smaller groups such as at

department level to address the affected working groups more effectively and to allow for an opportunity for active feedback. The interesting aspect in this finding with regard to culture is that although some interviewees perceived the experienced communication from management as sufficient and appropriate, they also observed the need for members of other cultural groups to be involved in the communication process in a closer and more personal work environment. The importance of considering cultural perceptions on participation and empowerment is also emphasised in the literature (e.g. Bowen & Inkpen, 2009). An explanation of what participation means for the New Zealand group was explained by two New Zealand interviewees who stated that New Zealanders expect managers to come to them rather than joining in a big meeting where staff goes to management.

This observation confirms the strongly expressed expectation of many staff members that they want their voices to be heard in an honest and active manner as discussed above. This is also confirmed by the organisational change literature where the importance of employee involvement in the communication process is stressed (Johnson et al., 2005). It generates consensus (Applebaum et al., 1998; Proctor & Doukakis, 2003) which aligns them to the organisation's change strategy (Barrett, 2002). Researchers argue that in particular an implemented two-way communication process creates feedback (Barrett, 2002; Goodman & Truss, 2004; Johnson et al., 2005), generates dialogue (Welch & Jackson, 2007), minimises uncertainty and guarantees flexibility (Goodman & Truss, 2004) during a change period. The fact that the majority of EDU staff members (approx. 80%) independent of their cultural background indicated that their direct manager constitutes their primary leader confirms the importance of communication in smaller organisational units. Likewise, Larkin and Larkin (1996) stressed the importance of face-to-face meetings with frontline managers as opposed to large meetings. On the other hand, some researchers like Welch and Jackson (2007), for instance, highlight the necessity for one-way communication from strategic managers because this form of communication is required to mediate messages to the audience in a controlled and unmodified way. The fact that also 18.6% of staff members indicated that the Dean is their primary leader illustrates the important role of direct communication from strategic managers during organisational change as suggested by Welch and Jackson (2007).

In sum, a cascading approach to communication as suggested by some researchers (e.g. E. Jones et al., 2004; Peus et al., 2009), where senior management provides information about strategies and direct supervisors communicate about practical issues which affect staff members in small meetings could satisfy the expectations of all staff members in a multicultural working group independent of their cultural background or personal preferences.

Behavioural response

As outlined in the communication section earlier in this chapter the majority of staff members perceived the communication during EDU's change as not very effective. Moreover, the survey results indicated that for more than half of staff members across all cultures (59.3%) the change initiatives had a negative impact on their motivation level. It also became apparent in the interviews that job satisfaction was lower during the change process. This finding is in line with the literature that organisational change often leads to a higher level of uncertainty which leads to higher stress levels among staff members and, therefore, increases job dissatisfaction decreasing commitment to the organisation (Parlalis, 2011). As explained in chapter 3 the EVLN model (Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect) was applied in this study with the aim of exploring behavioural response to the change communication in relation to low job satisfaction.

Exit

Exit describes an active and destructive response in the EVLN model. It refers to leaving an organisation when job satisfaction is low, but also to thinking of leaving or looking for other work opportunities (Rusbult et al., 1988). The survey and interview results of this study suggest minor differences in the people's attitude toward leaving EDU during the change that may be related to culture. However, many interviewees also related factors for leaving the organisation to personal reasons, or the opportunities someone would have to change jobs.

According to several researchers, individualism and collectivism is the most powerful dimension of cultural variation to describe differences in social behaviour across cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Thomas & Au, 2002). Thomas and Au (2002) assumed, in particular, for individuals from collectivistic cultures with a high power distance that they would consider leaving an organisation as more acceptable compared to people from individualistic cultures because of their tendency to avoid conflict situations.

The findings of the present EDU research do not support a clear relationship between individualism-collectivism and a tendency to leaving or to thinking of leaving an organisation during organisational change. The survey results illustrated that more participants of the NZ and UK group, which are individualistic cultures, were thinking of leaving. Also, a South East Asian interviewee with a collectivistic background observed that Western cultures are "fast moving". Indian staff members who can be referred as being from a collectivistic culture with a high power distance did not show a clear indication with regard to a preference to respond

with exit. Although one Indian interviewee pointed out that Indian people are "a bit more selfish" and they who would "look for another option" if they feel very unsatisfied over a longer period of time, the other Indian employee stated that Indians would "wait to the end" because they want to be seen as "loyal" to the organisation. Moreover, the survey results indicated that none of the three Indian participants were thinking of leaving which again contradicts Thomas and Au's (2001) assumption. However, also Thomas and Au (2002) observed that other contextual factors like legal, political and economic influences a behavioural response of individuals.

Moreover, the fact that some interviewees did not observe differences in this behavioural response, which they would relate to culture and many talked of personal reasons or opportunities someone would have to change jobs as reasons why some would leave EDU indicates no clear trend with regard to culture. Also the observation that other factors like job alternatives, for example, may influence an individual to leave EDU confirm the suggestion of Thomas and Au (2001) when they highlighted the potential mediating role of other situational factors like the quality of alternatives.

In sum, the findings of this study in relation to leaving are not clear enough to conclude that the cultural background of an individual plays a role in influencing to leave or think of leaving an organisation when the jobs satisfaction is low.

Voice

An active discussion with management and colleagues about problems is considered as an active and constructive behaviour in the EVLN model (Rusbult et al., 1988). An interesting result of the present study is that although the survey results did not indicate any culture related variations with regard to whether staff members voiced their opinion with their managers and/or colleagues, the in-depth interviews provided very interesting and valuable findings about differences in the way staff members voiced their opinion that are potentially related to culture.

Differences in the levels of directness and openness in the way participants expressed these opinions were observed in the interviews. For example, the Continental European, UK, and Australian interviewees described themselves as people who voice their opinion "openly" and "clearly". Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) offer a useful definition of "information openness" which describes the disclosure of someone's feelings. The New Zealand interviewees perceived themselves less open than the Continental European, UK, and Australian colleagues and they prefer to voice their opinion in smaller groups rather than in

public. "Information closeness" in contrast to openness refers to the revelation of someone's feelings (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Following this definition, the Indian people might be closer in their provision of information as the Indian interviewees made clear that people from their culture might voice their opinion but not in a "straightforward way" or they remain quiet because they want to be perceived as "loyal to the organisation". Finally, the South East Asian interviewee confirmed the overall impression of interviewees that people from her culture would not react strongly. In particular they would not voice their opinion and therefore, this group can be related to a closer communication style.

As discussed in chapter 2 (p. 15), Gudykunst (1998) and Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) suggest that an individualist often prefers to confront a conflict in a low-context conflict style (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Hence this person will process an open direct communication style to address conflict situations. In contrast, a collectivistic individual often prefers to avoid the conflict with a high-context mode (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Hence this person will use a close and indirect communication style during conflict situations. Likewise Thomas and Au (2002) concluded that culture directly influences the behavioural response of voice where collectivists with a high power distance are less likely to respond through voice compared to individualists. Table 20 below illustrates that the staff members from India and South East Asia who described a more close communication can be related to a collectivistic culture with a high power distance compared to the other interviewees who can be identified as individual cultures with a low power distance.

