The Prominence of Organizational Culture in Workplace Well-Being

- a Qualitative Research on an International Organization

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The most central part of any organization comprises the organizational cultures – that is the established values, beliefs and behaviors of the corporation, commonly shared by its members. A preferable way of explaining organizational culture is to consider it as glue that binds the members of the organization to the overall goals of the corporation. A strong organizational culture has been considered beneficial for all organizational to establish nonetheless maintain, but extensively more crucial for organization working on an international high competitive market. One reason for this could be the constant exposure of the organizational culture to other foreign nations and cultures, thus the possibility of external influences. Although prior research has investigated the benefits arising from establishing a strong corporate culture, a existing gap in the existing literature constitutes the overall impact of the organizational culture on the employee well-being at a workplace. This thesis will thus provide further investigations on the prominence of the organizational culture in the different synergistic elements of workplace well-being – commitment, trust, motivation and job satisfaction, within an international organization with established branches all over the world. Based on this our research question was formulated as following:

“How are organizational cultures evident in synergistic elements of workplace well-being within international branches?”

In order for us to receive the information needed and to gain an in-depth understanding, a decision to conduct a case study on an international corporation called Handelsbanken was made. The research was furthermore conducted in a qualitative manner through the use of semi-structural interviews. Our chosen sample could be considered somewhat limited since it mainly consisted of Handelsbanken managers and employees. Thus, our desire is not to generalize a particular populations, rather our aim is to contribute with additional information on the subject of organizational culture. From our empirical findings and analysis, we discovered an overall coherence between the organizational culture and the synergistic elements of workplace wellbeing. In other words, our results confirm the possibility of utilizing the organizational culture for the purpose of establishing workplace well-being. Furthermore, our recommendation is for international organizations with a similar structure and strong culture to apply the organizational culture as a strategic tool. This will allow the organizations to acquire a motivated, committed, trustworthy and satisfied workforce, thus improve the entire workplace atmosphere.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to provide the reader with sufficient incentives that ultimately will explain our choice of subject as well as it will provide information on the overall problem background. The chapter will furthermore reflect over the existing researches made and conclusively introduce the reader to the research question and research objective of this degree project.

“It has been said that arguing against globalization is like arguing against the laws of gravity.”
-Kofi Annan

1.1 Choice of Subject

All humans have 24 hours a day and may choose how to spend every minute of it. Every human being is born with 300 bones as infants, but as he or she reaches adulthood the amount decreases to 206. The only specie that can form emotional tears as a result of emerging feelings are human beings. Not only do every individual have unique fingerprints but also tongue prints, which can conclude another commonality - all humans are unique. Nevertheless, many of us also have preconceived ideas or prejudice concerning other people. For instance, it has been facetiously suggested that in an ideal world the policemen would be English, the car mechanics would be German, the cooks would be French, the innkeepers would be Swiss and the lovers would be Italian. In the other end of the spectrum, instead the living hell would consist of German policemen, French car mechanics, English cooks, Italian innkeepers and Swiss lovers (Monippally, 2013, p.77). As these preconceptions suggest, nationalities differ in a variety of ways but an occupational classification in accordance to nationality will most likely never occur. However, due to the increased level of globalization, many people will work with different nationalities that differ in values, behaviors and norms. Of course, this may create challenges for international organizations. Heterogeneity in terms of demographic characteristics could be problematic, so of course, this may create challenges for corporations in culturally different markets (Pratt, 2001, p. 26). This ultimately made us wonder; how does international corporations create well-being in environments where diversity is inevitable?

Similarities as well as differences between individuals are indeed regarded as fascinating and have been a subject of study for several researchers around the world. In line with these authors we believe that the subject of cultural diversity is highly relevant and always a subject in need of further investigation. Intrigued by the fundamentals of business and the varying perspectives of other cultures, we have decided to specialize this subject in regards to our educational direction - management. Not only does the subject capture a managerial perspective, it also gives a cultural aspect of an issue prominent for international businesses.
1.2 Background

The globalized economy has constituted a free movement of resources such as people, skills as well as tangible goods across national borders. This ultimately contributes to an overall increased competition and performance requirements between the global economies and forces organizations to be innovative in terms of resource utilization for manufacturing, production, design and services etcetera (Hitt et al., 2012, pp. 8-9). The international trade through globalizations has been very beneficial for multiple countries in regards to productivity growth and increased wealth. For instance the United States, China, India have experienced advantages involved with penetrating the international market and as a result improved the overall living standards and in severe cases assisted a large portion of the population out of poverty (Scheve & Slaughter, 2007, pp. 35-37). Although there are huge benefits involved with a globalized market, but from a business perspective this may become problematic due to increased competition (Miller & Parkhe, 2002, pp. 55-56). Consequently, this increased competition has led to a greater customer demand for specialized and localized products and services, which ultimately requires corporations to establish and maintain a strong competitive advantage keeping nationality, culture and values in mind (Miller & Parkhe, 2002, p. 58). Additionally, one possible result of a globalized world and a more developed market is a noted tendency amongst the organizations to change their overall business structure from a centralized business structure to a decentralized business structure (Malone, 2004, p. 36). The change of business structure is considered to mainly originate from a decrease in cost of communication, as well as an increased flexibility in terms of innovation and creativity (Malone, 2004, p. 36). A centralized business structure ultimately means that the top-level management exercises their complete authority and control over the entire enterprise and monitors its everyday activities (Malone, 2004, p. 5). However, as mentioned by Malone, businesses are becoming increasingly more decentralized, meaning lower level managers are given more authority (2004, pp. 4-10). One industry that has experienced an increase in competition is the banking industry. The financial services industry has experienced a decrease in barriers during the recent years, which consequently has led to a global integration in the banking sector (Berger & Smith, 2003, p. 451). As previously stated, the high amount of international competition in regards to the financial sector nonetheless the bank industry is considered to promote interesting information on the overall use of the organizational culture as a strategic tool for establishing a competitive advantage. Moreover, organizations adopting a decentralized business structure are regarded to be relevant for studying the phenomenon of organizational culture, across the different international branches. This is based on the fact that it is believed to facilitate information on the utilization of the organizational culture amongst its members and across the authority distributions.

In order satisfy the customer demand on a competitive international market, it is crucial to possess information and create an understanding of the respective national cultures in which the corporation operates. The national culture is referred to as culture based on different characteristics of a society, hence each particular nation (Doney et al., 1998, p. 607). Yet another researcher such as Hofstede defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another” (Hofstede, 1984, p. 82). Geert Hofstede was one of the founding fathers own the six dimensions of national culture - a tool for understanding cultural differences, claiming the international environment to differ in terms of their level of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, long-term orientation and/or
pragmatism as well as indulgence (Hofstede, 2001). Due to the fact that each nation varies in their significant culture, this constitutes an unavoidable phenomenon and ultimately is believed to have an impact on individuals’ decision-making (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 20; Conway & Swift, 2000, p. 1398).

For an organization, culture has been described as equally important as personality is for the individual (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993, p. 60). Just as a culture can stem from a nation, an organization can additionally establish their own culture, which is collectively shared by its members. The subject of managing organizational culture has been considered an extremely vital part of the success and performance of a corporation (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993, p. 60). The importance of competent leaders may be exemplified by a statement of Ireland and Hitt, who argued “tomorrow’s organization will still require a great leader to be successful” (1999, p. 47). Thus illustrating the importance of strategic leadership especially on the global market where it can provide a strong competitive advantage over the existing rivals all over the world (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51) The leaders main task constitutes being able to motivate strong performance and promote self-confidence and ambitions for the organizational members, which consequently will benefit the entire organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 47). Additionally, an extended version of leadership concerns strategic leadership, where the leaders successfully are able to influence the organizational members to make decisions that promote beneficial results for the organization without directly imposing their ideas on to them (Rowe, 2001, p. 81). Strategic leaders have been known for serving as an interactive link communicating the values, goals and mission across company levels (Quinn, 1985, pp. 76-77; Burgelman, 1983, pp. 238-239). For instance, as argued by prior research, middle managers are considered to play a vital part in regards to the process of implementation and integrating an organizational culture (Valentino & Brunelle, 2004, p. 394).

As argued by prior research the organizational culture provides a strong foundation upon which core competencies and human capital can be established on (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). The organizational culture ultimately contains the shared beliefs, vision and purpose of the corporation and should thus be exploited by the strategic leader (Alvesson, 2002, p. 3). The importance of culture within an organization has been argued to be equally important as the personality of an individual (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993, p. 60). Hence illustrating the cruciality of obtaining a strong organizational culture of which the members of the corporation can relate to. The organizational culture has been metaphorically described as a “social glue” or “sacred cow”. The former described to be a source of identification where control is informal and non-structural, whereas the latter argued a deeper and more committed approach (Alvesson, 2002, pp. 32-33). In Social Identity Theory (SIT) organizational identification has been defined as "the process by which the goals of the organization and those of the individual become increasingly integrated and congruent" (Hall et al., 1970 p.176-177). Identification with an organization may be facilitated when there is intra-organizational homogeneity, conversely heterogeneity in terms of demographic characteristics could be problematic (Pratt, 2001, p. 18, 26). As pointed out by Hewstone and his co-authors diversity needs to be managed (Hewstone et al., 2001, p. 84) Individuals within an organization have been argued to work better if
there are commonly shared characteristics in regards to demographics, but also due to an strong established organizational identity that allows them to work towards the common goal (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p. 12; Ashforth & Johnson, 2001, p. 33). It is thus important for an organization to establish commitment, motivation, job satisfaction and trust amongst its employees since these elements are key antecedents when it comes to accomplishing corporate goals (Pool & Pool, 2007, p. 366). The synergistic elements - commitment, motivation and job satisfaction along with the addition of trust (factors that from here on collectively will be referred to as synergistic elements) recurs on a frequent basis throughout prior literature serving as underlying reasons to workplace well-being (Mohamed et al., 2012, p.1-3; Dirk & Ferrin, 2002, p. 613; Pool & Pool, 2007, p. 366).

Prior research argued that organizational trust ultimately constitutes a collectively shared commitment towards achieving organizational goals, thereby ensuring beneficial results from an overall employee cooperation (Puusa & Tolvanen, 2006, p. 30). The main idea with the element of trust, is that the trustor feels confident in the trustees commitment towards honoring what has been promised (Gilbert & Tang, 1998, p. 322). Through the utilization of trust, an organization can create a care-giving environment founded on the employees’ believes that the leader is able to make decisions that in the end not only will benefit the organization but also the individuals involved (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 2). Trust has been found to be built on a shared belief in regards to the norms and values (Dooney, 1998, p. 616). Prior research has also identified factors that could ultimately promote trust. These include, maintaining an open communication throughout the organization, allowing employees participations in the decision making process, promoting knowledge sharing as well as recognizing the benefits involved with sharing perceptions and feelings amongst the organization (Mishra & Morrissey, 1990, p.459).

One additional element of workplace well-being is motivation amongst the members of the organization. This factor has been argued to be the psychological process that originates from the overall interaction between the individual and the environment (Latham & Pinder, 2005, p. 486). Prior research furthermore suggested there being two different types of motivation that can exist within an organization, these being intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation shortly explained is founded on rewards such as money and can be exemplified by pay-by-performance motivation, as oppose to intrinsic where an individual is motivated by praise or rewards ultimately satisfies the values or needs of the individual (Osterloh & Frey, 2000, pp. 539-540). Internal marketing has been regarded as an efficient tool for creating motivated and committed employees that in turn will generate high quality services (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 452; Tsai & Wu, 2011, p. 2602).

The third synergistic element is commitment, which has been suggested to facilitate a sense of security amongst its members, thus improve the organizational welfare (Finegan, 2000, p. 150). Commitment has been suggested to be “a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target” (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301). Thus reduces the possibility of employee turnover as well as encourage hard work towards the organizational goals (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 993; Kim & Rowley, 2005, p. 109). A lack of commitment on the other hand can come to challenge the overall success of the organization (Collier & Esteban, 2007, p. 30). For example, employees with a national culture rooted in their behavior and values, may
find it troublesome to relate and commit to the values and beliefs of the organization (Ahmad & Oranye, 2010, pp. 589-590).

Reflecting over the existing relationship between organizational commitment and the other synergistic elements, prior researchers implied commitment being linked to job satisfaction and employee empowerment (Ahmad & Oranye, 2010, p. 589). Regarding the subject of job satisfaction, it has been defined as “...a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p. 1304). Furthermore, suggestively job satisfaction is based on the individual’s perception regarding the factors that are considered important for the person. Thus affecting the satisfaction the individual feels towards the job (Roodt et al., 2002, p. 23).

Prior research also proposed leaders to play an important role in terms of establishing employee job satisfaction, since this ultimately will come to affect performance and accomplishment of the organizational goals (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006, p. 13).

Job satisfaction was furthermore considered to vary depending on the state of employment. Thus the initial entrance within an organization was described as generally being more positive, but the level of satisfaction tends to decrease consequently creating the honeymoon-hangover effect (Boswell et al., 2005, pp. 883-884). Throughout this degree project the use of the word ‘employees’ will merely be directed towards employees, excluding the managers. Furthermore, ‘members of the organization’ will refer to both managers and employees.

1.3 Previous Research

As argued by Alvesson, the main reason as to why the organizational culture is a recurring subject within the academic world stems from the fact that it ultimately plays a central part in the life of an organization (2002). As can be noticed in the background much of the previous research has been focused on how to establish an organizational culture and its importance for companies (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Alvesson, 2002; Schein, 2010; McAlleeese & Hargie, 2004). In fact, the authors described the organizational culture to be equally important as a personality is for the individual (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993 p. 60). In relation to prior suggestion comes national culture, where focus has been directed towards its indirect effects (Conway & Swift, 2000) and understanding the “mental programming in the human mind” (Hofstede, 2011). Much research has been directed towards national culture and how to manage it (Hofstede, 2011; Trompenaars, 1998; Hall, 1990; Lewis, 2000, Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). The magnitude of research within the topic of culture can be reflected in the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn where they in 1952, compiled a list of 164 different definitions of “culture” which surely has grown since then. Connected to the management of culture is the research that has been conducted on the importance of strategic leadership and human resources. Here researchers such as Ireland and Hitt (1999), Rowe (2001), Goleman (2000) have dedicated research towards importance and responsibilities of leadership as well as establishing leadership roles in order to effectively manage human resources. Since human resources are key when it comes to establishing a competitive advantage, naturally, this has also been a heavily researched area. Factors such as commitment, motivation (both in terms of human needs and at work), job satisfaction and trust have been recurring in then literature for not only attracting competencies but also keeping them within the company (Gilbert & Tang, 1998; Tzasif & Dolan, 2004; Noble & Mokwa, 1999; McGuire & McLaren, 2008; Lok
Here, much research has been focused upon correlations and how one affects the other in work environment.

As illustrated above, lot of research has been conducted within the respective areas. However, we have not been able to find any research that in-depth investigates the prominence of organizational culture in regards to synergistic element of workplace well-being, thus we have located our research gap.

1.4 Research Question & Purpose

In order to cover the existing research gap the following research question has been formulated:

“**How are organizational cultures evident in synergistic elements of workplace well-being within international branches?**”

Our purpose with this research is to investigate how international corporations’ culture is prominent in established branches within different countries and how it ultimately reflects in the chosen criteria of employee well-being - motivation, commitment, trust and job satisfaction. The research will be based on a company within the banking industry, more specifically a company called Handelsbanken. Our case study is performed in a qualitative manner giving a deeper understanding of the subject. As the research question and the purpose of this research involves investigating international branches with members of the organization and their perceptions it is important to consider the possible effect of cultural ambiguity in terms of national and organizational culture. Conclusively, the purpose with our research is to provide the reader with insights and understandings through a descriptive study performed in a cross-sectional manner at a single point in time (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 140; 155).

1.5 Delimitations

The focus of this research is to investigate the prominence of the corporate culture in established international branches and how the organizational culture ultimately is reflected in the workplace well-being. The relevance of investigating this phenomenon within an industry such as the banking sectors stems from the fact that the industry has been regarded to be highly competitive and thus constantly have too outperform their rivals. As argued by prior research a strong organizational culture is considered to form an extensive competitive advantage and hence can be considered to be a strategic tool relevant for utilization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). Reflecting over the beneficial aspects of investigating an organization that adopts a decentralized business structure. The authority and responsibility distribution across the different branches, as well as an increased sense of motivation and creativity ultimately can be argued to assist the organizations in establishing a strong corporate culture (Malone, 2004, p.5; Lee & Choi, 2003, pp. 205-206; Amason et al., 1995, p. 27). Furthermore, we argue the banking sector and specifically Handelsbanken, that currently is operating in a highly competitive market and utilizes a decentralized business structure to possibly foster interesting information on the use of the organizational culture as a strategic tool. Thus not only provide the organization participating in this research with important
information, but also provides other decentralized businesses operating on a highly competitive international market with beneficial information on how to secure an advantage over their rivals. Eventhough this research may be applicable to organizations outside the banking sector with similar conditions and business structures, we strive to exemplify using bank as a specimen for these types of companies.

In our degree project we have moreover chosen to focus on two respondent perspectives that are present in Handelsbanken branches: Handelsbanken employees and Handelsbanken managers. Our decision was to mainly direct this research towards middle managers since they serve as an intermediary to implement the organizational culture and at the same time acts in a manner that works in favor for the organization. Furthermore, the other part of the focus will be directed towards Handelsbanken employees, this in order for our research to be more credible. It will provide us with the employee perceptions and opinions on the prominence of the organizational culture and how their opinions corresponds to the ones of the managers. We have thus decided to exclude the top-level perspective since our desire was to focus on the international branches of Handelsbanken that are closer to customers and where national culture may be more salient. We have chosen to delimit our research to companies that operate in an international environment and have similar business structure, strong culture and way of conducting business. However, this does not imply that one can generalize our findings to any international business, and that is not our intention. Since every company has their own business structure, culture and way of conducting business it would not be appropriate. Instead, we propose that our findings can gain insights for companies who wish to reflect upon how their organizational culture may be prominent in employee well-being through factors of motivation, commitment, trust and job satisfaction.
2.0 SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY

The content of this chapter includes discussions on our previous experiences and pre-conceptual knowledge in regards to the existing practical and theoretical pre-understandings and the possible effect these might have on our research. Moreover, we will continue by introducing the reader to our respective choice of research philosophy, accompanied by our chosen research approach for this research. Thereafter we will announce and argue on the relevance of our chosen research design together with the research strategy. Furthermore conclude with an overall description on our theoretical choices as well as our chosen theoretical sources and how these can come to affect the research quality and trustworthiness.