Table 4: *Power Distance and Individualism-Collectivism :Comparison of the examined cultures with regard to these dimensions*

Country	Individualism (*)	PDI (**)	Description
South East Asia	~25	> 100	Collectivism and very high PDI
India	48	77	Clear collectivistic traits and high PDI
NZ	79	22	Individualistic, very low PDI
Continental Europe 1	~70	35	Individualistic, low PDI
Continental Europe 2	~70	34	Individualistic, low PDI
UK	89	35	Highly Individualistic, low PDI
Australia	90	36	Highly Individualistic, low PDI

(*) The dimension of individualism-collectivism (on the basis of Hofstede, 2001)
(**) The dimension of power distance index (on the basis of Hofstede, 2001)

The findings of this study mainly confirm the suggestions made by Gudykunst (1998), Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) that collectivistic individuals tend to have

a preference to a more close and indirect communication style compared to individualistic people.

However, interestingly the New Zealand staff members voice their opinions more openly and directly compared to their collectivistic colleagues which confirms Gudykunst's (1998), Ting-Toomey and Oetzel's (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) observation. This matches also Thomas and Au's (2002) study where the researchers found that people in Hong Kong (collectivistic with a high PDI) are more tentative in responding with voice compared to people New Zealand when the job satisfaction is low. But it is noticeable that the findings for the New Zealand group indicate members of this group do not voice their opinion as openly and directly as other comparable countries with regard to their score of individualism and power distance. The New Zealand interviewees described a more reserved way of voicing their opinion where trust towards management and a feeling of "safety" are important factors for placing feedback. This leads to the suggestion that the cultural dimensions of individualism and power distance are not the only contributors to an open or close communication style.

Voice and organisational culture

Another very interesting finding is that organisational culture appears to have an impact whether staff members mix with other cultures or whether they prefer to stay in their cultural groups when talking about change related issues with their colleagues. In detail, the findings of this study reveal that staff members voiced their opinion and discussed change-related issues with colleagues in their work environment if the organisational culture was perceived as "good" in their departments or working groups in the sense that generally all colleagues are respected and acknowledged. For instance, one interviewee stated that organisational culture "promotes this kind of conversation" and, therefore acts as a facilitator of feedback. In contrast, if the group culture was perceived as not so positive the preference of some staff members to stay in their cultural groups was observed. For example, two interviewees who clearly perceived the organisational culture in their department as not so positive observed that some cultures tend to group together. However, one of these two also stated that, first women and men tend to separate, and second, within these male or female groups, cultural groups "stick together".

This finding that organisational culture can positively influence whether members of a multicultural working group have discussions together is particularly interesting because many interviewees generally acknowledged that they feel more comfortable in their own

cultural group in the sense that fewer misunderstandings occur. This is understandable because cross-cultural communication can cause misunderstandings and misperceptions as people from different countries assess and interpret situations differently (Adler, 2002). Nevertheless, this cultural related hurdle does not seem to have an impact on whether colleagues across cultures talk about sensitive issues where organisational culture supports an inviting communication environment. This matches the emphasis of many interviewees that a mutual intercultural communication competence facilitates an organisational environment of cultural awareness and sensitivity where people are respected which in turn positively influence organisational culture. As Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) argue even an assertive way of voicing an opinion can be constructive when generally others are invited to voice their opinion.

Furthermore, this observed relationship between organisational culture and voicing an opinion confirms Jackson's (2011), Fagenson-Eland et al.'s (2004) and Jacob's (2005) strong emphasis on an interplay and mutual influence between national culture and organisational culture. Fagenson et al. (2004) used Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a framework to compare organisational development and change procedures, finding not only that national culture but also organisational culture may have an influence on organisational change interventions. Moreover, they expanded this view and emphasised the need to explore other concurrent factors beyond national culture like economics, politics and organisational culture for example in order to investigate their influence on organisational development and change interventions. This suggestion is in line with recent scholars who highlight the importance of considering other external influential factors on the concept of culture like social, economic, and political variables (Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Jackson, 2011; Leung et al., 2005; Rees & Hassard, 2010; Treven et al., 2008).

Loyalty

Loyalty describes an inactive but positive attitude of waiting and hoping for improvement. The findings of this study showed that some Asian cultures, in particular, the Chinese and Japanese staff members, were perceived by non-Asian interviewees as more loyal to the organisation during the change at EDU. This assessment was based on the fact that these cultural groups were observed as "fairly quiet" and they "did not participate as much", they "just go on with their job and do not complain", they "observe" and they are "sitting and waiting without being very vocal". Likewise, one interviewee observed that her Japanese colleagues would not leave EDU because of their sense of loyalty to it.

Whether these observations can be related to loyalty could not be explored further because they are based on individuals from other cultural groups mainly. Although one South East Asian interviewee also stated that people from her cultural group tend to trust and "seem to accept always" and "do not question", it was not clear that this is mainly related to loyalty. For instance, some interviewees also recognised loyal behaviour among Pacific peoples, but they emphasised at the same time that this might not be related to trust into the organisation only but also to their high respect for authority.

To sum up, the findings of this study in relation to loyalty show that the motivation for demonstrating loyalty would need a further in-depth investigation to provide a better understanding for this behavioural response particularly in a cross-cultural context where understandings of loyalty might differ. Furthermore, as Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) argue loyalty can be perceived as a passive and destructive behaviour in particular from an individualistic perspective because it can be interpreted as a wait-and-see strategy. For this reason it would be necessary to receive sufficient views from Asian staff members to further investigate whether their response can be related to loyalty as no clear finding can be reported in this case.

Neglect

Neglect describes a passive and destructive response which results in a reduced effort, chronic lateness or an increased error rate for example (Rusbult et al., 1988). In the present study voicing a negative opinion amongst colleagues was named as a form of neglect by many interviewees from different cultures as a typical reaction in case people did not agree with the change process. The fact that the findings of voice and neglect overlap here is not surprising. According to Hsiung and Lin (2009) a consensus among recent researchers exists that voice is more complex and can not simply be placed in the constructive and active quadrant of the EVLN-model. Instead the category of voice should be clustered in two forms, the considerate voice as a constructive form of problem solving, and the aggressive voice which is less constructive and lies in the middle of the constructive and destructive scale (Hsiung & Lin, 2009). Likewise, Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) emphasise that voice has two different layers. Firstly, voice can be expressed assertively where someone voices his needs openly but allows room for others to express their feelings. Secondly an aggressive voice expresses the individual's own needs, but at the expense of ignoring other emotions (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). The fact that negative talking was named in the EDU case study as a form of destructive response confirms the need for this separation. Many EDU

interviewees observed that negative talking has a strong influence on other staff members which can lead to frustration and demotivation.

However, also the characteristic of negative talking appears to vary across cultures. While an Indian interviewee, for instance, confirmed negative talking amongst each other he emphasised at the same time the need to save face for the whole group and, therefore, they would not voice their opinion in a "straight forward" way. The concept of "face" is addressed by Ting-Toomey's (see Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001) face-negotiation theory as discussed in chapter 2 (p. 18), which suggests that collectivists like Indian cultures tend to be more other or mutual face-oriented in contrast to individualistic cultures. To conclude, although the Indian interviewees confirmed negative talking amongst themselves they would not do this in an open way in order to save face for the group. In contrast, it appears to be a natural response for the individualists to voice their opinion in a direct and open style which was already discussed in the voice section above.

Opposing perceptions

An interesting finding which came up in this section but also in the 'voice' section is that it became apparent that opposing perceptions exist between the cultural groups about someone's communication style. For instance, voicing an opinion as well as "negative talking" was not assessed as inappropriate by the interviewees who named these responses as typical for their cultural group. For example, the English and Australian interviewee who can be thought of as belonging to an individualistic culture perceived themselves as "relaxed" towards change; they would voice their opinion or leave the organisation if it does not work. On the other hand, colleagues with a collectivistic background like the South East Asian interviewees perceived colleagues who voiced their opinion as "loud", "very vocal" and people who "complain a lot". They emphasised a strong negative influence on others. This finding is confirmed by Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) who observed that a collectivistic individual might perceive an individualistic voice style as an aggressive and destructive style. The authors argue that the interpretations and meaning which are aligned to the four behavioural responses of the EVLN model reflect an individualistic Western point of view. However, as Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) propose, both individualistic and collectivistic groups might perceive themselves as acting in an active and constructive manner which confirms the observations in this study.

Usefulness of the EVLN framework

Researchers who applied the EVLN model generally acknowledge the usefulness of this framework which helps to build up theories (Farrell, 1983; Hsiung & Lin, 2009; Thomas & Au, 2002). This usefulness is somewhat supported by this study. The framework provided by the EVLN model helped to conceptualise several forms of behavioural response. Nevertheless, a more in-depth investigation about the different assessments of active/passive and constructive/destructive in various cultures as suggested by Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) might provide a more comprehensive understanding for possible differences in the behavioural response across cultures particularly in a cross cultural context.

Furthermore, it is also important to note that not only the voice response has two different characteristics as discussed above. According to Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) all four responses in the EVLN model can have two opposing characteristics depending on how these reactions are processed. For instance, the neglect style can refer to a passive reaction where someone does not constructively work towards a common goal (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). On the other hand, someone can act in a more active manner and can strategically neglect a positive outcome in a conflict situation (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Applied to a change situation, someone can neglect passively and simply not support the change efforts or someone can neglect actively and strategically undermine any change strategies. For exit and loyalty, different specifications are possible as Ting-Toomey and Oetzel argue (2001). For instance, for someone who is emotionally overwhelmed with a conflict situation it might be better and more constructive to leave an organisation in order to de-escalate a conflict situation. Alternatively, a loyal attitude can be motivated by applying an obliging strategy which is more active in contrast to the wait-and-see strategy.

Thomas and Au (2002) found that culture might have a more indirect effect on behavioural response. This possibility also resonates with the findings in this study because it appeared that other factors also influence the response particularly in the responses to loyalty and exit such as the availability of other job opportunities. Moreover, the responses to dissatisfaction are diverse and complex (Farrell, 1983), an issue that became apparent in the loyalty section of the EDU study when it turned out that loyalty needs to be investigated more fully in order to obtain a clearer understanding of an individual's motivation of quiet and non-responsive behaviour.

Individual Profile

Across all cultures the majority of staff members do not view culture as a factor, which complicates a change implementation. A clear majority (71.2%) stated that it would not be easier to implement change in monocultural compared to multicultural working groups. Likewise, although different perceptions and views between various cultures were often perceived by staff members, national culture was not thought to be an additional barrier during a change implementation throughout the interviews. This finding matches a similar observation in Joshi and Lazarova's (2005) research where the importance of managing cultural diversity was regarded as not important by team members, but important by management and leadership. This perception from a staff perspective contradicts the evaluation of many researchers (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Michalak, 2010; Treven et al., 2008) who emphasise the need to investigate the role of culture as an additional influential component on the outcomes of organisational change.

The assumption that culture describes an additional factor on change outcomes is based on implementing change in a monocultural team environment, where managers from one country implement organisational change in another country. In a multicultural environment processes of cultural adaptation together with awareness of cultural differences might soften potential problems in regard to culture. For instance, in the present study EDU it became apparent that the amount of time someone has been away from his or her home country influences the degree to which individuals have adapted to their host country. Some participants pointed out that they have adapted their direct communication style to a more indirect style. Two interviewees stated that they voice their opinion much more compared to their home country because they feel encouraged to do so and, therefore, adapted their behaviour in terms of voicing an opinion towards the local host culture.

This adaptation to the local host culture over time as described by the interviewees in this study are a form of acculturation (Hsu, 2010). An important factor for the willingness to loosen someone's cultural identity is the extent an individual identifies herself as being a member of her national culture (Leung et al., 2005). If culture is viewed as an important factor in one's self-concept then culture will have a strong influence on this person's beliefs as Leung et al. (2005) argue. This is demonstrated by the example of an Indian interviewee who emphasised several times during the interview that he does not want to "read too much [ethnic] culture" into organisational life. He identified not so much with his national culture but aimed to view things from a professional and organisational perspective rather than a cultural perspective. Leung et al. (2005) argue this form of "social identification" describes

one of several possible moderators or amplifiers of cultural impacts in a work environment and illustrates one more time the complexity of culture.

In sum, the findings in this section illustrate that culture is not static but dynamic and is subject to change itself as suggested by many recent researchers (Collard, 2007; Erez & Gati, 2004; Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Jackson, 2011; Jacob, 2005; Leung et al., 2005; Craig L. Pearce & Osmond, 1999). That culture underlies change itself, in particular, when one culture comes into contact with other cultures is not often addressed in research as Erez and Gati (2004) criticize. Because a multicultural working environment is exposed to several environmental factors like a host country's social context and the fact that people from various cultures work together, it seems to be apparent that culture cannot be viewed as an isolated factor for someone's perception and behavioural response. Moreover, if other factors like the organisational culture positively influence a working environment, national culture becomes less important as a critical factor with regard to a change implementation. Therefore, other factors like organisational and external influences might have a stronger impact on a change implementation than national culture in a multicultural work environment.

The Research Question and Sub-Questions - Overall Discussion and Summary

This research aimed to answer the following question: How do members of a multicultural working group perceive and respond to communication relating to organisational change?

It was guided by the two subquestions:

- What is the impact of culturally dependent dimensions like *uncertainty avoidance*, *power distance*, and *future orientation* on the perception of change communication?
- Are there culture based differences in the type of behavioural response (active, passive, constructive, destructive)?

Because the subquestions address perception and response separately, the discussion of the main question will be split accordingly.

How do members of a multicultural working group perceive communication relating to organisational change?

The findings of this study clearly indicate that ethnic culture has an impact on the perception of change related communication. In particular, the interviewees emphasised cultural differences in the communication style for the staff involved as well as for

management and leadership during the change implementation. The differences were found in regard to the levels of directness which clearly vary between cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hall, 1989; Treven et al., 2008). Further, different attitudes towards hierarchy were perceived which again differs significantly between cultures as suggested by Hofstede (1984).

Another interesting indicator about culture based differences in the perception of change related communication is the strong difference between self-perception and perception of others, and also opposing perceptions between staff members from different cultural groups in regard to someone's communication style. For instance, the direct communication style of a leader was perceived as "very strong" by many participants. It was critically assessed as "overwhelming", but also perceived as the positive trait of "strong leadership" which was considered as particularly supportive in the context of change. A consequence of these contradictory perceptions became particularly apparent when interviewees explained that the direct and "loud" communication style from some cultures which included "negative talking" about change, created a negative influence on other colleagues. Therefore, although the intention of this group was not to influence other colleagues negatively but to voice their opinion "straight forwardly" it had a negative impact on other cultural groups.