“If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable.”
- Lucius Annaeus Seneca

2.1 Pre-Understandings

The level of relevancy a research project has is determined through the evaluation of the amount of new knowledge the project provides to the scientific community and also how well that same knowledge can actually be applied to solving real-world situations (Al Jerajawi, 2010, p. 346). Preconceived perceptions can carry both advantages and disadvantages. As explained by Saunders and his co-authors, knowledge about a particular organization or an area of research may serve as a quid pro quo in the sense that the knowledge provides in-depth understanding whereas it also may hinder researchers from investigating all issues in a research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151). It is thus of major importance to be aware of the preconceptions and ascertain that these will not bias the research. Due to the fact that our research constitutes a case study on an actual organization, Handelsbanken, it is important for us to bear in mind that we subconsciously might have previous theoretical and practical understandings that could come to influence our research. Thus, by enlightening, reflecting and becoming aware of these we can decrease the chance of our research becoming manipulated.

2.1.1 Practical Pre-Understandings and its Effect

Prior to previously mentioned bias that consequently might arise due to the authors already established preconceptions regarding the organization on which the case study is performed on, therefore it is necessary to bring up the potential preconceptions that might arise from one of the authors being a summer employee for the organization. Furthermore, both of the authors have a connection to the organization in a sense that we currently are customers of the organization. This can ultimately influence the research in terms of an already established understanding and consequently created feelings towards the organization that might hinder the research process. For instance this might create reluctance towards shedding a bad light over Handelsbanken hence jeopardizing the research reliability. However our intentions with this research is not to
judge whether actions or way of working are wrong or right, but instead reflect over a rather unexplored subject where Handelsbanken acts as an example for many other similar organizations.

We do not consider these preconceptions to be a major issue, since this potential problem has been reflected upon early in the process. Thus, by constantly considering the effects of our pre understandings we could conduct the research and gather information without skewing it towards a specific direction. We moreover consider the already established connection with the organization to be beneficial for the research, in a sense that the established contact between authors and organization assisted us in getting respondents for our data collection. Yet another beneficial factor of the relationship is that it allows us a deeper understanding of the organization, which we regard as highly positive when it comes to the overall analysis of the empirical findings and thus improves the quality of the research. By arguing both negative and positive influences of the created pre-understandings regarding the organization, the overall credibility of our research is increased.

2.1.2 Theoretical Pre-Understandings and its Effects

It is important to also regard possible theoretical understandings and their influential impacts on our research. For example, as students from the International Business Program at Umeå University our previous academic knowledge consists of a wide array business courses and since the emphasis of our studies is within the field of management, this gives us a solid theoretical understanding for our area of research. This is important since the background research and the formulation of research gap play an essential role as it serves as the basis for the entire study (Al Jerjawi, 2010, p. 347). It is of our firm belief that our academic knowledge serves as an advantage rather than a disadvantage since it has given us a broad perspective of knowledge as well as thought us to critically reflect upon information. Although, we strive to be completely objective and suppress personal opinions and subjective feelings we realize that our academic background will to some extent have an impact of our choice of theories and our research. It is therefore our primary interest not to exclude or skew information by our personal opinions. As a subjectivist fails when it comes to setting standards and guidelines in research we believe an objectivist’s stance is a more appropriate viewpoint (Al Jerjawi, 2010, p.350). Therefore, we do not consider our previous knowledge in this matter will have a negative impact on our degree project, but find it rather on the contrary to raise the overall quality, thus allows us to utilize theoretically relevant theories and concept valuable to our research.

2.2 Methodological Awareness

2.2.1 Research Philosophy

Before deciding upon relevant methods it is crucial for authors to understand the nature of research as well as the context of social science disciplines (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 4; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 5). Since many of us differ in how they see the world our philosophical commitment may have a tremendous impact of the outcome of the
research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 108). According to Bryman and Bell there are two major philosophical outlooks that scholars should consider, the perception of reality and how the knowledge of this reality is acquired - more commonly known as ontology and epistemology (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.15; 20). When it comes to the ontological approach and “the nature of social entities” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20), we strive as previously mentioned to be objective and maintain a discrepancy between our own thought and values and the respondents’ answers.

The other philosophical outlook is the epistemological aspect, which concerns what should be considered “acceptable knowledge” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 112). In this case, there are three different ways to reflect upon epistemological stances: positivism, realism and interpretivism (Saunders et al, 2009, pp. 113-116; Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 15-20). A positivistic approach solely considers observable data to be credible and conducts research free from feelings and emotions. The researcher is therefore a separate entity striving to have little or no effect on the outcome of a research (Saunders et al, 2009, pp. 113-114). Realism differs from the positivistic stance in the sense that conceptualization of reality exists independently of the human mind (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 17; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 114). The last scientific approach when considering an epistemological direction is interpretivism. This stance serves as a contrast to positivism as it views reality as relative with more than one truth (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 16-17). With this value-laden interpretivistic method researchers recognizes differences between humans, which allows for a more flexible research structure as oppose to a positivist. According to Saunders and his co-authors some believe this approach to be appropriate for business- and management studies where research is complex and demands a more unique method (Saunders et al., 2011, p. 116).

Due to the fact that the overall purpose of this research not only wishes to investigate data that can be observed by the researchers, there is also a desire to include research interpretations of the respondents, which ultimately has lead to us adopting a interpretivistic viewpoint. This will allow a thorough investigation on the human behaviors in international businesses through the use of scientifically performed investigations. It is of our belief that when you conduct research in various nations along with culture it is important to regard not only what is said in words but also how it is said. Our research design does not provide us with black and white patterns but is rather based on a situational context that we regard should be open for re-interpretations.

2.2.2 Research Approach

Researchers also have to consider how the relationship between theory and research and can choose between either inductive or a deductive approach. A deductive approach includes the creation of a testable proposition with characteristics including movement from theory to data (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 124-125). A deductive reasoning may further be explained as “reasoning from the general to the particular” (Pelissier, 2008, p. 3). As oppose to a deductive approach the inductive instead propose theory would follow data (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 124-125). This approach has been suggested appropriate for a smaller sample and qualitative data as the emphasis of the study might include context and non-generalizable findings (Saunders et al, pp. 125). For instance,
Alvesson and Deetz explain that the inductive method has over the time become increasingly associated with qualitative research since it allows a more nuanced perspective (2000, p.1).

Although the most common approach when performing a qualitative research is inductive, a deductive approach is regarded as more relevant for the purpose of this research. Our aim is not to generate a new theory but instead answer our research question “How are organizational cultures evident in synergistic elements of workplace well-being within international branches?” through the utilization of existing theories. The theories in this degree project have acted as a basis for the formulation of our research objective, thus the research question. This means that we will relate our results in the empirical findings regarding the presence of workplace well-being based on the synergistic elements in Handelsbanken and its culture to the ones of existing theories in Chapter 3.0. Therefore, in accordance to Pelissier (2008, p. 3), our initial starting point will begin from a general perspective and later focus on our particular case – Handelsbanken.

2.2.3 Research Design & Research Strategy

Furthermore, as explained by Bryman and Bell there are two main research strategies when conducting research - quantitative and qualitative method (2011, p. 26). As the name suggests name, a quantitative research is characterized by the collection of numerical data and are utilized to objectively draw conclusions and testing theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 26-27, Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151). The latter, a qualitative method, instead is characterized by a more inductive nature where conclusions are products of the research process. Here, the conclusions are made up from words rather than statistical numbers (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 389). In order for us to receive the information needed, a decision to use a qualitative research technique was made. Simply based on the desire to gather relevant and detailed information from the respondent in terms of their experience and perceptions on the prominence of the organizational culture.

Furthermore, this research will be conducted in a case study design, which entails a detailed and intensive analysis of a single organization (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 59). The reasons for this is due to the fact that we wish to retain relevant and detailed information on a organization that ultimately operates internationally, since this would allow us a deeper understanding on the subject in manner. The research design allows us the possibility of asking questions such as ‘why?’, ‘how?’ and ‘what?’ and thus provides us with an opportunity to study the phenomenon desired through a case study on an organization of interest (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 146). In terms of the different types of case studies, this particular study can be regarded as an instrumental case. This means that through the use of a specific case we will be able to create a greater understanding on a broader issue (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 60). Although Handelsbanken has been exemplified throughout an instrumental case study, this research can be beneficial for corporations with similar structures and cultures.

Understandably, it is important that researchers understand the purpose of a study before choosing an appropriate research strategy. There are three different variations of purposes for conducting a research. An exploratory research aims to clarify issues of a
certain problem and is useful for a flexible researcher willing to change when new insights appear (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 139-140). Explanatory goes even further than exploratory studies and instead aim to find relationships between different variables and, as the term suggests, it aim to find reasons behind a theory or phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 140-141). Lastly, a descriptive researcher on the other hand is more viewed as a precursor or an extension to the aforementioned researches (Saunders et al., 2009, p.140). Thus the purpose of our study, as previously mentioned is to provide further insights and perspectives on a subject that already has existing theories.

2.2.4 Choice of Theories

Our research is conducted with a deductive approach where previous research acts as the foundation for our research question and objective. We consider our chosen theories to cover the various areas of interest and regard them as beneficial in terms of providing important information. Since our research focuses on the prominence of organizational culture within a corporation, we began identifying relevant theories on the subject. As suggested by Gordon in his research, an organizational culture is formed on the basis of organizational assumptions commonly shared by its members, which ultimately provides values that illustrates the right things to do, and is included in organizational strategies and structures (1991, p. 399).

We specifically desired to investigate overall national differences in terms of culture, and how this ultimately could cause issues with the organizational culture. As implied by Geert Hofstede, countries can vary significantly in their power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, long-term orientation and pragmatism as well as indulgence (Hofstede, 2001). The underlying reason as to why the cultural dimensions were included was due to its potential relevance and evidence on how the organizational culture is perceived and adopted. We have decided to solely utilize Geert Hofstede’s cultural research and dimensions in order to create coherence and to limit our research further. If we were to include more researchers we argue that our research would have taken a more cultural direction than we intend to investigate, thus we are aware that there are more cultural researchers and that the use of only one major cultural researcher could have an impact on the outcome of our degree project. However, throughout this process we will contemplate upon this fact and be critical on the contents of the dimensions.

Investigating prior theories on organizational culture, we noticed a common pattern where the authors ultimately stressed the importance of strategically implemented organizational cultures, since this may improve the company position and efficiency (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). By referencing to our previously stated research question: “How are organizational cultures evident in synergistic elements of workplace well-being within international branches?” it becomes obvious that organizational culture is a central part in our research and therefore requires theories that explains and explores this subject. As suggested by prior research, one potential tool that potentially can come to provide a strong competitive advantage is the use of the organizational culture (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). Furthermore, since middle managers are believed to serve as an intermediary to implement the organizational culture various literatures on leadership strategies and relevant strategic tools have been contemplated upon.
Following our prior choices of theories, we continuously noticed four recurring elements - motivation, commitment, trust and job satisfaction, which all indicated a close connection to organizational culture. As argued by Dietz and his coauthors, a particular cultural membership allows a better understanding on the shared values and behaviors amongst the group, and thus contributes to a relationship high on trust (Dietz et al., 2010, p. 19). Prior theories additionally referred to commitment as the overall identification strength with the organizations goals and values (Noble & Mokwa, 1999, p. 61). Furthermore, Latham and Pinder suggested the interaction between individuals and the respective environment to consequently result in higher amount of motivation (2005, p. 486). A result from the recurrence of these elements generated speculations regarding the organizational cultures influence on workplace well-being, thus a decision to include these in the theoretical framework was taken.

Another aspect that is important to consider is the underlying needs of human kind and the potential effects of the social identity theory. Since we are conducting research on social actors it is important to consider theories of kind, which ultimately will increase the research credibility since we are conducting our research on human beings and thus need to consider social aspects of this issue. Each concept introduced in the theoretical framework is deemed as necessary in order for us to successfully carry out our research and gain a full understanding of the topics.

2.2.5 Choice of Theoretical Sources

In our theoretical framework, we have gathered theories we deemed as relevant for the purpose of our study. The gathered information was found in theoretical sources such as scientific articles, books as well as webpages that have been considered vital were some of the theories included have been introduced to us during our previous years of studies. The scientific articles used during this research have been located through EBSCO host, Google Scholar and Business Source Premier. An alternative method that has been utilized for discovering relevant theories stems from scrutinizing reference lists on prior articles, followed by searching for these in the previously mentioned databases since these potentially could contribute with additional insights. We attempted to acquire literature that ranged from the late 90’s until present day, in order for us to get the lastly updated theories and discoveries. This is important since the information included in our research is continuously being researched and thus updates reoccurs on a regular basis. However, in certain occasions we have decided to include older references, simply because of them being the original sources for the theories and models utilized.

Key words as organizational culture, national culture, culture, leadership, globalization, human needs, social identity, strategic leadership, organizational trust, organizational commitment, work motivation, job satisfaction, well-being, international business, amongst others have been used when searching for these theoretical sources that consequently will aid us in our process of answering the research question. Efforts to try and minimize any type of secondary references were made early on in process and thus attempts to acquire the original source guided our theoretical framework. However, whenever we deemed the original source as unattainable or considered the description provided by the secondary source as better, secondary sources have been applied.
2.2.6 Source Criticism

In order for our research to be regarded as a source of credible and trustworthy information it is important for us as authors to critically reflect upon our choices of theories. We consider our academic background and our previous experiences in terms of acquiring relevant literature as beneficial for assembling theories of high quality. However, it is still crucial to consider possible strengths and weaknesses originating from the choices of literature. In terms of strengths, the decision utilizes literature gathered from reliable databases that only publishes reviewed and additionally peer-reviewed articles have greatly benefitted our research. Moreover, although our decision to locate particular scientific articles through the use of Google Scholar could negatively influence our research if these were not peer-reviewed. However, we have almost exclusively chosen well-cited articles that were considered credible and reliable. When such articles were used we took on a critical approach towards the content and some were excluded when deemed unreliable. We furthermore regard this as strength since it allowed us easier access and thus a better focus on the overall quality of the paper. Additionally, the utilization of theories and models that have been regarded as original and well-known highly benefits our research. At the same time, our desire was to mainly locate articles relevant for the time being and for them to be up to date.

When it comes to the potential weaknesses originating from our choices of literature source, we consider these important to mention and reflect over. Our decision to include secondary sources when we deemed these as necessary and suitable can potentially affect the quality of our research due to the fact that interpretation on the original source can be skewed and misunderstood. Yet another additional weakness can be possible language errors when translating. An attempt to keep to books and articles in English was originally made. However, at specific occasions when an English version was not available, a decision to use literature sources in Swedish was made. For instance, when we attempted to obtain Hofstede and his co-authors’ book “Cultures And Organizations - Software of the Mind”, the English version was not available thus the decision was made to instead reference to the Swedish version of the same book. However, when the English literature later was available we made sure that the content was coherent to the original source. We realize the risks involved with translation mistakes, but regard our previous experiences in English translations throughout our academic background as adequate for keeping this risk to the minimum. Furthermore, our educational background might also affect our overall choices for theoretical sources. This can stand as a weakness since other relevant theories and models simply might get ignored. Nonetheless, we consider our chosen theories and models as relevant and necessary for the purpose of our research.
3.0 THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

This chapter includes literature on the topics needed in order for us to be able to answer our research question and fulfill the purpose of this degree project. The theoretical framework begins with relevant literature on the subject of national culture, which is followed by necessary literature on strategic leadership. The framework thereafter introduced the subject of organizational culture, which is central to our research, and continues on by introducing literature on the synergistic elements of well-being, that is trust, commitment, job satisfaction and trust. Lastly, theories on social identity as well as internal marketing will be included in the chapter.

You can't sell it outside if you can't sell it inside.
- Stan Slap

3.1 National Culture

In order to understand the magnitude of definitions that exist when conceptualizing and explaining the word “culture” one can consider the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn. In 1952, these two anthropologists compiled a list of 164 different definitions of “culture”, and this number has surely grown since then. National culture was in 1980 defined as “collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 19). Another more recent definition states that “Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behavior and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behavior” (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 3). Regardless, culture is believed to have an impact on how people make decisions (Conway & Swift, 2000, p. 1398).

One of the most prominent researchers within the field of culture professor Geert Hofstede, describe culture as an unavoidable phenomena that constitutes one of three different levels of mental programming in the human mind (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 20, 28). One of these levels, Human nature, concerns the universal ability to generate emotions of anger, fear, love, happiness et cetera although the culture influence how these individuals express these emotions (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 22-23). The personality is specific to an individual and is based on both inherited and learned traits, experiences and attributes (Hofstede et al., 2011, p.23). Culture, on the other hand, is specific for groups and is learned during the course of life, which is nothing that people are born with and should therefore be separated from human nature and personality of individuals (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 22). Furthermore, there are various cultural levels or groups that an individual may mentally adhere to. These levels may for instance constitute nationality, gender, generation, religion, region, ethnicity, societal class and even division or position in an organization (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 36-37) Each and every one of these categories carries a mental software which may not always harmonize as an individual is likely to have a sense of belonging and be mentally programmed to more than one of these groups (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 36-37).
Cultural differences can be described with four manifestations on different layers. The least profound one concerns *symbols*, which constitutes gestures, clothes, and the choice of words, symbols of status or objects that communicates a meaning in some cultures. Due to the rapid changes and disappearance of symbols, this is the most superficial manifestation (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 24). The adjacent layer has been found to have an impact on culture and concerns fictitious or non-fictitious *heroes*. Whether they may be alive or dead heroes they serve a function as cultural role-models (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 25). Meetings, ceremonies, signs of showing respect as well as the way of greeting people and other *rituals*, is even more deep-rooted since it strengthens the social aspects of a culture. All of the aforementioned layers are visible to an outside observer (although the cultural substance may be difficult to interpret) and are called conventions (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 25-26). The core layer – *values* – is the deepest manifestation and incorporates the common tendencies and preferences within a culture. In stark contrast to the outer layer, changes in the core layer occur slowly, which generates a stable foundation for the values of a society (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 26; 39). Geert Hofstede and his co-authors further suggest reasons as to why there are cultural differences between nations. As can be seen in figure 2.1, there are three different types of cultural differences; identity, values and institutions and all of these have a historical background (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 42-43).

![Figure 1 - Hofstede Culture](image)

*Identity* concerns the language and/or religion, and what group one belongs to. An individual usually have many identities; being a Swedish citizen and a woman are examples of two of those. The extent to how many identities one may have may be restricted the culture and is connected to one of the dimension developed by Hofstede namely, collectivism and individualism. The second difference, values and the implicit software of the mind and as previously mentioned include common tendencies and preferences within a culture. The last source of difference between groups is the laws, systems and organizations that have developed throughout the history, summarized in a category called *institutions* (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 43-44). There is a strong connection between values and institutions. However the connection between values and identity is much weaker, which means that foreign institutions not always are applicable in to a home country but instead have to adjust institutions to the citizens’ software (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 44).

### 3.1.1 Six Cultural Dimensions

#### 3.1.1.1 Power Distance
The origin of power distance has been related to the historical roots of language. For instance, countries with a history from the roman language (and the roman empire) such as French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish got scores that were from average to high, whilst Germanic languages like Swedish, English, German, Dutch and Norwegian received low scores. These countries were once roman but later re-conquered by barbarians, thus the roots of power distance can be traced back as far 2000 years ago (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp.109-110). The Confucian/Chinese heritages with a culture from at least 4000 years ago are also connected to an average or high power distance. The score of a nation have also been found to have connections to the geographical latitude, size of population as well as the wealth of the nation. Higher latitudes tend to have lower power distance, a greater population is connected to higher power distance and wealthier nations generally have lower power distance (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 110-111). Nonetheless, the power distance index (PDI) is the first of the dimensions and concerns how societies handle inequality (Hofstede, 2001, p. 79). Societies that experience a high degree of power distance tend to accept hierarchical orders. In a business context this may be in terms of subordinate-boss relationship where inequality is nearly inevitable, thus concerns the level of acceptance of this discrepancy power and hierarchy acceptance. Conversely, countries that exhibit a low score in power distance tend to equalize the power distribution (Hofstede, 2001, p.81). In organizations where the power distance is high both managers and subordinates believe they are not equal. In these organizations the power tend to be centralized to a selected few and the salary is based upon the power of the individual. The wage difference between the powerful compared to the less powerful is usually significantly different, which is also true considering the status (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 98). Surprisingly, managers tend to feel underpaid and dissatisfied with the carrier where high power distance is present (Hofstede, 2001, p. 106). At workplaces where the power distance is low decentralized, flat structures is more prominent were hierarchy is merely constructed due to convenience. In these organizations managers rely on their employees and include them in decision making as well as expects support from their co-workers, as oppose to high power distance were managers are authoritative makes decisions without the consultancy of employees that instead expect to be told what to do (Hofstede, 2001, p. 107). Where high power distance is evident some employees usually have a controlling function and act as a supervisor who reports to the next level in the hierarchy (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 98). Low power distance organizations also tend to have a more open communication with all levels of the organization where low levels of the organizations are viewed as equally important as top levels (Hofstede, 2001, p. 108). According to Hofstede, symbols of status is likely to be perceived as negative where the power distance score is low since employees might reason that the superior wastes company money (2001, p. 105). Hofstede and his cowriters describes that the power distance between nations so far has remained unchanged and suggests that although the power distance might decrease, the decrease would affect all nations thus the ranking would remain the same (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 113).

### 3.1.1.2 Uncertainty Avoidance

Again, as with power distance the history of uncertainty avoidance is connected to languages although in this case there were no connections regarding, latitude, wealth or size of the population (Hofstede et al, 2011, p. 286). This index describes to what extent
a society feel uncomfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty as well as magnitude in which the people try to control it (Hofstede, 2001, p. 146). Hofstede defines uncertainty avoidance as “The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations” (2001, p. 161). The coping of uncertainty is something that all humans as well as organizations have to deal with due to the fact that we cannot foresee the future (Hofstede, 2001, p. 146). Human societies have developed technology, laws and religion in order to cope with these uncertainties. Similarly, organizations utilize technology, rules and rituals for the same reasons (Hofstede, 2001, p. 147). Rules are intended as a predictor of behavior as well as enhancing obedience of individuals, whereas rituals such as business meetings serves as a social glue with the intention of keeping people together (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 147-148). Technology is also a tool for organizations to create predictability (Hofstede, 2001, p. 147). Together, these three are intending to minimize uncertainty and ambiguity within an organization.

Where the uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) is low, stress and anxiety also tends to be low (Hofstede, 2001, p. 155). In addition to reduced stress and anxiety, is a tendency to be less hesitant to change employer as well as being less loyal to an organization (Hofstede, 2001, p. 160). In organizations where the UAI is low there is also a pattern that employees express dissatisfaction to a superior if needed whereas organizations with high a high UAI score employees usually do not express dissatisfaction. Although low low-UAI countries are prone to express dissatisfaction to employer they tend to have their emotions under control and do not express embarrassment, anger or guilt (Hofstede, 2001, p. 156). Lastly, a common pattern in countries that score low in UAI is that individuals tend to trust most people as well as they are being more open to change (Hofstede, 2001, p. 159).

3.1.1.3 Individualism & Collectivism

This dimension can be illustrated by how some species are more gregarious in nature like wolves compared to the solitary tiger. Similarly, this dimension aims to measure the gregariousness of the human nature and how people define themselves as “I” or “we” (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 209-210). The concept of individualism has been defined by Geert Hofstede as: “Individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: Everyone is expected to look after him/herself and her/his immediate family only”. He furthermore defined collectivism as: “Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 225). Even here, the level of individualism contra collectivism can be connected to the latitude and the wealth of the nations where a wealthier nations in general score higher on individualism and countries close to the equator tend to have a lower score thus being more collectivistic (Hofstede et al., 2010a, pp. 166-167). In the future it is believed that the relative ranking will remain, but if the gap between wealthy and poor nations will continue to grow, then the differences within this dimension will grow even further (Hofstede et al., 2011, p.170).

From a work perspective collectivistic nations tend to act in accordance to what is best for the team or their in-groups neglecting personal interest, and decisions should also be taken collectively. In societies that score low on the individualism index (IDV) the workplace itself may serve as an in-groups. Rewards from management should also be
given to the in-group rather than to a single individual since personal rewards might disrupt the harmony of the in-group (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 235-237, 241). In individualistic nations there is more control and individualistic work within the workplace and the workplace commitment is often higher than in collectivistic societies. In a collectivistic society trust has to be established before conducting any business and is more based upon relationships rather than in an individualistic business context where the work task itself is more important (Hofstede, 2001, p. 239). The relationship between a superior and an employee is also more based on a business agreement and not based on personal connection (Hofstede, 2001, p. 240).

3.1.1.4 Masculinity & Femininity

In this fourth dimension biological, social and cultural distinctions between relative masculinity and femininity scores are distinguished and further refer to the prominent patterns in modern and traditional societies (Hofstede, 2001, p. 279; 284). Hofstede has defined the two aspects of the dimension as: “Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.” (2001, p. 297). In addition feminine nations are in general more consensus-oriented than masculine nations. There are no clear distinctions as to why some nations are considered feminine and some more masculine, besides how feminine nations tends to have colder climates such as Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands. This implies that an equal partnership under such circumstances increases the chances for survival and population growth (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 225-226).

There are many evident differences when it comes to the level of masculinity (MAS) and femininity at the workplace. Firstly, the reason and meaning of work differs between the two poles. While a high masculinity society work in order to receive security, salary and are in need of an interesting work, a low scoring society instead work in order to live and value relations and working conditions (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 312-313). Moreover, where high masculinity is prominent the employees tend to value more salary rather than more leisure. When conflicts arise in a workplace situation masculine cultures tend to solve issues through either letting the best man win or by denying them. A common pattern for conflict resolution in more feminine countries instead is through negotiation or compromise (Hofstede, 2001, p. 316). What is also evident in more feminine cultures is that managers possess female and male characteristics and that there are more women in managerial positions than in masculine cultures (Hofstede, 2001, p. 313). In masculine cultures the managers are perceived as heroes and not equal to the other employees and there are also a more tendencies towards competition and performance at the workplace (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 313-314). Additionally, employees within a masculine culture expects their manages lead the workplace through decisiveness, firmness and somewhat aggressively (Hofstede, 2001, p. 314).
3.1.1.5 Long-term Orientation & Pragmatism

“Long Term Orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift. It’s opposite pole, Short Term Orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of ‘face’ and fulfilling social obligations.” is how Geert Hofstede has described the fifth dimension of national culture (Hofstede, 2001, p. 359). This dimension was important since persistence and thrift mirrors the future perspective of a society whereas personal stability along with traditions is factors that describe a perception of the present or past (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 293). The long-term orientation dimension was based on Confucian thinking, however in 2010 Michael Minkov came up with two additional dimensions. One of the dimensions was new and will be discussed further below, and the other was a replication of the previously mentioned concept of Long-term orientation (LTO) but called the poles pragmatic (PRA) versus normative. Only this time Minkov based his research on World Values Survey rather than Michael Bond’s Chinese Values Survey (Hofstede et al., 2011, 290; 295).

Based on Minkov’s research Hofstede and his co-writers found some relative differences depending on whether a society is long or short term oriented (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 339). Nations that scored low on the LTO-index have a higher sense of pride regarding their nations and values traditions whereas instead a long-term oriented nation (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 310). In normative societies the absolute truth along with a desire for explanation of things to the highest possible extent, whilst as the name suggests, pragmatic nations (or long-term oriented nations) tend to have a preference of believing that a certain “truth” depends on the situational context. In pragmatic nations there is also a higher level of acceptance for contradictions and situational adaptation (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 339).

3.1.1.6 Indulgence & Restraint

Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov suggests that the last dimension should be defined as: “Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.” (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 353). In an indulgent society freedom of speech is valued and smiling is a norm. This may exemplified by the American company McDonald’s attempt to implement the American conventions in the Russian society. The Russian employees were then told to demonstrate their ‘happiness’ with a smile and friendly demeanor as they do in America. However, in a more restraint culture this is not natural behavior where the American-style customer service perceived as unnatural and odd by the Russians (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 365). This may also be illustrated in how for instance public politicians in the United States often radiate happiness and joy whereas the Russian leaders instead exuviates seriousness (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 365).

In restraint nations gender roles are more prominent, although it is not considered a problem if the household work is not divided equally. Noticeable, is that these societies tend to be less satisfied with their family life (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 361).
indulgent nations it is also more common to communicate with family, friends and colleagues as well as outsiders through e-mail and Internet whereas in restrained nations there is not much communication through these means at all (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 361). In societies with a high level of indulgence, the general norm is that leisure and having friends is important, also here a greater part of the population is happy and healthy. Lastly, these indulgent societies enjoy a society with more optimism, positive attitudes and extroverted individuals (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 358-360).

3.2 Leadership & Strategy

Leadership has always been a crucial part of any organization, and as stated in prior research the leaders’ responsibilities not only include guiding the members of the organization but also showing them the extent of their abilities and accomplishments. Thus convincing them not to settle for anything below the satisfactory level (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 47). Previous studies performed suggest there being two different dimensions of leadership - formal and informal leader-member relationships. An informal leadership has been regarded as the morally correct way of leading the members towards a common purpose for the overall collective good. The vision merely constitutes the shared values, needs and beliefs of the environment as oppose to the single vision of a leader such as in the case of formal leadership. Furthermore, informal leadership usually adopts interactive dialogues, where the leader listens and tries to understand existing issues. But also engages in motivational actions in order to encourage and inspire the staff, at the same time as the individual tries to emphasize equity and collaboration amongst the members (Pielstick, 2000, pp. 111-112). In regards to the formal dimension of leadership prior literature have claimed this leadership to be established on shared understandings in terms of authority distributions as well as and the roles of leadership. Thus ultimately explains the different predetermined roles of the members, its relations and hence the overall organizational member structure (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, p. 359).

A further extension of leadership involves the role of strategic leadership. Influential leaders contributes to organizational sustainability enhances by guiding the members to voluntarily make company-profitable decisions on an everyday basis (Rowe, 2001, p. 81). Some suggest strategic leadership to be highly correlated with the wealth creation of an organization in a sense that decisions are being made with a goal of achieving above average returns (Rowe, 2001, p. 90). Strategic leaders share the belief that actions and decisions not only affect their companies but also their respective environment. Thus highly encourages employees to work together towards the established company vision (Rowe, 2001, p. 91). As stated by prior research, organizational values are often a reflection of the ones from top managers, thus implying the importance of recognizing the behaviors and values of the top management in order to predict the organizational performance and actions (Hambrick & Mason, 1984, p. 193).

Several researchers and business-involved individuals have provided their own definition on the subject. Suggested by Ireland and Hitt, strategic leadership is a person’s “ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization” (1999, p. 43). Furthermore, the creation of uniquely strategic leadership processes can function as an advantage for the organization on the market, in a sense that it will be
hard for the existing rivals to imitate (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 43). There are several areas possible to utilize as a strategic leadership tool and the exploitation of these by leaders serve as a likely creation of a strong competitive advantage. The strategic leader is responsible for recognizing the core competencies in forms of knowledge sharing across the organization. Hence exploiting the competitive advantage such as resources and capabilities and notice their rarity, value, inimitability and non-substitutability (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 49). The leader should also recognize human capital as a critical source for core competencies, such as skilled labor. There has been illustrated by prior studies that a result of a highly educated work force could lead to an increase in the organizational productivity (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 50).

Throughout prior literature, strategic leadership has been argued to be a useful tool in many organizational contexts, such as successful communication of company visions, the establishment of organizational structures as well as the company decision-making process (House & Aditya, 1997, pp. 462-463; Hickman, 1998, p. 560). Furthermore, strategic leadership has been suggested to represent the company ability to control different areas of an organization, the ability of maintaining the company culture and thus handle possible cultures conflicts (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). Ireland and Hitt additionally forecasted a problem regarding workforce diversity for the future expansion of the global market and thus the strategic leaders. They encourage openness towards the different values and beliefs, furthermore different behaviors and practices of as a result of various cultures (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, pp. 50-51). The authors implies that workforce descended from a region has a better understanding of that particular culture and the population preferences and should thus be utilized for the benefit of the organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51).

This brings us to another important strategic tool to be exploited by leaders. That is the organizational culture where strategies are decided upon, communicated through the use of specific patterns with the aid of communication networks for a possible future implementation (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). The strategic leadership utilization of a tool such as the organizational culture, especially on the global market can provide a strong competitive advantage over the existing rivals all over the world (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). It has been known as a source of company growth in terms of profitability and the cause of low layoffs for the staff of Southwest Airlines and their CEO Herb Kelleher. Their company culture has been considered extremely desirable and is one of the main reasons as to why the amount of applications for job openings at the company is at its highest (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). The strategic leaders should also be the ones designing strategies suitable for the purpose and vision of the organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 48). Furthermore, prior authors suggest that issues such as ethical considerations as well as organizational controls need to be recognized by the strategic leaders. Meaning, the need of the leaders to make decisions based on integrity, trust and furthermore successfully utilize procedures in order to frame and maintain organizational activities that can be considered beneficial for the organization. However, this tool is suggested to suffer from issues concerning diversity in form of global economy and culture, thus is deemed to be difficult to control (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 52).

When it comes to cross-cultural aspects in terms of leader and follower dissimilarities, previous research argued that when a leader and a follower originates from different parts of the world, it will most likely be difficult for them to establish a high quality
leader-member relationship. This is based on possible cultural misunderstandings arising consequently due to the different cultural behaviors and assumptions on how to act in social gatherings (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, p. 165). Another factor mentioned by House and Aditya is the need of different types of leadership types and thus behavior depending on the environment; some employees might be acceptable towards the idea of high-power concentration. This means that the staff members needs someone to delegate assignments and control the overall quality of the work, another type of leadership for these individuals might cause distress (House & Aditya, 1997, p. 463).

Prior research conducted by Goleman found there being six different leadership styles being adopted by individuals, each relevant for leaders to utilize based on their emotional intellect (Goleman, 2000, p. 82). Goleman further argues positive result of a flexible leader who is able to exhibit multiple styles based on the situational fit. He claims that a leader who demonstrates an authoritative, democratic, affiliative and coaching style will greatly benefit the workplace climate and thus the performance amongst the members (Goleman, 2000, p. 87). The six different leadership styles will be introduced below.

One of the leadership styles prominent in organizations is the coercive style, whereby the leader demands performance and compliance. Additionally, the leader goes to the extreme when it comes to firing co-workers and selling divisions for the good of the organization, and is not afraid of showing his or her dissatisfaction (Goleman, 2000, p. 82). This type of leadership style does not allow for a lot of flexibility and when it comes to decisions being made it is performed in a top-down fashion. Ultimately, these types of actions has been known for causing emotions of ambivalence amongst the members of the organization in terms of communicating ideas and opinion, simply due to them being scared of being shot down by the leader (Goleman, 2000, p. 82). A coercive leadership style is furthermore known for interfering with motivation, which is considered one of the main tools for collectively gathering everyone to work towards the same mission and this will consequently lead to a less committed workforce. All together this leadership style causes discomfort and has a severe impact on the workplace climate, and should thus only be applied with extreme caution in the few situations that demands instant change (Goleman, 2000, p. 82).

Following leadership style constitutes the authoritative style; this leadership style has been regarded as the most effective one for the overall workplace climate. This leader is considered to be visionary and successful in clarifying the workforce role in achieving the company vision but also stresses the importance of each individual's contribution to the organization and for this reason motivates the entire workforce (Goleman, 2000, p. 83). The overall result of this leadership style is highly committed employees who ultimately receive their motivation from the overall success of the organization. The leadership style additionally constitutes flexibility, this means the leader assures his or her final say in important matters but also allows leeway for employees to be independent in terms of innovation and creativity. This style is not suitable when the leader considers him or her as less experienced than their significant peers (Goleman, 2000, p. 84). Furthermore is the affiliative style, which to a great deal revolves around the individuals’ part of the organization (Goleman, 2000, pp. 84). This leadership style is considered highly flexible, high in trust, and allows innovation and risk-taking. Motivation through rewards consisting of positive feedback, the leader is likely to go out for lunches and have coffee breaks with the coworkers and through this creates a
sense of belongingness. This style has been proven beneficial when there is a desire to establish harmony within the team, improve communication and repair distrust. Possible downsides of this leadership style are development stagnation and performance inefficiency (Goleman, 2000, pp. 84-85).

Following leadership style is referred to as the democratic style. This style is commonly known to establish respect and trust in the leader by including the employees in the decision making process, and through this foster employee commitment (Goleman, 2000, p. 85). The style is regarded as flexible and responsible where the leader allows the employees to be part of taking decisions. This creates realistic employee expectations on the leader. A possible limitation could be employee confusion resulting from being leaderless, and when it comes to taking decision the process would take time and the meeting would be endless in order for everyone to have a say in it (Goleman, 2000, p. 85). In terms of a pacesetting style, the leader sets very high standards both for leader and the coworkers and makes sure to stick to them, thus constantly improving oneself (Goleman, 2000, p. 86). The leader is fast to comment on poor performing employees and if improvements are not made the employee is likely to get fired. Although this leadership style seems effective in promoting performance, it is likely to overwhelm the workforce and thus destroy the workplace climate. Consequently flexibility and work becomes more task focused, which ultimately hinders any type of innovation and leaves the employees feeling distrusted (Goleman, 2000, p. 86). The leader is also considered to be unable to provide feedback to the employees and instead takes over their job when needed. The consequences of this could be that if the leader is absent, the employees might feel confused and lack the direction needed, thus performance stagnates (Goleman, 2000, p. 86).