A further outcome of this study is that intercultural communication competence of a leader, who is managing culturally diverse staff members, was thought important but not overemphasised by the participants of this study. Instead, other culturally independent characteristics were assessed as similarly important or more important, such as interpersonal communication competence, in particular in the context of organisational change. Further, intercultural communication competence was assessed as a characteristic that is important for all members of a multicultural team including both subordinates and management for the creation of an overall positive working environment.

Stereotyping of other nations was also raised as a danger in a multicultural environment because it can influence someone's perception of a person from another culture. This was noticeable, when the management style of some English managers was described as "colonial", for example.

Further, the findings of this study suggest that no culture based differences in the perception of the communication process and the perception of what is important change related information exist. More precisely, a general agreement exists among the EDU participants regardless of culture that it is important for employees to understand the change purpose in order to support it. Therefore, employees want to be fully and clearly informed about the change purpose, and how this affects their individual work situation. Also, a clear

vision as well as clear instructions about the change initiatives is valued as important information by the participants. Moreover, the shortcomings in communication noted by the participants during the change process at EDU are also discussed in the general literature of organisational change.

Finally, the findings did not indicate any culture based differences when considering the direct manager as the primary leader during organisational change. This finding is in line with the suggestion of many interviewees that smaller meetings are more efficient for discussing change related issues and to allow for an opportunity to place feedback.

What is the impact of culturally dependent dimensions like uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and future orientation on the perception of change communication?

The findings of this study show that several cultural dimensions are partly relevant in the context of organisational change as suggested by Harzing and Hofstede (1996). For instance, the influence of *uncertainty avoidance* on the general acceptance of change as proposed by Harzing and Hofstede (1996) are supported by the results of this study. Whereas members from countries like the South East Asian country which has a very low UAI (see Hofstede, 1984) stated that people from their culture accept and adapt to change easily, Japanese staff members appeared to struggle to cope with the change situation. Japan is one of the countries with the highest UAI (Hofstede, 1984).

The impact of the cultural dimension *power distance* on employee participation during change was only partly confirmed. The reservation of the South East Asian interviewees about placing feedback can be explained by their culture's high power distance. However, the influence of this cultural dimension was less apparent for the Indian group, which has a high power distance index, and even contradicted the low power distance of the New Zealand group in this study. The in-depth interviews with the Indian participants provided an indication that Indian staff members participate in changes but not as "straight forwardly" as compared to colleagues from other cultures. Therefore, it appears that for the Indian group the implications of power distance might be more complex than suggested by Hofstede (1984). Further, for the New Zealand group it became apparent throughout the interviews that they have a more reserved way of voicing their opinion, and need to trust management and have a feeling of "safety" in order to feel comfortable about it.

The dimension of GLOBE'S future orientation was not further investigated because the cultures in this study cluster in the mid-score range of this dimension and no large

differences between these cultural groups occurred in regard to this cultural dimension in the survey results as discussed in chapter 4 (p. 80).

The influence of retained cultural views and behaviour, as reported by the interviewees, indicates the importance of cultural dimensions which confirms that cultural values are manifested early in an individual's life and are deeply imprinted as suggested by Hofstede (1984). However, the fact that participants adapted partly to the local culture indicates that other factors also play a crucial role in an individual's perception. For instance, a good organisational culture positively influences the voicing of opinion between members of a multicultural working group. Additionally, other factors like age, gender, and reference to subjects such as sports directly influence a communication style. For example, participants of this study found that using sports topics in communication can lead to a feeling of exclusion by groups who are not interested in this topic. These may include many women or those from cultural groups where sport is not important. The overall finding that cultural dimensions and their implications are not the only influential factors on an individual's perception and behaviour in the context of change are confirmed by other cross-cultural studies and their results. For instance, Aldulaimi and Sailan (2012), and Martinsons and Hempel (2001) confirm the implications of a cultural dimension, whereas Fagenson-Eland, Ensher, an Burke (2004), and Savolainen (2007) partly confirm or even contradict them (e.g. Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Savolainen, 2007).

In sum, it can be concluded that although cultural dimensions are influential factors on people's perception and behavioural response to change they are multifaceted and cannot be clearly separated from other factors as Raz (2009) suggests. It seems to be appropriate to apply more complex models like the multilayered model of Erez and Gati (2004). This model uses many factors beyond national culture and accentuates their mutual interplay to address the dynamic characteristic of culture. In particular in a multicultural context the processes of adaptation and aggregation seem to play a major role and to invalidate the assumption of cultural stability.

How do members of a multicultural working group respond to communication relating to organisational change?

Culture based variations were noted in responses to the question of whether staff members felt generally comfortable during a change situation. For instance, the South East Asian interviewees stated that they accept and adapt to change easily and New Zealand interviewees described themselves as relaxed when it comes to change. In contrast Japanese

staff members' were observed by other colleagues to struggle to cope with the change initiatives.

The findings indicate another difference in the way people respond to participation during organisational change that can be only partly related to culture. Although across cultures the vast majority indicated that they want to participate, the idea of what participation consists of varies. Interviewees, who were not used to being consulted and usually came from a country with strong organisational hierarchies, mainly perceived participation as getting provision of full and clear information. In contrast, interviewees, who were used to employee consultation, expected an active involvement including placing feedback that will be taken into account by management. However, the Indian interviewees who were not necessarily involved in employee consultation back in India, expected the opportunity to participate at EDU as the organisational structure in general supports active participation. This indicates that participation might not depend predominantly on culture but also on organisational culture that supports an active participation by employees as observed by other studies, e.g. Rees and Hassard (2010).

Are there culture based differences in the type of behavioural response (active, passive, constructive, destructive)?

To answer this subquestion the EVLN model (Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect) was applied with the aim of exploring behavioural response to the change communication in the case of a low job satisfaction.

Differences in the behavioural response to change related communication which can be related to culture were mainly perceived in the way people voiced their opinion (Voice). These differences address variations of directness and openness that clearly differ across cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). For example, the interviewees coming from a collectivistic culture with a how high power distance tend to be less open and direct in their communication style compared to the other interviewees with an individualistic cultural background and low power distance, like the English, Australian, and New Zealand participants. However, the findings also illustrate for the New Zealand group that additional factors like a trustful organisational environment are necessary to motivate them to voice their opinion.

The findings of this study do not allow clear conclusions to be drawn in regard to cultural differences relating to the question of whether someone tends to leave or thinks of leaving the organisation during change (Exit). Many interviewees observed personal reasons

or the existence of opportunities to change job as more important reasons for this response. Likewise no conclusions can be drawn about whether some cultural groups tend to respond with more loyalty to the organisation as compared to other cultures (Loyalty). Although some interviewees perceived some Asian groups in particular as more loyal, it could not be further investigated whether this can be related to loyalty or another motivation because not enough Asian staff members participated in the interviews.

Finally, the EDU study findings suggest that differences occur between cultures in regard to people's perception of a response to be active or passive and constructive or destructive. For instance, one cultural group described their reaction of voicing an opinion as "straight forward" and they perceived this behaviour as an appropriate, active and constructive response as suggested by Rusbult et al. (1988). In contrast, other cultural groups perceived this "negative talking" about the change initiatives as inappropriate and destructive because of its strong negative influence on others. Voicing a negative opinion amongst colleagues was the only form of neglect named by the interviewees in this study (Neglect). This culture based difference in the assessment of a behavioural response is also confirmed by Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001). For this reason it would be interesting to conduct a further investigation about what is perceived as active/passive and constructive/destructive in various cultures to allow for further statements.