Lastly is the coaching style, where the employees are encouraged to find their respective strength as well as weaknesses and to individually set long-term goals for which they try to help them reach (Goleman, 2000, p. 87). The leadership style provides a magnitude of feedback and constantly tries to challenge his or her employees by giving them assignments out of their comfort zone. They aim for long-term learning, even if it could cost the organization short-term failures. The coaching style has been considered one of the least common ones, mainly due to the time requirements and economic pressures. Nonetheless, this style has been argued being a very powerful tool and will positively affect the workplace climate and thus the performance (Goleman, 2000, p. 87). As explained by prior research the employee reassurance will originate from having the boss guiding him or her. Meaning the employee will most likely not be afraid of experimenting, knowing the boss is there to correct possible mistakes and provide the employee with constructive feedback. The “I believe in you”-approach of a coaching style ultimately promotes a committed workforce and is profitable to utilize when the employees themselves wish to improve their performance. However, when regarding the limitations of the style, it does not work in situations where the employee is considered resistant towards change (Goleman, 2000, p. 87).

3.3 Business Structures

Concerning the business structure of organizations, prior research have stated a variety of factors that affects the decision making processes as well as implementation strategies for corporations (Malone, 2004, p. 8). Factors such as the possessor of the
information, the division of responsibilities, the effects of culture, availability of organizational capabilities furthermore existing motivation and consumer trust are a few of these (Malone, 2004, p. 8). Previous research performed by Malone further suggested the cost of communication to be a major factor affecting the decision making process of not only businesses around the world but also entire societies (2004, p. 8). Originally, communication functioned as a personal manner between individuals divided into decentralized groups referred to as bands. These groups developed as an entire society and were successful in establishing long distance communication through the use of pen and paper (Malone, 2004, p. 8). Centuries later, another discovery featuring a printing press promoted additionally decreased costs of communication of information to ordinary folk (Malone, 2004, p. 9). Of course, accompanied by other factors such as individual freedom requirements and motivation through the use of flexibility, which acted as sources to a decentralized society. A further technology development in forms of telephones, telegraphs amongst many others led the way towards a centralized and successful society as a result of an increased communication ability (Malone, 2004, p. 10) However, as to this day, the use of internet and e-mails and the supply of relevant information to employees promotes independent choices and ideas and thus encourages innovation (Malone, 2004, p. 10)

For additional clarification there are two main organizational structures that are being utilized to this day by several organizations across the world, that is the centralized- and decentralized business structure (Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003, p. 651). When decision concerning the company is provided from one particular level of the corporation, a centralized structure is being adopted. That is a centralized structure implies one main location whereby the individuals in charged operates from and controls the remaining departments (Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003, p. 651). An advantage with a centralized organizational structure is that it assures operation persistence and assures that performance is constant and according to protocols. However, an isolation from the environment can contribute to faulty decision being made and can lead to a less efficient workforce (Kim, 2006, p. 242; Morrison & Milliken, 2000, p. 720). A centralized organizational structure furthermore acts in a top-down fashion, hence the resources, costs and information are controlled by higher-level management (Caruana et al., 1998, p. 25). Thus allows the highest management to carefully monitor the activities within the organization.

Furthermore, authors such as Malone (2004) reflected over a future revolution of business over time from a centralized and controlled society to a more self-managed, democratic as well as employee empowering way of working, thus a more decentralized business structure. The author suggested this structure to provide a sense of freedom and claimed decentralization to be “the participation of people in making the decisions matter to them” (Malone, 2004, p. 5). A decentralized way of working as opposed to a centralized function also provides several benefits for an organization in terms of increased motivation, innovation and creativity (Lee & Choi, 2003, pp. 205-206; Amason et al., 1995, p 27). This is due to the fact that it allows lower level managers more power to decide on actions to take for the particular department, hence tailoring the organization towards the respective environment (Ouchi, 2006, pp. 299-300). Just as centralized structures functions in a top-down fashion, decentralized structures have implemented a more bottom-up design promoting productivity and organizational improvements (Gudergan, 2004, p. 269).
A consequence of giving more power to lower level managers is the less involvement of top-level management, good or bad, this means that higher level executives are limited to only manage the organization based on annual reports on their success or failure and the communication is brief and rare (Greiner, 1972, p. 7). The knowledge and closeness to customer demands and the evolution of the market in terms of products and services developments greatly benefits the company. Hence, this utilization can contribute to a greater ability to penetrate the respective markets (Greiner, 1972, p. 7). However, the decentralized strategy is not risk-free, since it puts severe pressure in terms of responsibilities on managers that might lack the competence needed and simply is considered unsuitable for the position. That being said, if the individual is deemed right for this role it promotes better performance and a possibility of discovering ideas that efficiently works towards the overall good of the company (King, 1983, p. 321). One major disadvantage with this structure can thus be apparent in terms of loss of top-managerial control (Greiner, 1972, p. 7).

3.4 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a recurring subject in the academic world because of the central part cultural dimension plays in an organization's life (Alvesson, 2002, p. 1). The concept of ‘culture’ has a broad meaning without an exact definition; consequently it can cover everything or nothing (Alvesson, 2002, p. 3). Similarly, ‘organizational culture’ has been explained in a various different ways without any universal definition (Alvesson, 2002, p. 3). Frost with co-authors for instance described the term as “Talking about organizational culture seems to mean talking about the importance for people of symbolism – of rituals, myths, stories and legends – and about the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by the groups within which they lived” (Frost et al., 1985, p. 17). Nevertheless, culture is jointly created by a group of individuals thus the result of learning experiences gathered from challenges occurring over time (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). Organizational culture has further been described as ‘social glue’ as a source of identification where control is informal and non-structural. One of two major viewpoints of this metaphor postulates that harmony within the organization is natural affair, whereas the other stance claims that the glue is in constant need of maintenance (Alvesson, 2002, pp. 32-33). In comparison to the ‘social glue’, the ‘sacred cow’-metaphor suggests a deeper and more committed approach of culture that corresponds to the core values of the organization (Alvesson, 2002, p. 33). An additional description on the subject was provided by Johnson and his co-authors, defining the organizational culture as being the: “taken-for-granted assumptions and behaviors that make sense of people’s organization context” (2011, p. 168).

Organizational culture is highly relevant for businesses on the global market since the established culture will act as a foundation for the chosen actions nonetheless the methodological tools and can act as a competitive advantage (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). The overall strength and stability of an organizational culture will vary depending on how long the culture has been present and consequently the emotional intensity of it (Shein, 2010, p. 3). Alvesson (2002, p. 83) furthermore suggests that in service marketing and service management, culture appears to be of particular importance, and since services are intangible, social processes naturally become more important. Thus implying that selling the image of the company to the employees also will stand to affect the customers in the latter instance (Alvesson, 2002, p. 84). Organizational
culture has nonetheless been argued as a subject that consists of different layers, starting from the outer layer is values, followed by beliefs, behaviors and paradigm, which basically stands for the taken-for-granted assumptions (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 173). Values have been regarded as the easiest noticeable since these are usually written down and pointed out by the organization (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 173). Beliefs on the other hand are considered more specific, and can consequently result from decisions made on how to solve issues currently faced by the organization (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 173). The behaviors are day-to-day operations in terms of work routines, structures and symbolic behaviors and are mostly noticeable amongst the individuals involved in the organization. Last but not least is the taken-for-granted assumption that ultimately sets the foundation for the organizational culture, these can however be hard to identify not to say the least describe (Johnson et al., 2011, pp. 173-174).

McAleese and Hargie suggest that there are five guiding principles of building, maintaining or modifying organizational culture regardless of what products or services that are provided (2004, p. 160). These principles include formulating a cultural strategy with shared values, mission and vision of the company (McAleese & Hargie, 2004, p. 160). By developing ‘cultural leaders’ and also communicating the culture internally and externally this may result in increased motivation by the employees as well as increased customer satisfaction. It is also of major importance to encourage, measure and recognize the performance by individuals within the organization since they are crucial to the success of the organization (McAleese & Hargie, 2004, pp. 162-167).

![Figure 2 - Five Principles of Organizational Culture](attachment:figure2.png)

However, it is not an easy task to adopt a culture that is suitable for the environment constraints and criterion that fits with the preferences of the senior management (McAleese & Hargie, 2004, pp. 167-168). In a similar study, Young instead included six levers that could serve as tool to maintain organizational culture (2000). His study suggests that motivation, conflict management, management control, authority and
influence, strategy formulation and customer/client management all must fit together in order to reinforce the organizational culture (Young, 2000, p. 20). Organizational culture has nonetheless been suggested as highly related to leadership, in a sense that the final organizational culture ultimately is created, embedded, evolved and manipulated by the leaders (Shein, 2010, p. 3). Leadership has been regarded as being shaped by the culture, and not the other way around (Alvesson, 2002, p. 106). Cultural-driven leadership implies an idea where the manager and employees share the beliefs and norms of the organization and acts accordingly (Alvesson, 2002 p. 116). Furthermore, as stated by Alvesson, “as leadership is a cultural phenomenon - and any act that is not interpreted as meaningful will lead to negative responses (confusion, resistance, loss of legitimacy, reluctant obedience) - cultural change rather means the cultural re-definition of leadership” (2002, p. 116).

One can question the extent to which the organizational culture actually influences the organization in terms of for example potential strategies. According to Johnson and his co-authors the nature of the culture established on the taken-for-granted assumptions is highly correlated with the management of strategies, and should thus stand as central to the organization (2011, p. 174). They argue three main reasons for that being, starting with as similarly to Alvesson (2002), a cultural glue ultimately binds the workforce together when it comes to organizational operations and thus requires less supervision in general. Furthermore, there is also a potential for the organization to be captured by the culture. This means that when a changing business environment is prominent, the organization attempts to cope with the change through its existing culture (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 174). The culture itself, meaning the identity and other observations that are typically taken-for-granted also makes them hard to manage. Thus performing an analysis concerning the organizational culture becomes extensively more important (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 175).

Changes in the environment have a likelihood of leading to modifications in organizational values and assumptions, hence change the overall organizational culture. This could lead to a collision between the newly established assumptions and the original organizational culture and can consequently cause confusion amongst its members and hence be met by resistance (Gordon, 1991, p. 401). Even though an organizational culture normally is referred to as the higher-level created and controlled assumptions and values, specific for an organization and thus contributes to typical behaviors of its members, it can be severely influenced by the industrial environment (Gordon, 1991, p. 397). Prior research has however suggested that as long as the basic assumptions the industry demands are covered, an existence in differences amongst values and occasionally even assumptions within an organization is possible (Gordon, 1991, p. 398). There are furthermore a variety of variables that can contribute to an industry-driven culture, that is where the assumptions are shared between the work force and its management, hence contributes to less confusion in terms of taking market inappropriate decisions followed by a faulty implementation (Gordon, 1991, p. 402). These variables consist of the organizations competitive environment, the various customer requirements as well as its societal expectations (Gordon, 1991, p. 402). In regards to competitive environments prior research has argued the benefits of an organization to be flexible when it comes to its adaptability, this will ensure the responsiveness of the organization towards any type of sudden change or arising challenges (Gordon, 1991, p. 403). One relevant industry where this type of change is prominent is within the financial service industry, where the importance of adaptability
becomes evident as a competitive tool. This is due to the fact that it is considered to have a deregulated environment with aggressive competitor marketing as well as an orientation towards customers (Gordon, 1991, p. 409). However, as stated by Wilkins and Dyer, even if changes has been made to prohibit ineffectiveness of an organization, there is still a likelihood of the changes being unsuitable at the end due to for example already established member commitment (Wilkins & Dyer, 1988, pp. 525-526). Additionally, a culture established on the existing customer requirements is based on the reliability and novelty of the service or product (Gordon, 1991, p. 405). That is, whether or not it reaches the requested quality and delivers as promised. Equally important is the differentiation ability of the product or service in regards to meeting the different market demands (Gordon, 1991, p. 405).

As first introduced by Chao and Moon, cultural mosaic describes the likelihood of an individual to not only be regarded as an employee part of the organizational culture, but goes beyond that and suggest geographic, demographic and associative influences on the groupings (2005, p. 1129; Hope-Hailey et al., 2010, p. 339). Natural regional features such as the climate and location consequently accounts for as the geographic culture, and ultimately shapes group identities (Chao & Moon, 2005, p. 1130). Furthermore, the social identity derived from parents or other relatives in forms of gender, race, age or ethnicity, referred to as demographic culture, and may also play a role in establishing identities (Chao & Moon, 2005, p. 1129). Followed by associative cultures, whereby formal or informal groupings such as religion, workgroups or occupation, exercise influence on group identities (Chao & Moon, 2005, p. 1131). These types of subcultures existing within organizations will ultimately affect the extent of organizational trust occurring. Members identify themselves with particular individuals with whom they share an understanding with, and will thus consequently foster a stronger trust-relationship (Chao & Moon, 2005, p. 1135).

The process of establishing an organizational culture provides a huge challenge for the respective middle managers, since this requires extensive knowledge on various areas such as the demands of the organization, its processes as well as the individuals involved within it. Additionally, the manager needs to create this form of relationship and sense of connection between the members as soon as possible in order to make the organization work as a united entity (Valentino & Brunelle, 2004, p. 393). When it comes to the communication of corporate goals and vision, prior research performed by Quinn noticed the importance of middle managers within organizations; this was based on top management isolation from everyday company activities and thus their inability to successfully communicate to their respective employees (1985, pp. 76-77). Middle managers close connection with company employees, customers, operations and practices, as well as their ability to communicate ideas up to the top management thus provides a huge advantage for organizations (Burgelman, 1983, p. 1352; Huy, 2002, p. 32). The role of middle managers has thereby been suggested to be a major part of an organization and its culture in a sense that they are more likely to identify its currently existing problems and utilize its strengths (Huy, 2002, p. 61).

3.5 Synergistic Elements for Workplace Well-Being

When it comes to the globalization of organization, the well-being of organizational employees becomes ever so evident. Prior research has investigated possible elements
that ultimately affect the employee well-being at the workplace (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 1). Pool and Pool, described the interest in factors such as commitment, motivation and job satisfaction, id est the synergistic elements (2007, pp. 354-355). Furthermore, authors such as Mohamed et al. proposed a clear relationship between organizational commitment, job satisfaction as well as the existing trust (2012, p. 1). They suggested a necessity of organizations when it comes to understanding this relationship arguing that it not only would help them in reaching a higher level of performance but also additionally create a sense of group belonging (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 3). Another element that has been proven beneficial for the workplace is employee motivation; a factor that has been suggested to be founded on the basis of organizational trust (Mohamed et al., 2012, p.1). Thus highly encourages organizational leader’s to utilize strategies that ultimately promotes increased levels of job satisfaction, commitment and trust nonetheless motivation (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 5). There has also been a noticed connection between commitment, motivation and job satisfaction. Suggesting that commitment stands as a possible antecedent in successfully motivating employees, which ultimately affects job satisfaction (Pool & Pool, 2007 p. 366). Dirk and Ferrin argued that organizational commitment and job satisfaction is the final result of high trust (2002, p. 613). As indicated by prior research, these elements ultimately affect the individual well-being at work and is therefore important to investigate when dealing with human resource management.

A model provided by Burchell and Robin has successfully been used for investigating the well-beings of employees throughout several areas where different cultures and languages are prominent (2010, p. 183). They argued it being five dimensions of a great workplace, and divided these into the established credibility in terms of trusting their leader, respect arising from being a valued member of the organization and fairness from being treated equally. Followed by pride in working for the organization and camaraderie established on the basis of enjoying the individuals involved in the organization (Burchell & Robin, 2010, p. 4). The authors referred to particular quotes of which they deemed relevant when describing a great workplace, from an employees point of view. For example, “we have the culture where people are willing to talk to each other, share what they know, and take the proactive step to get you in touch with the right person”. Followed by “our company has growing pains like any other company, but the people always comes first. I truly know I matter in this corporation, and that’s what keeps me here” (Burchell & Robin, 2010, p. 2).

It has been suggested that the importance of organizations and their leader not only concerns emphasizing successful communication between its members but also making decision that are beneficial for the overall organizational environment (Burchell & Robin, 2010, p. 1). This means that a creative organization not only is the result of what has been done, rather on how the leader went by doing it. Meaning, the money and practices did not necessarily positively contribute to the well-being of the employees, instead the relationship established over the course of time does (Burchell & Robin, 2010, pp. 3-4).

As illustrated in previously conducted research, commitment, motivation and job satisfaction were regarded as the synergistic elements of workplace well-being. In addition to previously mentioned elements, trust was a recurring factor throughout prior literature whereby the authors implied the elements to be of high relevance for the subject of well-being (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 5; Pool & Pool, 2007, p. 366).
Therefore, a decision to utilize the original synergistic elements of well-being was suitable, furthermore the inclusion of trust due to its high relevance.

3.5.1 Trust

In a highly competitive market the trusting relationships might possibly stand as a strong organizational advantage (Gilbert & Tang, 1998, pp. 321-332; Huff & Kelley, 2003, p. 81). A framework provided by Doney and his co-authors considers the shared norms and values between two parties as a favorable foundation on which a trusting relationship should be established (Doney et al., 1998, p. 616). Prior researchers furthermore argued there being three different dimensions of trust, harmony, concern and reliability (Tzafrir & Dolan, 2004, p. 127). Harmony has been regarded as the extent of trust founded on the feelings, purposes and values to name a few, between the employees and managers within an organization. A mutual understanding and agreement in terms of values has been known for fostering a high employee-management relationship. This may be achieved through a successful creation of a collective identity amongst its members, thus promoting a shared commitment towards the values of the group. Furthermore this allows for managerial ability to effectively manage the corporation’s culture (Tzafrir & Dolan, 2004, p. 127). Trust founded on concern, simply means what it suggests, there are sufficient motives for one of the parties in performing as promised in order for the trusting party to look good (Tzafrir & Dolan, 2004, p. 127). Moreover, the dimension of reliability within trust simply implies that trust is founded on systematically consistent procedures and behaviors that bind the other party to keep their commitment (Tzafrir & Dolan, 2004, p. 127).

Additional research found a correlation between the interest in trust studies with studies performed on cross-cultural and national differences (Schoorman et al., 2007, p. 350) They discovered that culture in fact does affect the amount of existing trust, this is based on the personalities and experiences originating from the culture (Schoorman et al., 2007, p. 351) When a cultural membership is shared amongst individuals there is a greater understanding of the commonly shared values, norms and behaviors of the group thus simplifies the overall process of establishing a relationship founded on trust (Dietz et al., 2010, p. 19). A beneficial way to illustrate the relationship between cultures and trust is to consider a scenario as mentioned by Dietz with co-authors (2010, p. 21). For example, by comparing the business relations between the American society and the Chinese society, the authors suggest that trust for the American society to be the outcome of signing the contract, whereas in the Chinese society trust is the precondition in order for an individual to actually sign the contract (Dietz et al., 2010, p. 21). Thus indicating that culture “influences the formation of trust cues in relationships, and serves as a filter for cues encountered from another culture” (Dietz et al., 2010, p. 21). Another factor that can ultimately affect trust originates from issues involved with language boundaries (Henderson, 2010, p. 377). A reoccurring problem is the communication across languages where consequences such as misinterpretations and misunderstandings are common. This can severely affect the motivation and behaviors of the organizational members thus lead to faulty interpretations on the characteristics of trust such as the ability, benevolence and integrity cues of the individuals (Henderson, 2010, p. 360). As stated by Henderson, “as language signals in-group membership it therefore explicitly denotes a cultural boundary” (2010, p. 366). Individuals have a tendency to trust what is similar, when it comes the cultures,
languages and values. This means that the creation of trust will take longer time for an individual whom considers the other party as dissimilar, which ultimately obstructs the situation (Henderson, 2010, p. 367).

Individual’s abilities to trust tends to vary across cultures, one of the reasons for this has been suggested to be whether or not the culture is task or relationship oriented. Thus relating this to previously mentioned theories involved in strategic leadership. Task-oriented tends to put more faith into the goodness of others, whilst relationship-oriented initially need to establish a relationship before completing a task (Schoorman et al., 2007, p. 351). There are several necessities related to cross-national strategic alliances, but one of the major ones includes the importance of organization to understand the different cultures in which the organization operates in, this in order for them to possibly establish valuable relationships built on trust (Doney et al., 1998, p. 617; Dietz et al., 2010, p. 19). It has furthermore been suggested that in a collectivistic society, members are loyal towards one another, and are more likely to be high in trust, whereas in an individualistic society trust is expected to be low. (Huff & Kelley, 2003, p. 82; Huff & Kelley, 2003, p. 87) This is based on the idea that within a collectivistic culture, a noted tendency of the members to favor the in-group instead of the out-group is prominent (Huff & Kelley, 2003, p. 83). However, the trust for outsiders is deemed low, thus their ability to establishing relationships built on trust is non-sufficient (Huff & Kelley, 2003, p. 87). Furthermore, it has been suggested that an organization with a collectivistic culture might face difficulties in establishing an organizational cultures that stands out from the overall societal culture (Huff & Kelley, 2003, p.88). As previously mentioned, cultural filters creates cues of trust in terms of relationships, the importance of cultural competence when it comes to the process of building trust becomes ever so obvious (Smith & Schwegler, 2010, p. 286). Prior researchers Smith and Schwegler suggests Doney’s cultural framework for trust building, illustrated below, to be appropriate since each of the processes is founded on different norms and behavior, and thus their applicability will vary across the cultures (Smith & Schwegler, 2010, p. 286).

Previous research additionally proposed five possible ways for establishing trust, these includes calculative, prediction, intentionality, capability and transference processes (Doney et al., 1998, p. 615-616). The invoked process highly depends on the overall applicability within the specific culture in terms of norms and values (Doney et al., 1998, p. 615). Shortly explained calculative process is prominent when trust is created on the basis of behavior control. Meaning, the trustor receives assurance from calculating the expected cost and rewards of possible untrustworthy actions on the other party’s behalf, thus feels confident as long as the rewards exceeds the cost (Doney et al., 1998, pp. 604-605). Prediction process is when a trustor considers prior experiences as a demonstration on the behaviors of the other party, this means that the more experiences the trustor has with the party, the wider knowledge base is available (Doney et al., 1998, p. 605). Intentionality processes is relevant to utilize when a trustor wishes to investigate the intentions and motives of the other party through an analysis of words and behaviors. If the intentions are considered selfish, an establishment of trust is most likely not achievable (Doney et al., 1998, p. 606). Trust created on the basis of capability processes refers to the other party’s capability of satisfying the trustor’s expectations through the use of proper skills and competencies. This type of process is prominent in societies where there is an existing competence gap, this means that the trustor highly cherishes requested qualifications and expertise (Doney et al., 1998, p.
The last of the possible processes on which trust is developed is through the utilization of transference processes. This means that trust has a possibility of transferring from one entity to another; the trustor simply asserts trust on a party based on its existing trustworthy interpersonal network. The idea of trust based on transference processes relies on the trustworthiness of the individuals or organizations associated with the other party, thereby originally provides the trustor with information on the reliability of the other party (Doney et al., 1998, pp. 606-607). It is important to note however that whatever the processes for creating trust is being adopted; it has to fit with the overall culture (Doney et al., 1998, pp. 616-617).

Furthermore, researchers have concluded that possible threats to a trustworthy manager-employee relationship, this in forms of arguments or other situations where negative encounters are inevitable which in turn may hinder a solid trusting relationship. These situations are deemed impossible to avoid and will most likely occur on a frequent basis (Krosgaard et al., 2002, p. 316). As defined by Mishra and Morrissey: “trust is a fragile thing; it is generally earned and grows at a painfully slow pace, it can be destroyed in an instant.” (1990, p. 444) However, prior research has concluded that even during disagreements such as previously mentioned, managers who maintain open communications and discusses existing issues with the employees will suffer less negative consequences (Krosgaard et al., 2002, p. 316). This trustworthy managerial behavior will benefit the overall organization by establishing a close relationship between the employees and the managers, but also by assisting the organization through the promotion of a desired work-behavior amongst the employees (Krosgaard et al., 2002, p. 318).

Supporting previously mentioned research; organizational trust has been regarded as the result of communicative behaviors such as openness within and honesty towards the members of the organization (Mohamed et al., 2012, p.1). This organizational trust is highly affected by a variety of factors. For example, the competence of the other party, but also the established integrity in terms of commitment, honesty, fairness and ability to honor the agreements being made. Moreover the influence of rapport, that is the shared vision, purpose, goals and thus the important elements of the organization (Mohamed et al., 2012, p.1). Prior research has furthermore noticed a relationship between organizational trust and the motivation of the organizational workforce, arguing that when trust stands as the basis on which the organizational culture is built upon, it will not only contribute to committed employees but also increase the job satisfaction, thus decrease the overall employee retention rate (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 1). When discussing the importance of organizational trust, it can be beneficial to consider the possible consequences of a low organizational trust creation, nonetheless organizational distrust. Lack of trust can severely affect an organization, ultimately contribute to a workplace environment full of negativity, this will lead to less collaborative, committed, motivated workforce and in the end promote undesirable and non beneficial results (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 2).

It has been argued in previous studies that trust is a multidimensional concept consisting of emotional, cognitive and behavioral levels that ultimately affects the individuals’ ability to trust (Paine, 2003, pp. 4-5). One component of trust creation is the various interactions between co-workers, as well as teams and alliances on the different levels, which ultimately promote results of trust (Paine, 2003, p. 4). Trust can furthermore be regarded as culturally rooted, implying a close connection between individual and the
organizational culture in terms of norms, values and beliefs (Paine, 2003, p. 5). But it can also be founded on communicative behaviors resulting from organizational knowledge sharing activities as well as openness strategies. Trust is a factor that undergoes constant changes, one way to consider these changes is to regard the life stages of trust terms of establishing trust, destabilizing trust and causes future possible trust dissolution (Paine, 2003, p. 5).

3.5.2 Commitment

Prior research performed on the importance of maintaining employee commitment towards the organization (Noble & Mokwa, 1999, p. 61). As defined by Noble and Mokwa, commitment is “the extent to which a person identifies with and works toward organization-related goals and values” (1999, p. 61). In other words, it is the extent to which an employer meets the demands of the workforce. Meyer and Herscovitch additionally supported this by proposing that commitment is “a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target” (2001, p. 301). Thus reduces the possibility of employee turnover as well as encourages hard work towards the organizational goal (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 993; Kim & Rowley, 2005, p. 109). Employee commitment has also been proven to contribute to organizational growth, thereby importance of recognizing and understanding the commitment antecedents becomes obvious for managers to utilize. This tool is beneficial when a desire to improve organizational efficiency rates exists (McGuire & McLaren, 2008, p. 35).

When competing on a globalized market, commitment becomes of increasing importance where the differences in cultures and other multicultural contexts requires the local staff members to be highly committed to the overall values and goals of the organization. The lack of commitment might in fact jeopardize the overall success of the organization (Collier & Esteban, 2007, p. 30). Furthermore, organizational commitment has been suggested to be the result of employees whom not only perform according to requirements, but goes beyond that and benefits the organization through the use of word-of-mouth and other discretionary behaviors (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 994).

Commitment might be stronger or weaker depending on situational factors. A commonly used model for studying the importance of commitment is the three-component model. This model illustrated the likelihood of commitment differences founded on the various mind-sets of the employees; these included affective, continuance and normative mind-sets (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 305). When referring to affective commitment the authors refers to the level of organizational identification and attachment of an employee, thus the extent of involvement of the individual towards reaching the organizational goal simply based on the individual’s own desire (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 305; Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). This type of commitment has additionally been studied by other researchers, whom in fact came to the conclusion that there was a noticeable relationship between communication and knowledge sharing within the organizational culture and an overall increased affective commitment (van den Hooff & Ridder, 2004, p. 126). Indicating beneficial results following individual’s ability to share identity and values through the utilization of an organizational culture. This is also supported in research performed by Finegan, whom suggested a positive relationship between the organizational values and the overall
strength of employee commitment (2000, p. 164). The organizational culture might act as a foundation on which the affective commitment can be built on. Meaning, there is compatibility between the organizational values and personal values, which ultimately benefits the organization (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 1002). Likewise, a low affective commitment becomes prominent if there exist feelings of reluctance regarding company actions (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 1002).

Furthermore, another type of commitment concerns the *continuance* commitment. Meaning the high costs arising as a consequence of abandoning the organization, thus establishing an employee need for maintaining their position in oppose to previously mentioned desire to do so, thereby ensuring the organization positive employee retention rates (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 305; Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). The last type of commitment is called *normative* commitment, although less common, it suggests a sense of obligation of the employee towards the organization. This means that the current employee is likely to stay with the organization simply due to the established believe that they ought to do so (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 305; Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67).

The model (see figure 3) constructed by Meyer and Herscovitch illustrated the important components related to an established organizational commitment (2001, p. 317). Located at the central part of the model, thus the inner-circle, is the core essence of commitment. Which simply refers to the commitment the individual has towards adapting actions necessary for reaching the organizational goals (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 317). The outer layer of the established commitment consists of the various
mind-sets available for the individuals’ part of an organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 317). These as mentioned before include the affective desire, continuance cost as well as normative obligation. Based on these three components of commitment and the idea of employees’ obligations to engage in a particular type of behavior, the organization can obtain profitable results (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 318). However, that being said, the extent of commitment strength might vary between the mind-sets. For example, commitment founded on the desire of the employee to perform a particular way, such as in affective commitment, allows the employee to completely identify with the goals of the organization and is hence more committed (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 318). Whilst with a normative mind-set, the employee feels obligated to perform as desired and merely bases the commitment strength on whether or not this fulfills their obligation (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 319). The outer boxes simply contain factors regarded as bases that lead to a particular mind-set on which the commitment is built upon. These factors should and could furthermore be considered managerial tools for which the organization can increase organizational commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 319).

Other researchers have found additional factors that also relate to organizational commitment. Studies performed by Ahmad and Oranye found a positive linkage between job satisfaction, empowerment and the degree of organizational commitment (2010, p. 589). Where they also concluded that degree of organizational commitment might vary across cultures, simply due to cross-cultural differences (Ahmad & Oranye, 2010, pp. 589-590). This was additionally supported by other researchers who found a strong correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, stating that individuals who are committed to their job, also has a tendency to be satisfied (Hulpia et al., 2009, pp. 308-309). Organizational commitment has also been proven to be achievable through the utilization of appropriate leadership styles, thus contributing to increased organizational productivity (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006, p. 13). Concluded from previous statements are that these factors may be used as managerial tools when organizations desire to increase the commitment of their workforce.

3.5.3 Motivation

Historically, much research has been focus on motivation and already in 1943, Maslow suggested that people will always strive for more than what they already have (p. 370). Human needs can act as a motivating factor and thus can be used as a managerial tool for value creation. The human psychological needs can therefore relate to the overall organizational satisfaction of its members (Deci et al, 2001, p. 931). The author categorizes the various human needs of man into five segments in a hierarchical manner, these segments include the physiological needs, sensory needs, safety needs, belongingness and esteem needs (Maslow, 1943, pp. 371-373; Zalenski & Raspa, 2006, pp. 1121-1122). It is important however to note the hierarchical order of the human needs and that any type of inability in terms of fulfilling the first mentioned needs will ultimately stand to dominate the individuals thinking and actions, and will continue to do so until they have been satisfied (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006, p. 1121). Nonetheless, the ERG theory introduced by Alderfer has been regarded as more relevant when it comes to investigating motivation within a particular work situation, thus illustrating the applicability of this theory in regards to the human needs theory provided by Maslow (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2002, p. 698)
Additionally, other researches have supported the research performed by Maslow and emphasized the importance of identifying the various needs of individuals. The idea of ERG theory is somewhat similar to previously mentioned theory in a sense that it also divides the human needs into categories of relevance. However, instead of five categories it provides the following three categories, existence, relatedness and growth (Schneider & Alderfer, 1973, p. 490; Arnolds & Boshoff, 2002, p. 698). The existence needs sums up some of the needs mentioned in previous theory in such that it includes the physiological needs of hunger and thirst, but also materialistic needs in forms of physical safety as well as payment and other margin benefits. The goal of fulfilling the human material needs and importance of satisfying an individual’s personal interest on the cost of another persons dissatisfaction has been regarded a suitable characteristic of existence needs. Relatedness needs of human on the other hand concerns relationships established on the foundation of shared values and feelings. This type of need can only be fulfilled when there is a mutual agreement between the individuals and instead of a win-lose situation regarding satisfying and dissatisfying activities as previously stated their feelings are correlated with each other (Schneider & Alderfer, 1973, p. 490). The needs of growth are somewhat similar to the needs of esteem introduced by Maslow. These relate to the needs of individuals to be creative in terms of innovations and challenges, but also productive for the overall good of the environment. This need will be fulfilled when the human has the ability to utilize his or her competences as well as the possibility of gaining new ones (Schneider & Alderfer, 1973, p. 490). It has been argued by prior researchers that the theory of ERG provided by Alderfer is more valid when it comes to comparing the hierarchy of needs and is more commonly used by researchers when a desire to investigate the workplace motivation exists (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2002, p. 698). Furthermore, in oppose to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, the ERG theory does not follow a particular step-wise direction, thus any need can be satisfied even though the former basic need remains dissatisfied (Chang & Yuan, 2008, p. 51).

As oppose to the motivation need theories by Maslow and Alderfer, the expectancy theory introduced by Victor Vroom in 1964 focuses on the individuals’ cognitive differences in terms of the respective antecedents of motivation (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 1). The theory implies that there is a considered relationship between the efforts devoted into completing a task, the performance achieved and the rewards the individuals will receive when the task has been fully completed (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 1). In other words, the expectancy theory is founded upon three different elements, this means that a individual is considered to be motivated up to the point where he or she expects the devoted efforts to lead to a desired performance (expectancy), the performance will be rewarded (intrumentality) and the reward is regarded to be acceptable and according to the preferences of the employee (valence) (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 2). In order for this theory to be accurate, following assumptions need to be covered. First and foremost the individual expectations in regards to their respective needs, experiences and motivation are ultimately what convinces to them join an organization or not, following the made choice the individuals’ behavior if shaped accordingly. The demands and requirements in terms of security, salary, challenges et cetera is considered to differ between each of the organizational members. And the last assumption is that the organizational members consciously will choose the option that in the end benefits them greatest when it comes to their personal outcome and gain (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 2). The theory is moreover founded on following equation: Motivation = Expectancy x Instrumentality x Valence, which means that when the different elements are high, the overall employee motivation.
increases. Consequently, if any of the elements are at zero, so will the employee motivation (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 3).

Furthermore, as stated by Latham and Pinder “…motivation is a psychological process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment.” (2005, p. 486). People can be motivated be extrinsically and intrinsically; the first of the two concerns when individuals carry out tasks in order to receive tangible or intangible rewards. These rewards may be praise, money or fame, thus the extrinsic motivation serves as a mean to satisfy the instrumental values of individuals (Frey & Osterloh, 2002, p. 8). There are three different types of intrinsic motivation. The first one concerns the activities such as skiing or reading a book, where the activity itself gives satisfaction to the reader and not just a completed goal. The second one, on the other hand, concerns the achievement of personal goals where the end-product is what actually motivates the individual. The last form of intrinsic motivation regards standards for their own sake, and may include ethical standards, fairness or for example team spirit within an organization (Frey & Osterloh, 2002, pp.8-9). In a study conducted by DeVoe and Iyengar they found that managers perceived their subordinates to be motivated differently across cultures (2004, p. 57). For instance, North American managers were found to perceive their employees to be more motivated by extrinsic values rather than intrinsic values as oppose to Latin American managers who exhibited an inverse perceptual experience. Asian managers on that had a less distinct perception and believed their employees to be motivated equally by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. (DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004, p. 57)

3.5.4 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is explained as the attitude that employees have towards jobs and the organization that they work and plays therefore an important role when it comes to retaining and attracting employees (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006, pp. 11-12). However, the most commonly used definition of job satisfaction is the one defined as “…a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” by Locke in 1076 (p. 1304). Much of the research previously conducted has focused on links between an organizational variable such as commitment or performance and job satisfaction (Lok & Crawford, 1999; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992; McGivern & Tvorik, 1997), presumably because the level of satisfaction (along with organizational commitment) amongst employees is expected to have an impact on the performance of the organization (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001, p.557). A noticeable amount of research has been emphasized towards the nursing occupation (Larrabee et al, 2003; Adams & Bond, 2002; Seo et al., 2004; Tovey & Adams, 1999; Knoop, 1995).

Newly recruited personnel generally receives a positive view of an organization during the entry process since companies are prone to present their best side in order to attract competent employees. Therefore, in the initial state of employment, individuals possess a relatively high level of job satisfaction. However, with time this level of satisfaction is likely to decrease, causing the so-called honeymoon-hangover effect, coined by Boswell, Boudreau and Tichy. (Boswell et al., 2005, pp. 883-884). Lok and Crawford explain that when individuals experience a low level of job satisfaction, the level of commitment is also low. These employees are likely to look for another job where the
level of satisfaction is expected to be higher. Where no such opportunities exist, instead it is expected that they stop emotionally engaging in the organization (Lok & Crawford, 2004, pp. 321-322).

Leaders play an important role when it comes to employee job satisfaction since they have such an integral part in the performance and accomplishment of goals in an organization (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006, p.13). Consequently, through the utilization of different leadership styles, managers may increase or decrease the employee job satisfaction simply by the way they behave towards their personnel. Rad and Yarmohammadia do however stress that there is no universal leadership style and instead, it has to be modified to situational contexts (2006, p.13).

Roodt and his co-writers suggest that people will evaluate their job based on individual perceptions and factors that are important to them. This evaluation is connected to the level of satisfaction that individual has towards their job (Roodt et al., 2002, p.23). Their study further indicated a positive relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction. employees’ level of satisfaction can thus be seen as a predictor of their perception of culture (Roodt et al., 2002, pp. 28-29). Organizations that possess a culture that is innovative and supportive influences the level of commitment, satisfactions as well as the cohesion of their employees (Odom et al., 1990, p. 168).