The findings in this study suggest an impact of culture on the perception and response to change related communication. However, they also illustrate that other influences and factors might have an influence on this perception and response particularly in a multicultural context. The next chapter will draw conclusions in relation to the findings of this study, address limitations of it, and provide an outline for further research in this area.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This final chapter consists of three parts. The first part briefly summarises key issues from the discussion chapter and provides an overall conclusion. The second part discusses limitations of this research project, followed by suggestions for future research.

Summary

This research project, a case study within the organisational EDU, explored possible variations among members of a multicultural working group in regard to their perception and response to organisational change related communication. A particular focus of interest was the possibility that such variations may be related to culture.

The findings of this study allow the conclusion that ethnic culture has an impact particularly on people's perception of managers' and staff members' communication style. Variations related to levels of directness and openness that can be perceived differently by individuals with different cultural backgrounds. For instance a direct management communication style used during change may be perceived as either overwhelming or supportive in the context of organisational change, depending on the cultural background of the receiver. Also different attitudes towards hierarchy were perceived that differ between cultures.

Furthermore, a difference in perception of open and direct communication style can lead to a different perception of someone's behaviour with regard of its appropriateness. Behavioural differences were mainly perceived in the way staff members voiced their opinion. For instance, the findings showed that voicing a critical opinion straight forwardly was seen as an appropriate, active, and constructive response by staff members who responded this way during the change. In contrast, members of cultural groups with an indirect communication style perceived this form of communication as negative talking about the change initiatives and as inappropriate and destructive because of its strong negative influence on others. This voicing of a negative opinion amongst colleagues was named as a form of *neglect* in this study. No clear findings relating to cultural differences in regard to the behavioural response of *exit* and *neglect* can be reported from the findings of this research project.

Also the problem of stereotyping of other nations was mentioned as a possible culture based influence misleading someone's reception of communication.

Interestingly, the cultural component of intercultural communication competence of a leader, who is managing a team with cultural diversity, was acknowledged but not overemphasised by the participants of this study. In particular, in the context of organisational change, other culturally independent characteristics like interpersonal competence were assessed as similar or more important. The finding that this competency was thought to be a competency required of everyone among all members of a multicultural working group in order to create an environment of regard and respect, illustrates the importance of this characteristic in organisational culture.

An overall agreement exists among the participants of this study in regard to what is important information during change, which management level should provide this information, and in which way communication processes should be implemented in order to effectively involve staff members. Another key outcome is that national culture was not thought to be an additional barrier during a change implementation by the participants of this study.

Another interesting result is that the investigated cultural dimensions of *uncertainty avoidance* and *power distance* are only partly relevant in the context of organisational change in a multicultural working environment. The findings also illustrate that ethnic culture is not the only influential factor on an individual's perception and behaviour, while other factors play a crucial role on the perception and the behaviour, and might even soften the impact of ethnic culture. For example, organisational culture can positively influence whether employees voice their opinion amongst one other and whether they give feedback to their superiors. As a consequence the influence of ethnic culture and differences in the communication style can be overcome and can play a minor role.

The findings of this study suggest that the application of cultural dimensions is appropriate and useful for the general conceptualisation of cultural factors in a change context, but should not be considered as the only factors for consideration. In this study a limitation of the usage of cultural dimensions became apparent in the investigation on the role of participation and placing feedback through voicing an opinion. For some cultures the application of cultural dimensions was sufficient to explain a cultural specific perception on participation like the South East Asian. But for other cultures it was clear that additional factors had a strong impact on this perception as illustrated in the case of the New Zealand and Indian group in this study. Consequently, the integration of a more complex and multilayered concept as suggested by Erez and Gati (2004) might be more appropriate for an investigation in a multicultural context where adaptation and aggregation between cultures are

natural processes. Moreover, this multilevel approach would take into account the complex interplay between culture and other factors like organisational culture. In this approach, culture can be investigated as a moderator or mediator to explore its impact on organisational life as proposed by many scholars (e.g. Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004; Leung et al., 2005; Raz, 2009).

Limitations

The following limitations of this study should be considered. Although this cross-cultural study aimed to include staff members representing as many different cultures as possible, a narrower range was available. Thus, this research presents a specific composition of participating cultures, which limits generalisations to other multicultural contexts. In particular, the under representation of collectivistic cultures like many Asian countries is a limiting factor as it became apparent when these groups were mentioned as contrasting cultures. Therefore, even though few staff members with a collectivistic background participated in the interviews, the findings in this study need to be viewed under the restriction that mainly Western views and their observation on other non-Western cultures were collected.

The survey, which was used as a first quantitative collection method to guide the selection of the interview questions, was limited with regard to the size of the sample where, in particular, the number of members for each identified group was too small to derive general conclusions. Nevertheless, the survey results provided a general overview of how the change communication was perceived at EDU and first culture related trends could be identified, which was highly valuable for the conceptualisation of the second qualitative part of this study.

Areas for future research

Various areas for further research can be identified in the context of the present research project that could contribute to an enhanced understanding of the impact of ethnic culture on the perception and behavioural response to change related communication.

Firstly, this study aimed to fill a gap in research by investigating organisational change in a multicultural environment where three or more ethnic cultures are represented among team members. The findings of this study indicate that particularly in a multicultural context processes of adaptation emerge, which illustrates the complexity of culture and that also culture underlies change. Moreover, the findings also illustrate that other factors like

organisational culture, which is particularly relevant during organisational change, have a major impact on an individual's perception and reaction towards change. Because globalisation causes a changing work environment and has a strong impact on society and organisations, more research should be undertaken in multicultural settings in order to investigate external influences on culture. In particular, empirical investigations applying Erez and Gati's (2004) multilayer model could enhance the understanding of the interplay of culture and other various external influential factors like organisational, social, economic, and political variables. This could help to contribute to a more comprehensive evaluation of ethnic culture and its implications.

Secondly, the findings of this study suggest a close connection between organisational and ethnic culture in regard to whether members voice their opinion among members of a multicultural working group. Because voicing an opinion and participating during organisational change are important factors emphasised in the literature of organisational change, more research that addresses this relationship would be of high value for research in this area and for application in management practice.

Another topic of interest could be seen in the strongly perceived differences between team members of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. In this study indications in regard to this cultural dimension could be drawn in the behavioural response of voice, but due to an under-representation of members of collectivistic cultures in this project no clear findings and hence no clear indications for a difference on the perception to change related communication could be reported. Therefore, further research investigating differences in perceptions relating to individualistic and collectivistic cultures could be of interest for a more holistic investigation of multicultural teams and organisational change.

This research project focused on an employee perspective because this perspective is often underrepresented in research of organisational change and culture. The findings of this study illustrated that staff members did not overemphasise culture as an extra hurdle in the context of change, which appears to be in contrast to research where mostly the perspective of management was considered. Therefore, further investigations including perspectives from both staff members and managers in one study, could help to provide more insights about possible variations in perspective between staff and management.

The close relationship between interpersonal and intercultural communication competence is another finding of this study and supports Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) model of intercultural communication competence which is based on this relationship. It is also interesting that in this study the participants across different cultures emphasised

interpersonal communication competence. Therefore, further empirical research on Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) model of intercultural communication could help to test the validity to use this model as a culture-general approach.

To conclude, the findings of this study indicate a potential influence of ethnic culture on the perception of communication relating to organisational change by members of a multicultural working group, as well as their response to that communication. However, it became apparent that other factors like organisational culture, for instance, may have more influence on an individual's perception. The outcomes of this study point to the need to address the complexity of culture in its interplay with other organisational factors in achieving effective communication in multicultural settings. Further studies could contribute to a more comprehensive knowledge about the role of ethnic culture in organisations and thereby help them to deal with the specific characteristics of a multicultural environment.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Tables

Table 5: *Category "Communication": Summarised Survey Results*

Statements in the category "Communication"	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
During the past two years the change activities have been clearly explained to me.	61.0%	16.9%	44.1%	15.3%	20.3%	3.4%	23.7%
I have been kept up-to-date on the progress of the change activities.	59.3%	8.5%	50.8%	18.6%	20.3%	1.7%	22.0%
The new structures were clearly communicated.	66.1%	10.2%	55.9%	20.3%	11.9%	1.7%	13.6%
I understand how my job is altered by the new structures.	44.1%	13.6%	30.5%	18.6%	32.2%	5.1%	37.3%
Generally, this organisation ensures new policies and procedures are easy to understand.	61.0%	25.4%	35.6%	22.0%	15.3%	1.7%	16.9%
Information about upcoming restructuring activities was delivered in a timely manner.	61.0%	15.3%	45.8%	23.7%	13.6%	1.7%	15.3%
Overall, information about the restructuring initiatives has been communicated well.	61.0%	18.6%	42.4%	22.0%	15.3%	1.7%	16.9%
It is important for my personal job satisfaction to understand the intent of the restructuring initiatives.	5.1%	3.4%	1.7%	3.4%	45.8%	45.8%	91.5%

Table 6: *Category "Management Support": Summarised Survey Results*

Statements in the category "Management Support"	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
Management has acted consistently during the restructuring period in the last two years; they have done as they said they would.	37.9%	15.5%	22.4%	36.2%	25.9%	.0%	25.9%
I felt that management is personally committed to the restructuring initiatives in EDU.	27.1%	8.5%	18.6%	18.6%	47.5%	6.8%	54.2%
Management clearly communicated how the restructuring activities tied to EDU's overall vision.	48.3%	19.0%	29.3%	25.9%	24.1%	1.7%	25.9%
In general EDU's managers are friendly and approachable.	35.6%	15.3%	20.3%	23.7%	33.9%	6.8%	40.7%
In general management does a good job of keeping me informed about matters that affect me.	54.2%	16.9%	37.3%	25.4%	15.3%	5.1%	20.3%
I feel afraid of disagreeing with my managers.	45.8%	13.6%	32.2%	18.6%	23.7%	11.9%	35.6%
I feel more comfortable when my leader/manager is from the same cultural background as mine.	62.7%	22.0%	40.7%	23.7%	10.2%	3.4%	13.6%

Table 7: *Ranking of Valuable Information*

Information type	NZ	UK	Australia	India	Others
Information about the overall vision of the change initiative	1	2	1	1	1
Adequate information which supports involvement in decision making	2				3
Clear instructions about the change initiatives	2	3	3	2	
Information about my personal role in the change initiatives	1	1	2	3	1
Regular information which keeps me up to date	3				2

Note. 1 indicates most valuable information, 2 indicate very valuable information, and 3 indicate valuable information.

Table 8: *Category "Intercultural Communication Competence": Summarised Survey Results*

Statements in the category "intercultural communication competence"	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
Following this definition I would say my primary leader has a high intercultural communication competence.	29.8%	19.3%	10.5%	24.6%	31.6%	14.0%	45.6%
My primary leader's intercultural communication competence positively influenced my level of uncertainty and let me feel more secure about the planned change initiatives.	33.9%	18.6%	15.3%	40.7%	18.6%	6.8%	25.4%
I believe my primary leader is aware of the existence of several cultures in our department.	13.6%	8.5%	5.1%	13.6%	49.2%	23.7%	72.9%

Table 9: *"Following the offered definition of ICC (*) I would say my primary leader has a high intercultural communication competence": Survey Results*

Country	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
NZ (n=36)	32.4%	20.6%	11.8%	32.4%	23.5%	11.8%	35.3%
UK (n=9)	44.4%	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%	33.3%	.0%	33.3%
Australia (n=4)	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
India (n=3)	.0%	.0%	.0%	33.3%	.0%	66.7%	66.7%
Others (n=7)	28.6%	28.6%	.0%	.0%	42.9%	28.6%	71.4%

(*) "Intercultural communication competence involves the knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures" (Wiseman, 2002, p. 208).

Table 10: *Category "Participation": Summarised Survey Results*

Statements in the category "Participation"	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
I was aware of the possibility to place feedback before and during the restructuring initiatives which were implemented in the last two years (consultation. email. staff meetings).	18.6%	3.4%	15.3%	13.6%	57.6%	10.2%	67.8%
During these restructuring activities appropriate training and support were provided in order to understand the centralised processes.	65.5%	19.0%	46.6%	27.6%	6.9%	.0%	6.9%
Generally I prefer to have an input on decisions and actions that affect my job. (*)	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.7%	61.0%	37.3%	98.3%
Generally I do question leadership/management decisions.	13.6%	1.7%	11.9%	15.3%	55.9%	15.3%	71.2%
Generally I am confident that management considers my suggestions.	63.8%	25.9%	37.9%	20.7%	13.8%	1.7%	15.5%
Generally I am afraid to express disagreement with my managers. (*)	39.0%	15.3%	23.7%	23.7%	22.0%	15.3%	37.3%

(*) This statement is based on Hofstede's (1984) power distance dimension.

Table 11: *"Generally, I am afraid to express disagreement with my managers": Survey Results*

Country	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
NZ (n=36) PDI=22	38.9%	8.3%	30.6%	22.2%	22.2%	16.7%	38.9%
UK (n=9) PDI=35	55.6%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%
Australia (n=4) PDI=36	75.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
India (n=3) PDI=77	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Others (n=7) PDI=70	14.3%	14.3%	.0%	14.3%	42.9%	28.6%	71.4%

(*) The PDI of "others" is calculated as the average of PDI's of each country presented in this group.