3.6 Social Identity Theory

Related to the previously mentioned belongingness and relatedness needs of humankind is the idea of identity creation through group memberships. Prior research has successfully introduced the importance of identities by referring to the relationship between identities and the role relationships of individuals (Hogg & Terry, 2001, pp. 2-3); Brown, 2000, pp. 746-747). These role relationships simply implies the expected individual behaviors as well as personal responsibilities and assists the individual by providing him or her with guidance in terms of personal meaning and direction, derived from being part of a group (Brown, 2000, pp. 746-747). As first introduced by Tajfel in 1972 social identity is “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292, cited in Hogg & Terry, 2001, p. 2) An individual obtains his or her identity from being exposed to a particular society and thus a social category. This means that over the course of time each individual will combine various social categories as a result of previous experiences and thus create their own unique identity (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). When investigating any form of group or organization it is useful to consider the aspect of social identity theory, this is due to the fact that it emphasizes the members’ belongingness to a specific social category. Thus not only assist individuals in their behaviors towards others, but also how to control their emotions and aids them in their thinking process (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p. 3). These categories can be based on various factors such as the members nationality, political statements or simply just be a group intertwined as a result of similar personalities and values (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p. 3; Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225).

As stated in prior research social identity established as a result of belonging to a specific group can not only foster increased self-esteem and a sense of social superiority but also decrease emotions of uncertainty built up in the individuals (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p. 6). Relating the decrease of uncertainty to previously mentioned theories
provided by Maslow (1943), whom in fact introduced the importance of human security needs there is an obvious connection to the social identity theory. Authors such as Michael G. Pratt stated a couple of questions that he thought were relevant for the modernization of the world in terms of globalization and how this relates to the social identities. Such as “what does it mean to identify with an organization or group that is not physically co-located?” and “with what groups do we identify as organizations become increasingly global and more heterogeneous?” (2001, p. 13).

Connected to prior statement, social identification existence within organizations is called organizational identification. Michael Pratt defines organizational identification as “how the individual relates to the collective”, and occurs when an individual identifies with traits and attributes of an organization (Pratt, 2001, p. 14). This simply is when an individual part of an organization completely defines him or herself by the beliefs of the organization (Pratt, 2001, p. 14). This type of identification not only increases the job satisfaction, but also increases employee motivation of the organizational work force (Pratt, 2001, p. 14). Organizational identification could thus be facilitated through intra-organizational homogeneity and not a diverse categorization in terms of for instance religion, race, gender, age, etc. (Pratt, 2001, p.18). Ashforth and Johnson explain that by creating a strong organizational identity as well as common goals, individuals are more prone to work together (2001, p. 33). Research has shown that individuals with longer tenure within a company will experience a stronger identification with the organization (Pratt, 2001, p.25). Demographic and cultural heterogeneity could be problematic and act as a barrier for the informational flow within an organization (Pratt, 2001, p. 26; Hewstone et al., 2001, p.85). Hogg and Terry support this as they explain how homogeneity in organizations may increase attitudes, identification and conducts in a work situation (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p.127).

Prior research has furthermore discussed the importance of an interaction between category accessibility and category fit. Implying that prototypes, which are categorizations of particular groupings, typically become accessible for individuals through their memory gathered over time. These prototypes are used to describe a particular social context and individuals choose to activate the various categories depending on its fit with the environment (Hogg, 2001, p. 188). Prototypes can add to similarities within the group, thus distinguish among them and others in terms of fit with the prototype, reduce uncertainty but can also maximize intergroup differences (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p. 5-6). Prototypicality can even be evident in the recruitment process as the recruiters search for prototypical characteristics in the individual applying for the job. A close match may facilitate ease for socialization, commitment and collaboration with the other co-workers (Moreland et al., 2001 p. 96-97). However, when individuals differ from the prototype he or she might start to depersonalize him or herself in order to achieve a higher level of prototypicality, which in turn results in enhancement of normative behavior that may facilitate in-group collaboration, collective behavior, commitment and mutual influence (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p.123). Organizational commitment implies work satisfaction and willingness towards exerting in the interest of collective goals (Ellemers, 2001, p. 108-109).

That brings us to another important aspect of social identity theory, which is the emergence of salience due to multiple identities existing (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001, p. 32). Prior research stated that social identities of a person is just as commonly noticed as any other form of membership he or she might be involved in (Pratt & Foreman,
For instance, the Social Identity theory (SIT) proposes that people have a multiple identities that are salient in different context depending on social settings, identity’s subjective importance and situational relevance (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001, p. 32). However, it is possible for individuals find it easier to relate to the occupation itself rather than the to identify organizational belonging. This does not mean that an organizational identity do not exist that other ones is not salient at all, only that it is lower down in the identity hierarchy (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001, p.35, 46). Nonetheless, multiple identities can cause difficulties and negatively challenge the organization. Managers of organizations can face severe issues regarding multiple identities, for instance, the identities may not be shared by all the members and thus are likely to collide. The individuals might also remain ignorant as to them holding a certain identity (Pratt & Foreman, 2000, p. 21). Organizational identities can also be affected by internal and external powerful individuals such as top-level management and stakeholder, it is therefore a necessity of the organization to be able to handle conflicts occurring thus transform the cost of multiple identities to benefits (Pratt & Foreman, 2000, p. 22).

When it comes to personal identities, the most favorable position is to have neither too many nor too few social identities; this allows the person to be able to respond efficiently to a variety of different personalities and settings (Pratt & Foreman, 2000, p. 23). Too many social identities cause confusion and conflicts at the same time as too few cause a decreased sense of well-being (Thoits, 1983, p. 176). Like previous statement concerning social context fit indicated, other researchers further supported the idea of salience as an indication of which particular identity that is demanded for the situation and thereby has to be the one being activated (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 229). Social identity that is a subject of salience has been defined by Oakes as “one which is functioning psychologically to increase the influence of one’s membership in that group on perception and behavior” (1987, p. 118).

Dietz with co-authors furthermore implied that both individuals and organization have several cultural memberships that originate from various social identities (2010, p. 17). The idea of social identity is to provide an opportunity for individuals to categorize people into groups, this is achieved through classifying our own group with which we identified and compare it with an outside group (Dietz et al., 2010, p. 17). In-group identification along with out-groups dis-identification can reduce uncertainty (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p.3). A high level of identification to a group of people ultimately contributes to a greater sense of belonging. Consequently, creation of in-group favoritism leads to the salience of out-groups. The stereotypical features and attributes of a group are called prototypes (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p.5-6).

3.7 Internal Marketing

Internal marketing is especially vital when it comes to service occupations where the ‘seller’ is required to be able to have a knowledgeable dialogue with the buyer, and thus successfully respond to the demands of potential customers (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993, p. 220). Even though the theory of internal marketing is considered easy to grasp and clear, the utilization of this tool in reality is less common as prior research illustrated the lack of adaptability of organizations in applying this strategic tool (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 449). Furthermore, researchers who studied strategic marketing plans
discovered an “internal marketing gap”. Simply describing the lack of success of executives when it comes to distributing information to components of the organization such as top management, middle management as well as line-staff members regarding the strategic marketing plan (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 91).

Literature on internal marketing has focused upon employee satisfaction and improving service quality through motivating the organizational work force (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 450). It has been concluded that motivation of service minded workforce through the use of these marketing-like approaches is highly efficient, as well as the success of organizations when it comes to implementing strategies necessary for them to reach its goals (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 453). Furthermore contributed with ideas such as that the employee should be regarded as an internal customer, whereby the job is the products there to settle the demand (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000, p. 451).

Previous research done on the subject of internal marketing has implied a positive relationship between internal marketing and organizational commitment (Tsai & Wu, 2011, p. 2602). A suggestion that is also supported by Tsai and Wu who explains that internal marketing not only reinforces the objectives and mission of an organization, but also positively affects the employee commitment to the firm thus increases the employee retention rate (Tsai & Wu, 2011, p. 2602). Furthermore, it promotes educational opportunities as it strengthens the self-esteem of the existing employees but and also assists the organization in regards to recognizing proficient employees (Tsai & Wu, 2011, p. 2602). Internal marketing has been argued to be equally important as the external aspects considered by companies in their future plans and strategies (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 84). It is suggested that managers of organizations need to be able to balance out the impact of both internal and external elements, thus the goals involved in the external marketing plan should be the ones adopted internally (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 84-85). The internal marketing structure can be divided into four different areas, similar to marketing externally; these include the product, price, communications and distributions (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 85).

Considering the product aspect, the authors suggests that the attitudes and behaviors nonetheless the values of the internal organization consequently forms a marketing plan, and is therefore just as important when it comes to successfully selling a product (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 85). Furthermore regarding price, the authors simply refers to the amount that has to be paid in terms of sacrificing other projects as a result of the currently existing marketing plan this can be looked as a opportunity cost (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 85). Within internal marketing is also the ability to successfully communicate information in terms of goals and objectives deemed as relevant for the components of the organization, through the means of various reports and presentations. This means being able to promote beneficial behaviors and attitudes amongst the members of the organization. The fourth and final part of the internal marketing structure is the distribution aspect (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p.85). Meaning, the different uses of educational programs, regular meetings, and seminars amongst many others. The authors additionally bring forth the human resource management as a type of distribution channel by stating that the overall organizational culture built on evaluations and encouragement sets the foundation for a successful internal marketing strategy. However, not to be forgotten is the importance of evaluating the commitment and attitude of the organizational members towards the marketing plan, this in order to
reassure that the organization and its employees delivers as promised (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 85).

As stated in prior research “the internal marketing paradigm provides an easily accessible and ‘user-friendly’ mechanism for executives to analyze the organizational issues which needs to be addressed in implementing marketing strategies” (Piercy & Morgan, 1991, p. 87). Internal marketing is beneficial for organizations to utilize when the gathering of information goes beyond the external environment, hence includes the internal environment for the company’s future success (Tsai & Wu, 2011, p. 2602). Thus implying that selling the image of the company to the employees also will stand to affect the customers in the latter instance (Alvesson, 2002, p. 84).
4.0 PRACTICAL METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the overall reasoning behind our chosen research method. The chapter begins by introducing our choice of company, followed by our chosen sampling technique and accessibility. Thereafter this chapter will continue by introducing the choices of countries and an overall description on the interview construction as well as our way of collection data. Furthermore, followed by an illustration of the interview themes, pre-test and revision, data loss and the chosen method for analyzing the gathered data. The chapter will end with a discussion in regards to source criticism and ethical issues.

Perservation of one’s culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.
- Cesar Chavez

4.1 Choice of Company

Although there might be other choices of companies with a similar business structure and a strong culture, that could have been equally suitable when conducting this research our decisions to focus on the financial sector stemmed from prior research indicating this to be a highly competitive industry (Berger & Smith, 2003, p. 451). In a competitive market it is crucial to retain a competitive advantage and this is especially important in the service sector where human resources and core competencies stands as a necessity for the success of the organization (Miller & Parkhe, 2002, p. 58; Ireland & Hitt, 1999, pp. 49-50). We moreover argue a potential organizational competitive advantage to be the possible result of the strategic use of the organizational culture. Furthermore, as mentioned previously we argue the decentralized business structure in terms of authority distribution and creativity to foster interesting information on the visibility and adoption of the organizational culture amongst its members. Not only did Handelsbanken fill the criteria of a supposedly strong culture with a decentralized structure, we also benefitted from a previously established contact with the organization, which allowed for easier access to respondents. Since our research question is as follows: “How are organizational cultures evident in synergistic elements of workplace well-being within international branches?”, naturally it was also important that the company operates in a international environment and relies on human resources and their competencies.

4.2 Handelsbanken

Handelsbanken is an international bank originally established year 1871 in Stockholm, Sweden (Kroner, 2009, p. 59). As to this day, the bank has a network of branches in its original home market Sweden, as well as networks located in the UK, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Netherlands, all of which are considered to be Handelsbanken home markets (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 5). Handelsbanken’s workforce currently stretches to more than 11 500 employees, each of them there to tender to the needs of the customers and administer the company operations (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 179). The
organization utilizes a decentralized business structure, basing its operations and offerings on the customer requirements and thus successfully ensures that these are provided in every local branch (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 179). Handelsbanken’s strategy can be summarized in the following short sentence, “the bank is the branch” (Kroner, 2009, p. 71). A statement that ultimately indicates a close relationship between customers and the branch, and provides the bank with a better and closer recognition of the customer demands at a local level and thus lowers the possibilities of conflict (Kroner, 2009, p. 71; Kroner, 2009, pp. 73-74). Furthermore, Handelsbanken’s strategy and their closely established relationships allows each branch manager more responsibility and authority, in terms of pricing, marketing, customer segmentation and administration (Kroner, 2009, pp. 71-74).

The international organization currently operates in 24 countries where they are able to offer a wide range of products and services (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 182; Kroner, 2009, p. 66). Handelsbanken additionally continues to grow in terms of expanding into new markets (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 182). This market expansion originates from Handelsbanken’s utilization of an organic growth model, which has allowed them to grow and open up branches all over the world (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 179). Ultimately, the model highly relies on values of trust, the established long-term relationships, caution as well as organizational consistency (Kroner, 2009, p. 151). When reflecting on Handelsbanken’s organizational structure it has been regarded as relatively simple, this highly dependent on the organizational ability to maintain structure consistency and allow organizational roles to remain unchanged (Kroner, 2009, p. 160). This type of organizational structure is nonetheless suggested to be a contributable factor to the development of a shared culture and a creation of membership collaboration (Kroner, 2009, p. 160). Handelsbanken highly cherishes their strong corporate culture and strives to connect it in parallel to the main company strategies, principles and limits amongst many others (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 189). Due to the fact that the corporate culture and overall values are so important for Handelsbanken, a utilization of a strategy called internal recruitment is seen as beneficial (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 186).

The overall expansion decisions furthermore highly depend on its cultural similarity and applicability, meaning the organizational culture in relation to the particular geographical location (Kroner, 2009, p. 85). Thus illustrating the organizational emphasize of an expansion strategy based on the cultural affinity instead of considering particular big bang markets (Kroner, 2009, p. 85). However, important to note is that even though the organization is operating in several countries Handelsbanken highly emphasizes the importance of each office to regard the needs of the customers before anything else, thus focusing on fostering the established relationships in a long-term manner (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 182). The long-term view when it comes to maintaining relationship does not only account for Handelsbanken’s customers. The long-term relationship with the employees is considered equally important since the overall faith in the workforce is what sets the foundation for the corporate culture, and ultimately determines the success of Handelsbanken (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 190).

The dominant corporation goal of Handelsbanken is to retain a higher return of equity than the average of peer Nordic and British banks (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 179). This return highly relies on the organizational accomplishments in terms of acquiring and maintaining more satisfied customers than its competitors (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p.
This will be achievable by providing exceptionally better service in terms of quality than the rival banks and thus accomplish their corporation goal (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 179; Kroner, 2009, p. 66). The bank also recognizes the challenges involved with being part of the bank industry, and concludes that the bank’s priority in terms of sustainability highly depends on the satisfaction and confidence of their customers, investors and stakeholders amongst many others (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 182).

Handelsbanken furthermore recognizes the value involved in resources such as the company employees, and considers a knowledgeable and experienced workforce to be one of their most vital investments (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 186). When it comes to the recruitment of staff members, a cultural fit between the bankers and Handelsbanken’s organizational culture has been argued necessary (Kroner, 2009, p. 79). This means that Handelsbanken emphasizes a strict employee selection, which is necessary when an organization desires to assemble an inspiring workforce with suitable qualifications (Kroner, 2009, p. 101). Thus, prior to the recruitment an individual whom share and agrees upon the basic values of Handelsbanken is be highly preferable (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 186). There is an existing recognition on the vitality of retaining the right competencies and knowledge in forms of employees and the bank argues by stating that the overall organizational strength is “highly derived from the overall combined expertise of their employees” (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 186).

Handelsbanken has furthermore introduced a business plan process called ‘the wheel’, which ultimately is said to promote constant development and describes the relationship between the employee development and the bank’s operations (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 186). This means that the employees themselves are included in drawing up their own branch’s business plan, thus allows the employees to see how their own achievements benefits the organization and provides them with a sense of structure. The business plan process starts with a PLUS performance dialogue between the employee and the manager, minimum once a year. Following this dialogue, the employee creates an action plan for reaching the desired goals and how this will be achieved. The next step consists of an individual follow-up that ultimately investigated whether or not the action plan has been carried out as intended, which furthermore is followed by a salary dialogue between the employee and the manager were they review the employee success in executing the action plan (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 186).

![Figure 4 - Handelsbanken's Wheel](image-url)
Handelsbanken’s long-term approach has been described as the “basis of our ownership-structure” (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 4). Included in this long-term approach is the importance of sustaining productive and knowledgeable employees, since these employees ultimately are vital in order for Handelsbanken to achieve their financial goal of outperforming their competitors (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 4). Hence as a way of motivating its employees and establishing an overall agreement between employee interests and organizational goals, the bank introduced Oktogonen (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 52). This means that the Handelsbanken board allocates a part of the profits acquired throughout the year to a profit-sharing scheme. The profit-sharing scheme moreover provides all Handelsbanken employees working in either one of the bank’s home markets, additionally employees in Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Poland, Singapore and Taipei, with an equal share of any extra profits gained over the year (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 188).

Additionally, Handelsbanken moreover stresses the importance of establishing and maintaining a sufficient two-way communication between the organization and its stakeholder, customers as well employees. Benefits such as, the ability to keep up to date, meet the customer demands and linking the organizational goals to the individuals goal of the workforce, and thus allowing for growth (Handelsbanken, 2013b, p. 183). However, Kroner suggested it to be particular areas that the Handelsbanken model does not account for, thus implying possible limitations. One of these areas concerns small clients, that ultimately cannot generate enough income in order to pay for such a high service model (Kroner, 2009, p. 142). Followed by particular geographies, simply indicating that some markets are deemed more suitable than others (Kroner, 2009, p. 143). The author also mentions that a strategy such as the one adopted by Handelsbanken can possibly negatively affect the organization in terms of authority issues. However, Handelsbanken stresses the importance of the organizations in maintaining an adequate controlling system in order for them to successfully supervise and monitor the branches and the benefits that can arise as a result of this (Kroner, 2009, p. 89).

4.3 Sample

In order to fulfill the purpose of this research we were in need of respondents that possessed a lot of relevant information on the subject in manner. However, the population from which we could gather our sample was relatively limited. For this reason we decided to utilize a purposive sampling strategy. In other words, this sampling method is regarded as a non-probability approach in a sense that the respondents are selected based on their relevance for the overall research objective (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 442). The overall sampling group consisted of managers at Handelsbanken that we deemed as necessary in order for us to successfully answer the research question. Additionally, our established connection with the branch managers allowed us the utilization of a snowball sampling strategy. This means that we, through our contact with the managers were able to acquire additional respondents. These respondents were currently employees at Handelsbanken and ultimately possessed knowledge that we considered beneficial in order for us to increase the credibility and quality of our research. Furthermore these respondents could provide us with their own reflections over the importance of an organizational culture within a company.
Additionally, since our research focuses on investigating the members of Handelsbanken through the use of applying a purposive sampling method, a generalization of a population has not been the goal.

4.4 Access

Our decision to include managers working in various Handelsbanken branches such as China, United States, Latvia, France, Germany and Norway to some extent originated from an accessibility point of view. The already established relationship to the organization would ultimately operate to our benefits, and could be a contributor to the relatively high amount of participants. Furthermore, the respondents were all considered important components of our research since it was in our belief that these are knowledgeable on their respective branch areas as well as the organization and thus would be able to provide us with relevant material. Since as previously mentioned, the respective managers are given authority to make decisions (Kroner, 2009, pp. 71-74), the process of access was simplified and we did not need to contact the highest level of management. Moreover, the respondents within each country included in this study were not decided beforehand, and is merely based on their own desire to participate in the research. Additionally, a desire to gather information on the perceptions of the employees regarding this subject ultimately contributed to us including Handelsbanken employees in our research. Mainly since we believed their opinions to highly beneficial for the overall quality of this research, thus we could also see how well their perceptions cohered with the ones of the managers.

A final decision to access this information through the use of Skype and telephone was made. Simply due to the time constraint placed on us, and the unlikelihood of us traveling to each country in order to perform the interviews in person. However, we regard the use of these means of communication as time efficient and as mentioned by Bryman and Bell, there are potential benefits involved with this strategy. Such as the low cost but also in some cases the absence of the interviewer will cause less distress in the interviewee when answering a question (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 488-489). Furthermore, when conducting interviews overseas this type of interview strategy has been regarded as preferable (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 489). The process of assembling respondents was initiated through an informative email to a selection of 20 Handelsbanken branch managers all over the world. The informative email contained a short outline on the overall purpose of the research, what is required of the participant and how this will ultimately help the study (Saunders, 2009, p. 179). Of which we later on received six positive responses, whereby the managers all agreed to perform an interview at a scheduled time at their convenience and the additional respondent were acquired through snowball sampling.

4.5 Choice of Countries

The basis for our choice of countries has mostly been determined by availability as well as the national cultural differences amongst them in terms of the aforementioned cultural dimensions. Firstly, we desired to conduct our research amongst countries with national cultures that are perceived to contrast Handelsbanken’s culture. Due to the fact that Handelsbanken is a Swedish bank with an organizational culture that supposedly is
highly influenced by the Swedish national culture we utilized the national culture dimensions to find countries differed from the Swedish culture (see Table 1 below). When contemplating upon the various cultural dimensions of Sweden compared to Handelsbanken’s structure and way of working, we found that the organizational culture was a reflection of the culture in Sweden. Since Handelsbanken currently operates in 24 different countries (Handelsbanken, 2013a, p. 182), our desire was therefore to conduct interviews with branches from different parts of the world. However, at some of the branches there were only one or two representatives, which we therefore had to exclude, thus also excluding that country from our research. This was true for id est. Brazil, Australia, Malaysia and Russia (Handelsbanken, 2014). Naturally, this limited our accessibility but we captured branches from different parts of the world containing a wide range of cultural diversities.

Table 1 - Cultural Dimensions for Chosen Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Power Distance</th>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Masculinity</th>
<th>Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>Pragmatism</th>
<th>Indulgence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lativa</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.1 Sweden

Gannon and Pillai aims to explain the cultures within nations through metaphors typical for that specific country (Gannon & Pillai, 2013). With more than 600,000 summer homes in Sweden the “Stuga” is the metaphor and an illustration of the equality in Sweden (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 140, 146). This equality is apparent when explaining the “Everyman’s Right” (Allemansrätten) – a tradition that permits the passage of fields or woods regardless of ownership (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 151). The stuga that almost solely has necessities inside it, acts as a typical residence for Swedes during the summer (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 146). Gannon and Pillai describe the Swedish culture as “…love of untrammeled nature and tradition, individualism through self-development, and equality.” (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 146). The word “lagom” is a common expression in a Swedes vocabulary and essentially means not too much, but not too little either. This is also reflected in society as well as in context in which there
is a preference to reach consensus (Gannon & Pillai, 2010, p. 144). In accordance with the expression “lagom” the score of 53 Sweden (see figure 5 in Appendix) is in between pragmatism and normativism (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 315). As previously explained, feminine nations solve conflicts through compromises and negotiations and rewards are given based on equality (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 207). On this dimension, Sweden ranks as number 76 out of 76 in masculinity (MAS), being the most feminine nation of the ones studied (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 179). In feminine societies people work in order to live and also stress equality (Hofstede, 2001, p. 318). The stress of equality is especially evident in their “law of Jante” (Jantelagen) – an unwritten rule intended to restrain people from rise above others in the society (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 199).

Some might believe that Sweden is a collectivistic society due to the welfare system that exists within the nation but when it comes to individualism contra collectivism, Swedes mostly care for themselves along with their close family thus score relatively high on the index for individualism (IDV) - with a score of 71 (Hofstede, 2001, p. 215). However, this is based on development of the individual rather than Americans tendencies towards competitiveness, Swedes for instance prefer jobs that contribute to personal development and self-actualization (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p.149). Gannon and Pillai described that “Relationships among people are becoming more distant, and concern for others is eroding because of increased individualism.” (2013, p. 152).

Conversely, this high individuality contradicts the Swedes preference towards working towards mutual goals within an organization (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 150). When it comes to power distance Sweden scores 31 which is relatively low and in low PDI organizations decentralized structures are common with hierarchies based on convenience rather than inequality (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 101). Gannon and Pillai explain that the hierarchical system is mostly accepted to due its effectiveness and the managers consult the employees when making decisions (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 150; Hofstede, 2001, p. 107).

Additionally, Sweden scored 29 on uncertainty avoidance, which accounts for low compared to other nations (Hofstede, 2001, p. 151). This means that there is a relatively high tolerance for ambiguity and that affinity and praise works as motivating factors (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 268). Lastly, Sweden’s preference of leisure over work, optimism and loosely loosely-knit social framework is a mirroring of the high level of indulgence that exists within the nation that ranks as number 8 amongst 93 countries (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 349).

4.5.2 Germany

Germany is often described with words such as “rules” and “order”, and this may be the reason as to why Gannon and Pillai metaphorically illustrated the country as “The German Symphony” where features such as precision and synchronism (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 178; 192). Although the orchestra consists of many individuals with certain preferences they all act in accordance to the conductor’s likings and directives in order to contribute to the success for the group (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 182). Nevertheless, Germans love music and have produced many famous composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert to name a few (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 182). Although, Germany has a relatively high score of 67 in IVD, thus grouped together with individualistic countries the nation has a more subordinated approach to
individualism than for instance the United States were the high score instead is based on competition (Hofstede, 2001, p. 215; Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 192) A typical leader in Germany should be clearly defined and one that obtains characteristics of a conductor, thus should be strong and able to delegate responsibilities to subordinates on various hierarchical levels. (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, pp.189-190). This is also reflected in the fact that Germany is a masculine country (score of 66), were as previously mentioned leaders tend to be assertive and decisive (Hofstede, 2001, p. 314). The reason as to why the leader should be clearly defined may be a reflection of their high score in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001, p.151).

In Germany, punctuality is valued which can be exemplified with their infrastructure and transporting system, which is one of the best in the work and trains rarely are late. (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 200). However, punctuality is important when conducting business as well since there is a big chance of loosing a client when arriving late upon a business meeting (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 192; 197). Meetings are usually long and rich in information where the main point usually made at the end of the sentence, just like a classic symphony that usually slowly builds up to the peak (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p.187). Decisions are also often made through consensus and after thorough scrutiny, which may be related to the low score (35) in power distance as well as the tendency towards uncertainty avoidance (UAI), which can be seen in Figure 6 in the appendix (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 187, 190; Hofstede, 2001, p. 87, 151). Low PDI also indicates participation in decision-making by employees and open communication (Hofstede, 2001, p. 107). At work gestures and smiling are restrained and doors are often closed in order to not violate physical space. Germans risk-averse and less comfortable with strange situations and new comers which might be a reason as to why their physical distance between individuals are much greater then between for instance France, Italy and Thailand (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 187). The score of 83 indicated that Germany is a pragmatic nation and ranks as the sixth most pragmatic countries out of 93 (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 314). Germans are therefore implied to possess a higher level of acceptance for contradictions and situational adaptation (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 339). Lastly, their score that implies restraint (score of 40) is an indication of their sense of helplessness about personal destiny and how they do not put much emphasis on leisure (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 351; 359).

4.5.3 France

French wine and its five principle elements – purity, classification, composition, suitability and maturity, is key in the metaphorical description of the French culture. The reason behind this metaphor is due to the similarities of complexity with winemaking and the national culture (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 248). The first of the five elements - Purity describes the pureness and proudness of the nation as grapes grow in soil where little else will grow, and the finest wines grow in very special soil (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 232).

There are 5000 varieties of French wine that may be classified accordingly in four different types of classes. As with the French wine the society is stratified and divided into four stratifications. The firstly, aristocrats, top businessmen and government professionals, the second stratification consists of owners of small companies or top managers, thirdly is the middle class and lastly the working class (Gannon & Pillai,
Thus this does not pose as a problem since French in general accept classification systems. However, since the French mind and social class comes first, outsiders are not openly welcomed. This may be exemplified by how many tourists experience the locals’ refusal of speaking any other language than their own (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 236). Composition furthermore stands for how the French tends to do many things at once, i.e. is a polychronic nation, however as soon as a goal is set they become monochronic thus planning is seemingly difficult (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 237). The inhabitants work hard with few breaks, although lunch is taken seriously and without any rush. As mentioned, on weekdays they work hard but the weekends however is devoted to family matters (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 236-237). In France there is a high degree of power distance, with a score of 68 meaning that there is a certain acceptance for inequality in the society which can be seen in Figure 7 in the appendix (Hofstede, 2001, p. 87). Moreover, they have a high score of 86 when it comes to uncertainty avoidance since they prefer long-term relationships, and loyalty towards the workplace (Hofstede, 2001, p. 151; Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 327).

The French conversational style is complex and argumentative, for instance greeting a stranger without knowing them is seen as provocative whereas not saying hello to friend is considered rude (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 239). The complexity of interaction may be transferred to their way of conducting business where rules and hierarchies are present. It is hard to reach consensus of a decision without approval from the top (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 235).

4.5.4 Norway

Just like Sweden, Norway share individualism in the context of personal development and, scores relatively high on the index for individualism (IDV) - with a score of 69, see appendix Figure 8 (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 593; Hofstede, 2001, p. 215). This further implies that Norwegians puts more emphasis on “I” compared to “we” (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 209-210). Norway has the exact same score (31) as Sweden when it comes to power distance, meaning that there is equality within the Norwegian society. As previously mentioned the law of Jante with its ten commandments is an evidence of this equality amongst the Scandinavian countries. The law was written by the Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose during the 1930’s and can be translated as:

1. You're not to think you are anything special.
2. You're not to think you are as good as we are.
3. You're not to think you are smarter than we are.
4. You're not to convince yourself that you are better than we are.
5. You're not to think you know more than we do.
6. You're not to think you are more important than we are.
7. You're not to think you are good at anything.
8. You're not to laugh at us.
9. You're not to think anyone cares about you.
10. You're not to think you can teach us anything.

(Hofstede et al., 2010a, p. 199)

This is level of equality also evident in business context were the superiors consultative and include their employees in the decision making process (Hofstede, 2001, p. 107). The Scandinavian country further enjoys an informal workplace where the power is decentralized, which is a reflection of the low power distance (PDI score of 31) in the
society (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 107, 87). Yet another similarity to the Swedish culture is the low level of masculinity (MAS), ranking just above Sweden – the most feminine country amongst the ones studied. This is evident in the workplace by the compromising and negotiating nature as well as how managers are equally important as the employees (Hofstede, 2001, p. 318). Despite all the similarities with the Swedish culture, Norway differ when it comes to pragmatism. Where Sweden shows a rather inconclusive result Norway is more normative than pragmatic with a score of 35, valuing traditions and exhibits pride for their nation (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 316, 339). However, when it comes to uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and indulgence (IVR) Norway shows intermediate scores of 50 and 55 respectively and thereby shows inconclusive results on these dimensions (Hofstede, 2001, p. 151; Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 350).

4.5.5 The United States of America

American football with its entire extravaganza and its characteristics of speed, movement, specialization and aggressiveness is the metaphor for the culture in the United States (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 252). Gannon and Pillai’s metaphorical comparison of the American culture described how the crowd is homogenous and how some individual players are treated as heroes. Similarly to some individual players managers in corporations are recognized as heroes (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 252; Hofstede, 2001, p.318). The sport combines violence and meetings in a war like manner where the goal is to destroy the opposing team completely (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 251-253). Gannon and Pillai describes “Football in the United States is not only a sport but an assortment of common ideals and beliefs; indeed, football is a set of collective rituals and values shared by one dynamic society.” (2013, p. 252). Just as the rules of football are constantly changing, Americans strive for change and innovativeness, however only of the core values and beliefs are constant (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 256). This along with the premise that employees may be less reluctant towards changing employer and possessing less loyalty towards an organization is furthermore a sign of their low level in the uncertainty avoidance index where the United States scores 46 (Hofstede, 2001, p. 151). America is also a normative nation with a low score of 26 which can be seen in Figure 9 in the appendix (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 316). This implies a sense of pride and importance of traditions within the nation (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 339).

In a business context it is important to select the “right people” for the job, which is also key for the success of a football team where specialization for certain skills are sought after (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 253). Individual competition is not uncommon since member within the team compete over starting positions, which is also mirrored in the ranking of individualism contra collectivism where the United States score highest thus being the most individual nation amongst the ones studied (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 260; Hofstede, 2001, p. 215). This level is based on competition rather than personal development and self-actualization as in the case of Sweden and Norway (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 149). When contemplating upon the individualism in the American society it comes as no surprise that this is the only known nation that capitalizes the word “I” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 113). Although, the American society and football experience a high level of individuality, there is also a collectivistic approach when it comes to setting goals. Huddling, a time limited grouping before each play to determine a plan of action, can be compared to how Americans business tend to have meetings in
order to solve a potential problem. It is evident that Americans are “doers” aiming towards solving problems or achieving goals, which is a reflection of their level of masculinity of 62 (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, pp. 262-263; Hofstede, 2001, p. 286). This may also be an outcome of how they tend to express their personal achievements rather freely (Hofstede, 2001, p. 297). The relatively low level of power distance (score of 40 in PDI) indicates how the society strives for equality and “liberty and justice for all”. This is evidence of how American leaders who consult tends to obtain satisfaction and a higher level of performance from subordinates (Hofstede, 2001, p. 103). Lastly, their indulgent nature (score of 68) suggests that America is a nation where there is a norm to smile and that contact with strangers and family via Internet is not uncommon (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 367). Americans are furthermore known for their extroverted traits and their tendency to do things quickly, whether it is talking walking or eating (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 260, 266). This is evident in American football when the fans meet up before the game at tailgate parties, but when the game is over they hurry home and try to get ahead by cutting off other drivers (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 251).

4.5.6 Latvia

So far, Gannon and Pillai have not established a metaphor for Latvia. Nevertheless, the six dimensions of Hofstede gives insights in how the Latvian culture is evident. Firstly, as can be seen in Figure 10 in the appendix, the rather low level of 44 in power distance implies that there is a tendency towards minimizing inequalities within the society. (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 59) This may also be evident in the workplace were there are obvious differences in the superior-subordinate relationship. Here, employees expect to be consulted and the supervisor in turn relies on the resourcefulness of the staff (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 74). When it comes to individualism Latvia scores high with a value of 70 and shares common characteristics of Sweden that has a score of 69 (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 95). Their way of communicating in a low-context manner is an indication of their high score of individualism. Hofstede and his co-authors describe high-context communication as “…one in which the mass of information is vested in the explicit code” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 109). Individualist societies furthermore tend to use the word “I” more frequently than collectivistic nations, as well as being more extroverted (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 212, 214).

Similarly to Sweden’s low score on masculinity, Latvia scores 9 on this dimension indicating that as previously mentioned that conflicts are solved through consensus and negotiation in order to not disrupt the collective harmony, and rewards based on equality (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 166). Sharing Germany’s rule-based society, punctuality, formal rules and tendency towards xenophobia is also a sign of their strong propensity to avoid uncertainty (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 201, 210, 225). When it comes to pragmatism Latvia is a pragmatic, long-term oriented nation that has an acceptance for contradictions and situational adaptation and believes that “truth” depends on the situation (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 249). In the last dimension indulgence versus constraint, the country scores 13 and therefore places Latvia as restrained which means more cynicism and pessimism is present compared to indulgent countries (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 289).

4.5.7 China
China shares the characteristics of Latvia, being a pragmatic and indulgent nation (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 249, 289). However, China differs from the other countries when it comes to individualism and with its low scores of 20, it is a collectivistic nation, see Figure 11 in the appendix (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 97). Contrarily from the American society, in China the word “I” is perceived as somewhat negative (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 450). Their collectivistic society is instead has a focus on the family, which might be a reason why Gannon and Pillai has decided to utilize “The Chinese Altar” as their cultural metaphor (Hofstede, Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 448). There are three main characteristics for the family altar – roundness, harmony and fluidity (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 454, 458). Roundness is an illustration of the family as a main part of the culture and how there is no true end or beginning of ones life (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 254). The second characteristic represents their strive for harmony. There is a high level of uncertainty, luck and fate in the society, which may explain the Chinese attraction towards gambling and why they often do not use seat belts (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 458). These types of behaviors may be related to their low level uncertainty avoidance (score of 30) where uncertainty instead is accepted rather than avoided (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 203). The last characteristic, fluidity, represents how they can be individualistic if they still meet the obligations from the family first (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 459). However, their collectivistic nature finds is hard to separate the individual from collective thus there is no word for “privacy” in China (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 450). Thus, confrontation is rare in collectivist society, which also is a sign of how it can be avoided by collectivists’ reluctance towards saying “no” and instead answer, “we will think about it” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 106-107). In the workplace member seek to achieve the in-groups goals, which is also taken into account when it comes to recruiting personnel – he or she have to fit with the in-group (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 119-120).

China scores 80 in power distance where not only inequality exists but is also accepted by the inhabitants (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 57). In a work situation a hierarchical order is clear and the power is highly centralized. The superiors tell the subordinates what to do, who also expects delegation from higher levels (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 73). In collectivistic nations symbols of status is not uncommon and a leader usually utilizes an autocratic leadership style (Hofstede et al, 2010, pp. 73-74). As oppose to Sweden, China is a masculine society with a score of 66 where leadership also mirrored by the masculinility by its decisiveness and relatively aggressive style (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 141, 166). Here, individuals live in order to work rather than working in order to live and thereby prefer money to leisure (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.167). Furthermore, China has a low score regarding uncertainty avoidance that implies that the Chinese are motivated by a sense of belonging and a higher tolerance for ambiguity (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 216).