Table 12: *"Generally I do question leadership/management decisions.": Survey Results*

Country	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
NZ (n=36)	13.9%	2.8%	11.1%	8.3%	63.9%	13.9%	77.8%
UK (n=9)	22.2%	.0%	22.2%	33.3%	33.3%	11.1%	44.4%
Australia (n=4)	25.0%	.0%	25.0%	.0%	50.0%	25.0%	75.0%
India (n=3)	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Others (n=7)	.0%	.0%	.0%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	57.1%

Table 13: *Category "Attitudes towards Change": Summarised Survey Results*

EVLN model (*)	Statement	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Un-decided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
Voice	I discussed my concerns during the restructuring initiatives with my managers.	27.1%	.0%	27.1%	13.6%	47.5%	11.9%	59.3%
Voice	I discussed my concerns during the restructuring initiatives with my colleagues.	5.1%	.0%	5.1%	11.9%	62.7%	20.3%	83.1%
Voice	I made use of placing feedback during and after the consultation periods.	25.4%	1.7%	23.7%	20.3%	42.4%	11.9%	54.2%
Voice	I placed feedback to suggest improvements to the planned restructuring initiatives.	22.0%	1.7%	20.3%	18.6%	44.1%	15.3%	59.3%
Loyalty	I trusted the organisation to do the right thing.	34.5%	15.5%	19.0%	20.7%	37.9%	6.9%	44.8%
Loyalty	I had no choice but to go along with the restructuring initiatives.	5.1%	1.7%	3.4%	6.8%	44.1%	44.1%	88.1%
Exit	I was thinking of leaving during the change implementation.	45.8%	15.3%	30.5%	20.3%	16.9%	16.9%	33.9%
Neglect	The change implementation had a negative impact on my motivation.	28.8%	10.2%	18.6%	11.9%	30.5%	28.8%	59.3%
Neglect	I would feel that opposing the restructuring initiatives would be inappropriate.	35.6%	8.5%	27.1%	23.7%	27.1%	13.6%	40.7%

(*) EVLN-model: Each statement is based on one of the four response categories Exit, Voice, Loyalty or Neglect.

Table 14: *"I was thinking of leaving during the change implementation": Survey Results*

Country	SUM Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	SUM Agree
NZ (n=36) UAI=49	44.4%	13.9%	30.6%	19.4%	16.7%	19.4%	36.1%
UK (n=9) UAI=35	44.4%	11.1%	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%
Australia (n=4) UAI=51	75.0%	25.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	25.0%	25.0%
India (n=3) UAI=40	66.7%	66.7%	.0%	33.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Others (n=7) UAI= (*)	28.6%	.0%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%	42.9%

(*)The UAI of "others" is calculated as the average of UAI's of each country presented in this group. The UAI varies strongly between 8 and 92 in the single countries.

Table 15: *"I would feel that opposing the restructuring initiatives would be inappropriate": Survey Results*

Country	SUM Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	SUM Agree
NZ (n=36)	41.7%	11.1%	30.6%	22.2%	19.4%	16.7%	36.1%
UK (n=9)	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	66.7%	.0%	66.7%
Australia (n=4)	50.0%	.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	.0%	25.0%
India (n=3)	33.3%	.0%	33.3%	66.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Others (n=7)	14.3%	.0%	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	57.1%

Table 16: *Category "Individual Profile": Summarised Survey Results*

Statements in the category "Individual Profile"	Sum disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Sum agree
Hierarchical structures of organisations should be clear and respected. (*)	13.8%	1.7%	12.1%	20.7%	50.0%	15.5%	65.5%
Generally, I feel uncomfortable when it comes to change. (*)	67.8%	22.0%	45.8%	18.6%	10.2%	3.4%	13.6%
Generally, I am optimistic about the motives behind organisations' activities. (*)	18.6%	3.4%	15.3%	27.1%	47.5%	6.8%	54.2%
Conflict within organisations should be avoided. (*)	48.3%	3.4%	44.8%	13.8%	31.0%	6.9%	37.9%
I am happy to take risks. (*)	10.2%	.0%	10.2%	8.5%	61.0%	20.3%	81.4%
Organisational rules may be broken if they do not any harm to the organisation. (*)	32.2%	3.4%	28.8%	32.2%	28.8%	6.8%	35.6%
I find it easy to change job. (*)	30.5%	5.1%	25.4%	22.0%	40.7%	6.8%	47.5%
I believe in the long-term success of an organisation. (**)	3.4%	1.7%	1.7%	5.1%	55.9%	35.6%	91.5%
It would be easier to implement change in mono-cultural than multi-cultural working groups.	71.2%	23.7%	47.5%	20.3%	6.8%	1.7%	8.5%

(*) This statement is based on Hofstede's (1984) uncertainty avoidance index.
(**) This statement is based on GLOBE's future orientation.

Appendix B: Email to Staff Members of the Faculty announcing the Survey

Email subject: Staff members' perception and response to change communication

Dear staff member of [EDU]

My name is Blanka Schuster. I am undertaking this research as part of my master of International Communication degree at Unitec New Zealand. My research topic evaluates the impact of ethnic cultures on the perception and response to organisational change communication.

In the last two years multiple organisational restructuring activities have been launched at [EDU] collectively known as the 'Sustainability Project'. The aim was to replace local solutions with centralised organisational processes. This includes, for example, the introduction of higher student-staff ratios in 2009, the [EDU] workload model in 2010, and the creation of Student Central in 2010.

This survey addresses all involved restructuring initiatives. Your perception of the experienced communication flow and your response to this perception will be asked.

This research involves filling out a questionnaire which will take approximately 5-10 minutes of your time.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential and anonymous. The question in the 'individual profile' section may provide identifying factors, but only summarised and anonymous data will be accessible to others and only I (the researcher) will have access to individual data. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected computer at Unitec New Zealand for five years and can only be accessed by me. This survey has been approved by UREC and the Dean of the Faculty.

Summarised and anonymous results might be published in a later publication.

Completion and submission of this survey is taken as informed consent.

Please click on this link to start the questionnaire:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ChangePerception

Thanks so much for your assistance in my research project, I very much appreciate this!

Blanka Schuster
PH: 021 02444918
Email: blanka.schuster@gmx.net

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER (2011-1224)
This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from 3rd November 2011 to 3rd November 2012. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix C: Survey

Communications / Information

Change refers to the multiple change processes which have been undertaken at [EDU] in the last two years to centralise organisational processes. Please try to identify an answer which would fit to most of the change projects in case you feel that your response would vary depending on the project.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)				
1	During the past change initiatives, project objectives have been clearly explained to me.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
2	I am kept up-to-date on the progress of change initiatives.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
3	The new structures were clearly communicated.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
4	I understand how my job is impacted by the current structure.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
5	Generally, this organization ensures new policies and procedures are easy to understand.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
6	Information about upcoming changes is delivered in a timely manner.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
7	Overall, information involving change is communicated well and clearly.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
8	It is important for my personal job satisfaction to understand the intent for change.	SA	A	U	DA	SD

Management Support

9   Who would you indicate as your primary leader?

Line Manager   Head of Department   Dean of the Faculty

CEO   Others _____

10   I got the most valuable information during the change process from (multiple answers are possible):

Line Manager   Head of Department   Dean of the Faculty

Colleagues   CEO   Others _____

11   From whom did you expect to get change related information (multiple answers are possible)?

Line Manager   Head of Department   Dean of the Faculty

Colleagues   CEO   Others _____

Management are considered as the CEO, Dean of the Faculty, Head of Department and Line Managers.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)				
12	Management has acted consistently; they have done as they said they would.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
13	I felt that management is personally committed to the sustainability projects in [EDU] .	SA	A	U	DA	SD
14	Whenever change has been introduced in the past, management clearly communicated how the change tied to [EDU]'s overall vision.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
15	In general [EDU]'s managers are friendly and approachable.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
16	In general, management does a good job of keeping me informed about matters that affect me.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
17	I feel afraid of disagreeing with my managers.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
18	I feel more comfortable when my leader/manager is from the same cultural background like mine.	SA	A	U	DA	SD

"Intercultural communication competence involves the knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures" (Wiseman, 2002).

No	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)				
19	Following this definition I would say my primary leader has a high intercultural communication competence.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
20	My primary leader's intercultural communication competence positively influenced my level of uncertainty and let me feel more secure to the planned change projects.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
21	I believe my primary leader is aware of the existence of several cultures in our department.	SA	A	U	DA	SD

22   Please indicate if there has been a specific characteristic of your leader which has been helpful to cope with the change implementation? (Please use not more than three words) _____

Commitment

No	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)				
23	I believe the change process at [EDU] was necessary and has value for the organisation.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
24	I am confident that the implemented changes will positively impact my job.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
25	I believed that [EDU]'s leadership and management team had sufficient knowledge and skills to complete the projects successfully.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
26	Whenever change projects were introduced in the past, I understood my new role in making the changes happen.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
27	I am more likely to support a change project when I understand the change purpose.	SA	A	U	DA	SD

Participation

No	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)				
28	I prefer to be involved into management decisions.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
29	I do question leadership/management decisions.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
30	I was aware of the possibility to place feedback before and during the change implementation (consultation, email, staff meetings)	SA	A	U	DA	SD
31	I am confident that management will consider my suggestions in regard of planned change projects.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
32	I am afraid to express disagreement with my managers.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
33	During the change efforts, appropriate training and support were provided in order to understand the centralised processes.	SA	A	U	DA	SD

Attitudes towards Change

No	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)				
34	I discussed my concerns during the change process with my managers and colleagues.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
35	I made use of placing feedback during and after the consultation period.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
36	I placed feedback to suggest improvements to the planned changes.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
37	I did trust the organisation to do the right thing.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
38	I had no choice but to go along with this change.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
39	I was thinking of leaving during the change implementation.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
40	The change implementation had a negative impact on my motivation.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
41	I would feel that opposing these change projects would be wrong.	SA	A	U	DA	SD

Individual Profile

42   Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? _____

43   In which country (countries) did you grew up? _____

44   What is the highest level of education you have completed?

High School   Professional Degree   Bachelor

Master   PHD   Other_____

45   When did you start working for[EDU]?

less than 1 year   1-2 years   2-5 years   5-10 years   10-20 years

more than 20years

46   What is your professional role in the organization?

Teaching   Administration   Management   Other_____

47   Are you fulltime or part-time employed?

Fulltime   Part-time

No	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)				
48	Hierarchical structures of organisations should be clear and respected.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
49	I have a high emotional resistance to change.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
50	I am generally more optimistic about the motives behind organisations' activities.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
51	Conflict within organisations should be avoided.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
52	I am happy to take risks.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
53	Organisational rules may be broken if they do not any harm to the organisation.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
54	I find it easy to change job.	SA	A	U	DA	SD
55	I belief in the long-term success of an organisation.	SA	A	U	DA	SD

Critical incident

56   In case you remember a particular difficult change project where communication led to controversial views between staff members and/or management during the change implementation please indicate this project briefly:

_____

Appendix D: Information Sheet for the Interviews and Focus Groups

<u>Information for participants</u>

**The perception and response to change by members of a multicultural working group:
A case study**

My name is Blanka Schuster. I am undertaking this research as part of my Master of

International Communication degree at Unitec Institute of Technology. My research topic

evaluates the impact of ethnic culture on the perception and response to organisational change

communication.

The aim of my project:

The aim of my research project is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of ethnic

cultural on the perception and response to communication relating to organisational change.

I request your participation in the following way:

I would like to ask you to participate in a focus group interview and talk about:

- Your perceptions of the communication process during the change implementation at
  [EDU] in the last two years, and

- The impact of cultural values and views on the perception of change communication.

Furthermore I would like to ask you to participate in an individual interview and talk about:

- Your response to the change related communication.

The focus group will take about 60-90 minutes and will take place at the media centre room of the Department of Communication Studies. The individual interviews will take about 15-20 minutes and will be arranged directly with you. I will, with your permission, audiotape the focus group and individual interviews and transcribe them later. All features that could identify you will be removed and the tapes used will be erased once the transcription is done.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw from the project once the interview took place. However, any withdrawals must be done within 2 weeks after the interviews are accomplished.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential and anonymous. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected computer at Unitec New Zealand for five years and can only be accessed by me. Summarised and anonymous results might be published in a later publication.

Please contact me if you have any concerns about the project, via email (blanka.schuster@gmx.net) or phone (+64-021 02444918). You may also contact my primary supervisor at Unitec New Zealand. My supervisor is Jocelyn Williams, email jwilliams@unitec.ac.nz or phone 064-9-8154321 ext 8829.

Appendix E: Focus Group Consent Form

Focus Group Participant Consent Form

The perception and response to change by members of a multicultural working group: A case study

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understood the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw from the project within 2 weeks after the interview took place.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and will be made anonymous. However, individual profile questions may provide identifying factors, but only the researcher will have access to transcribed data. The only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher and participants of the focus group. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec Institute of Technology for a period of 5 years. Only the researcher will have access to these data. Summarised and anonymous results might be published in a later study.

I understand that my interview will be audio taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I understand that I will treat all gained information within the focus group as highly confidential.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: .... Date: ....

Project Researcher: .... Date: ....

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2011-1224)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 3rd November 2011 to 3rd November 2012. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix F: Interview Consent Form

Individual Interview Participant Consent Form

The perception and response to change by members of a multicultural working group:
A case study

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understood the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw from the project within 2 weeks after the interview took place.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and will be made anonymous. None of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec Institute of Technology for a period of 5 years. The researcher will have access to these data. Summarised and anonymous results might be published in a later study.

I understand that my interview will be audio taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: ……………………………. Date: ……………………………

Project Researcher: …………………………… Date: ……………………………

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2011-1224)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 3rd November 2011 to 3rd November 2012. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix G: Focus Group and Interview Questions

Communication

- What do you think could have done better in terms of communication during the change implementation in EDU?

- Do you think your cultural background has something to do the way you perceived this communication?

Management

- Do you think that a manager's communication style during the change process could be somehow related to his or her cultural background?

- Do you think the cultural background of a manager can inhibit or support staff members in the way you give feedback?

- Do you think your cultural background influences your reaction to a manager's communication style?

Intercultural communication competence

- Do you think a good manager in one country can be a good manager in another country?

- Did you experience cultural based differences from your perspective during the communication of the change?

    If yes, have you got an example?

- Do you think it is important that your manager has a high intercultural communication competence to support change communication in a multicultural working group?

Participation

- You might not be a typical representative of your cultural group. But can you think of how people in your cultural group would expect to be involved in these decisions?

- What does participation and having an input in your home country mean exactly?

Attitudes towards change

    Voice

- Would you say that you are coming from a culture where people voice their opinion to their manager in case a contentious issue comes or would you say they rather stay quiet?

- Did you discuss these issues with staff members having a cultural background close to yours or did this not matter?

- Did you experience different views and perceptions on the change communication when you were discussing change related issues with colleagues having a different cultural background than yours?

    Loyalty/Exit

        When you think of your own cultural group but also of other cultural groups:

- Would you say some cultural groups are different in so far that they tend to trust the organization rather than seeking confrontation with management?

- Do you think that some cultural groups tend to leave a company more easily than other cultural groups?

        Did you observe this?

    Neglect

        If the motivation level goes down several reactions are possible, for instance, not being supportive, negative talking about the change initiatives, coming late to work, to actively undermining a change initiative.

- What kind of action would be acceptable or maybe natural in your cultural group?

- What kind of action would not be acceptable?