4.6 Interview Construction and Collection of Data

Due to the fact that our aim was to investigate how Handelsbanken’s organizational culture is evident in workplace well-being in various nations, this required us to contact international branches. Since we were able to acquire respondents in six different nations out of 24, where as previously mentioned some had to be excluded due to the unfulfilment in choice criteria, we argue that our sample size is sufficient for the...
purpose of this study. Of course there is a possibility to investigate more than the ten respondents if a timely constraint was not an issue. However, our intention was to gather respondents from different nations rather than a large quantity from a specific branch. Therefore we argue that the ten respondents from six diverse countries provides us with thorough information, inputs and perspectives.

As previously mentioned the data collection consisted of ten interviews, two of them performed over Skype and eight by telephone. Our intention was to perform all of the interviews over Skype in order for us to be able to reflect on potential disturbances in terms of for example the environment, but also to be able to read the body languages of the interviewees. Unfortunately, the majority of the respondents did not have access to Skype since most of the interviews were conducted during their working hours, so a decision to perform this by phone was made. All of the interviews were recorded, of course with permission from the participants, which ultimately allowed us to focus completely on the respondents and recovered the information later on. Additionally, this allowed us to replay the audio recordings in order to notice intonations. The two interviews that took place via Skype were video-recorded with a screen-capturing recorder called Voila. Through this technique we could notice changings in the environment and allow for further interpretations of facial expressions. This contributed to our complete attention being directed towards the interviewee and allowed us to maintain consistency and successfully navigate the interview. The duration of the interviews varied slightly, merely due to the fact that some of the respondents had more to say and/or spoke as a faster pace but could also be a result of the extent of comfort when being interviewed. Consequently, some of the interviews were completed in a shorter amount of time, especially those concerning the employees as the questions for them (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents (Managers)</th>
<th>Country (City)</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Length of Employment</th>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dzintars Salavs</td>
<td>Latvia (Riga)</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>43 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Pessa</td>
<td>China (Shanghai)</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>1 h, 23 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesper Hellström</td>
<td>France (Paris)</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>56 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolf Marquardt</td>
<td>USA (New York)</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>1 h, 25 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerstin Fuchs</td>
<td>Germany (Hamburg)</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>35 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents (Employees)</th>
<th>Country (City)</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Length of Employment</th>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mārtiņš Freibergs</td>
<td>Latvia (Riga)</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>31 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Liao</td>
<td>China (Shanghai)</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>36 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X years</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>23 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 - Respondent Information

Our interviews were constructed in a semi-structural manner, mainly since our desire was to cover certain topics that we deemed as relevant for our research. Furthermore, semi-structure interviews enabled us as researchers a deeper understanding and beneficial material needed for the purpose of this research, but it also allowed us to
secure the interview process structure. In terms of the approach in which the questions will be asked, a decision to utilize open-ended questions was made. As explained by Saunders, open-ended questions promote participant definitions and descriptions of a particular situation and encourage the respondents to provide a self-perceived and extensive answer. Often recurring words are why, what and how (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 337). Moreover, in order for us to successfully cover the themes that were deemed as important an interview guide was established. The guide was organized into five themes within our research (as illustrated below), and allowed us to cover the topics needed in order for us to perform a successful analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 467). Furthermore, founding our questions on our theoretical framework and prior literature we assembled two different interview guides. One of the guides was directed towards managers and the other towards the employees. The interview guide consisted of five different themes founded on the basis of relevant theories, and thus needed to be covered during the course of the interview. The interview guide for managers was slightly more extensive since it included more questions in the subject of strategic leadership, and thus was more applicable towards these respondents. Together, all of these questions were deemed as suitable and necessary in order for us to successfully connect our empirical findings with our theories for analysis, and later on construct a reliable conclusion.

Moreover, an attempt was made to formulate the interview questions in an indirect way that ultimately allowed the respondents to provide their own opinions on the subject, without the possible influence and skewing of the interviewers. One additional benefit with semi-structure interviews is the leeway it provides for the interviewees in terms of their responses. Which implies that there is no need by the interviewers and the interviewee to follow the guide strictly. Meaning that during the course of the interview, the interviewees had a possibility of asking questions that was picked up from prior interviewee statements (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 467). Although, our original desire was to follow the structure of the interview in order to simplify the analysis process. Occasionally, due to the nature of our open-ended questions the interviewee managed to cover more than one single question. During such occasions, we decided to questions that ultimately made the most sense and connected to what the respondent answered. Nonetheless, the overall structure of the performed interview for both the managers and the employees looked as follows:

4.6.1 Interview Themes

**Theme 1: Background**
This section of the interview guide provided information on the respondents’ backgrounds in terms of their country of origin and previous work experiences. Apart from this the respondents were also asked to describe their company position, the length of their employment as well as why they decided to work for the organization. Furthermore, this theme concluded with an overall respondent description on how they identify with the organization.

**Theme 2: Culture**
This part of the interview intended to investigate respondents perceptions regarding the possible effects of the national culture on the way of working as well as it questioned the existence of cultural barriers, that the respondent might have encountered during the
employment. Additionally, it examined the occurrence of adjustments to the respondents’ natural behaviors prior to working at the organization. But also investigated the perceptions of respondents in terms of apprehended differences in working in a home country versus a foreign-country company. Meaning, this theme was aimed to highlight the respondent perceptions and opinions regarding the effect of a national culture.

**Theme 3: Organizational Culture**
These themes were intended to introduce the organizational culture in the eyes of its members. Thus aimed at collecting individual descriptions of each of the interviewees in terms of the organizational culture. Furthermore, other topics covered were the national cultures affect on the organizational culture, the existence of behavioral differences as well as hierarchical structures. It also asked for respondent reflections on the relationships and subcultures within the branch. These themes had the purpose of gathering interviewee reflections on the organizational culture of the company.

**Theme 4: Strategic Leadership**
In relation to the organizational culture, a desire to investigate the overall use of strategic leadership at the organization contributed to this being the fourth theme. Questions were asked concerning the relationship between the managers and employees, in the sense of formality. Furthermore this theme desired to gather respondent reflections on the benefits ascending from a heterogeneous vis-a-vis a homogeneous workforce. Apart from the general question relevant for all of the respondents, the managers were asked to explain whether or not alterations in their leadership styles occurred as a result of differences in nationalities or personalities. This theme concluded with managerial descriptions on their overall role in the organization.

**Theme 5: Motivation, Commitment, Trust and Job Satisfaction**
The themes included in this section of the interview are regarded as the synergistic elements of workplace well-being. And consequently consists of information gathered on the respondents overall well-being at their respective workplace. Thus investigated the ability of the organization to promote staff members and to what extent they are motivated, committed, trustworthy and satisfied with their respective jobs.

### 4.7 Pre-test and Revision

Prior to conducting the actual interviews, we performed pilot-studies in order to investigate whether or not the interview guides were understandable and relevant for the research purpose. We conducted four pilot testings in total, all of which were performed on individuals that can be considered comparable to the actual sampling of this research. Individuals involved in the pilot testing are deemed suitable based on the fact that they have previous experiences in managing human resources. Moreover, important to note is that neither one of the individuals included in the pilot testing were part of our research sample, and will thus not affect the final result (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 263). Benefits resulting from this pilot testing consisted of additional feedback on potential un-clarities and formulation mistakes. As argued by Bryman and Bell, an interview piloting can provide valuable experiences and ultimately promote an overall sense of confidence for the interviewees. Additionally, a possibility of identifying questions that caused the respondents discomfort significantly improved the interview quality (2011,
As mentioned earlier, of the 20 participation requests send out to different Handelsbanken managers all over the world, we received six positive answers from managers who desired to participate in this research, excluding the four respondents reached through snowball-sampling. The other fourteen either declined the request due to for example high workloads or constraints in terms of time. Furthermore, some of the respondents replied with a positive answer but were unreachable prior to scheduling an interview time. At the same time, some of the requests sent out never received an answer, which could ultimately mean that it went by unnoticeable or that it was not of interest for the manager.

4.9 Method of Analyzing Data

As stated in prior research, “Thinking of analysis as assembling a jigsaw puzzle is helpful... jigsaw puzzles cut up a whole picture into fragments” (à LeCompte, 2000, p. 147). Since the data collection is performed in a qualitative manner through conducted interviews, the analyzing process can be considered somewhat challenging (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 571). This can be due to the fact that the analysis is conducted through the utilization of conceptualizations (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 484). Prior to the analysis, the data that had been recorded through the use of relevant audio and video recording tools and transcribed into a written down text (Saunders, 2009, p. 486). We have decided to utilize a thematic approach to analyzing our qualitative data. Thematic analysis is described to consist of six steps where the first step is to code the material. This can be done through a separation of the data into meaningful and manageable data (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 390). The second step is to identify different themes from the text and the third step of the breakdown of the text is to construct various networks in terms of the various themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 392). The forth and fifth step concerns exploration of the qualitative data thus includes the investigation, description and summarization of these networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393-294). The last step in the analytical stage conclusively considers interpretation of the data received from the aforementioned steps (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 394). A summary of each interview can be found in the Appendix.

4.10 Criticism

In order for us to reassure the reliability and credibility of our research in terms of the practical method, it is necessary for us to highlight possible strengths and weaknesses originating from our choices and actions. First and foremost, possible weaknesses might arise from our choice of performing the interviews in Swedish, English and Norwegian. Although our intention was to make our interviewees feel as relaxed as possible, there is a possibility of translation mistakes that ultimately can come to influence the
quality of our research. This in terms of asking follow-up questions in a confusing way or misunderstandings in terms of the answers we received from the questions. However, when this was the case a follow-up question was asked that ultimately provided us with the relevant information. Additionally, at certain occasions the interviewee expressed confusing in terms of not understanding the question asked. Even though a pilot-study was made, it does not guarantee a complete understandability from all of the interviewees. Thus our attempts to explain the question in other words may have come to affect the end meaning of it. However, whenever we consider a question may have been regarded as skewed or faulty translated in any way, this question was removed and not included in our analysis. Additionally, due to our choice trying to maintain the openness in the questions and thus attempt to not include anyone of the elements in the questions. Possible weaknesses could be that the interview at particular occasion got carried away, however at this point we asked follow-up questions until we felt the question being completely covered. Another weakness could be the duration of time of the interviews; this might have had some consequences on our empirical findings. For example, the last asked question might be slightly shorter and not as detailed. Furthermore, when transcribing we faced some challenges in terms of hearing what the respondents said. In order for us to be able to transcribe we therefore had to use our own interpretations at particular occasions. However, we do not consider this to be a major issue since we sent the empirical findings for the respondents to scrutinize and confirm that the interview had been perceived in the correct way. Last but not least, due to the fact that the interviews were conducted through different means of communications such as telephone and Skype, we were not able to make sure that the environment was calm and not affecting the interviewee. Moreover, the telephone interviews did not allow us to grasp the surrounding environment for the respondents, yet none of them seemed to have gotten interrupted or disturbed by their surroundings.

In terms of strengths, we feel that the choice of performing the interviews in different languages works to our favor since it allows the interviewees to feel comfortable and thus be willing to provide us with extensively more information. It is in our belief that interviews can be slightly terrifying, especially for individuals who are not accustomed to performing these on a regular basis. Furthermore, the idea of having an interview in a foreign language that is out of the respondents’ comfort zone might jeopardize the end result. Thus we consider our choice of bilingual interviews beneficial. Although as mentioned earlier, regarding potential weaknesses in terms of misinterpretations, and how this can not be completely prevented through the use of a pilot study. We still regard the pilot testing as beneficial in a sense that it allowed us to see if there were any terms or explanations that were hard to understand or confusing. Thus attempts to remove any difficult academic terms and instead adapt the formulations to the interview audience were made. Another potential strength originates from the efforts put into and attempts to not include the specific terms that ultimately relates to our research questions and thus the purpose of our research. That way we were able to keep the questions open and to our fullest extent not guide the respondent towards a specific direction.

4.11 Ethical Issues

When conducting a business research of any kind, it is crucial to be accustomed to the various ethical principles that need to be respected. The ethical principles can be
divided into four different areas of importance, harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy as well as deception. In terms of harm to participants, there can be different types of harm, such as physical harm, harm to participant development, to participant self-esteem or in some cases cause participant distress (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 128). Prior to conducting the research, we made sure to question each of the interviewees whether or not they desired to remain anonymous. The majority of the interviewees did not regard this as a necessity, however in some cases the respondent in fact wished to remain anonymous. In order for our research to be considered high in quality we came up with following fictitious names for some of the respondents; Sam, Jamie and Casey, these names were considered preferable since they could be interpreted as both female and male names. Thus we consider ourselves successful in honoring the anonymity request. Furthermore, it is important to reflect over the potential harm towards the researchers in terms of emotional or self-disclosure, this is based on the fact that researchers anonymity is not possible. However we regard this harm as minimal since we in our previous studies have conducted a bachelor thesis and thus have been exposed to the pressure of getting our research examined by professional researchers and made public for the world to judge. Considering the possible ethical issues arising from lack of informed consent, Bryman and Bell argues the importance of providing the participant with sufficient information in order for them to make a decision whether or not they would like to participate. The participant should furthermore be informed on the researchers intent to record a specific conversation prior to conducting an interview (2011, pp. 132-133). This was done in order for them to have the opportunity of either agreeing or disagreeing to being recorded. We moreover argue our actions sufficient in terms of providing information on the research subject being studied. An informational email was sent out to each of the participants describing the purpose of the overall research, how the process will go about in terms of interviews and our overall intentions with the research. Furthermore, prior to the interview we forwarded our interview guide to the participant in order for them to be able to investigate the content of the interview beforehand. Additionally, early on in the interview process the respondents were asked whether or not they agree to us recording the interview for the purpose of documenting and analyzing the data later on. After receiving a positive answer from all of the participants we were able to continue on with the interviews without breaking any ethical principles. Furthermore, in terms of ethical issues originating from invading the participants privacy, has been highly linked to previously mentioned informed consent. Where it is crucial for the researchers to not violate the privacy of their respondents in terms of for example not respecting the personal values.

Although it can be hard to know what subjects that are considered sensitive, the participants should be given the opportunity of withdrawing from answering a particular question the person deems as sensitive (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 136). During the course of the interviews, we argue that we never forced a participant to answer a specific question. Mainly clarified specific clarifications that might have occurred, and then the participant had the option of answering or withdrawing from the question if regarded sensitive. Lastly, ethical issues can be the consequence of deception, whereby the researchers represents the study as something else than it actually is. As stated by Bryman and Bell, “deception in various degrees is probably quite widespread in much research, because the researchers often want to limit the participants’ understanding of what the research is about so that they respond more naturally to the experimental treatment” (2011, p. 137). In regards to previously mentioned, our decision to explain
the main content of our research but to the greatest extent not include detailed descriptions on the related synergistic elements of motivation, commitment, trust and job satisfaction to the participants, can be considered actions that might lead to deception. However, we regarded these elements as a big part of the organizational culture and would ultimately be covered by the participants during the interview regardless, but without us potentially directing the interview to a specific direction, which allows us to preserve the naturalness of our collected data.
5.0 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The content of this chapter constitutes the empirical findings gathered from the conducted interviews. This chapter will start by introducing the empirical findings linked to the first of the five themes, that is background. Thereafter the empirical findings from the following four themes; national culture, organizational culture, strategic leadership and lastly the synergistic elements of workplace well-being will be presented.

“Corporate culture matters. How management chooses to treat its people impacts everything - for better or for worse.”
- Simon Sinek

5.1 Background

Four of the respondents had Sweden as their country of origin, and had through Handelsbanken transferred to the respective country. The other six originated from the host country and thus were able to work at their locally established Handelsbanken branches. Most of the branch managers and employees interviewed had previous experiences in banking before joining Handelsbanken’s work force, others had prior experiences in other areas such as human resource management, office and communication administration as well as other business related areas. The length of employment at Handelsbanken varied from three years until nine years amongst the employees interviewed. Additionally the managers interviewed had varied employment duration of 5 years to as much as 17 years within Handelsbanken. A couple of the respondents choose to work for this organization simply due to its suitability and convenience. For example the flexibility of hours worked each day, or the coincidence of the request of working for the organization. Others regarded the organizational culture and their way of working as the main reason for joining the Handelsbanken workforce. For example as stated by Mārtiņš at the Riga office, Handelsbanken offers a “very different view and different approach to the customers and to the employees”. Furthermore, some argued that the structure on which Handelsbanken is founded on was one of the criteria for them choosing to work for the organization. Rolf at the New York branch suggested that the structure being “very simple and straightforward” and that there are “benefits involved with the authority distribution”. One of the respondent’s participating in this research actually considered quitting the area of banking, but specified that he felt “ready to work for Handelsbanken” (Mārtiņš). Further findings indicated that Handelsbanken provided an opportunity for the respondents to work with their area of interest. For example as suggested by Kerstin at the Hamburg office, the ability to work and have customer contact was necessary for choosing to work for the organization.

5.2 Culture
Most of the interviewees did not consider themselves needed to adjust their normal behavior when working at Handelsbanken. Jesper, the branch manager in Paris suggested that although Handelsbanken has their basic values that should be followed, the organization still allows for different viewpoints to be shared. Additionally, Kari at the Shanghai office stated the necessity of individuals being able to be themselves and behave in a natural way in order for the organization to function. Which in fact also was supported by the employee at the branch in Riga, Mārtiņš, who stated that “this behavior is very natural and understandable for me so I am not changing something when I am working in Handelsbanken” and “I can be as the person as I am in my daily life”. The branch manager in Riga argued that the recruitment process might stand as an explanation to why a change in behavior is not prominent. Stating “if you have the right people in the right place it is much easier for them to accept the Handelsbanken culture correct and work”. Kerstin at the Hamburg branch also suggested that any adjustments to her normal behavior were not prominent, mainly due to the compliment between this behavior and Handelsbanken as a whole. Some, majority of them employees, suggested behavioral adjustment to exist. Simply due to the need of them acting in a professional manner suitable for the banking industry. Others argued that the decentralized business structure expects them to take more initiatives and be more innovative. The branch manager in Hamburg furthermore stated that an adjustment is prominent in a sense that “you have to adapt to it in a certain way because you are not used to it from what you have done before”. Kerstin suggested that although there are cultural differences in terms of for example communication, this does not require a major adaptation. The branch manager in New argued there always being a need for adjustment, but these are mainly minor adjustments that do not violate the already existing principles. He suggested there always being business codes that ultimately the employees should follow in terms of behaviors, not only within Handelsbanken but also for any other company.

The majority of the respondent claimed the national culture to have an effect on the organizational arguing the national culture to be something that is rooted in ones behavior. A noticeable pattern amongst the respondents concerned the Scandinavian features of the Handelsbanken and its possible challenges. Suggested by Jaime, the transition from a hierarchical society in terms of authority division to a Swedish company that is more open, equal and decisions are discussed and made together as a team was obvious. Rolf at the New York branch suggested a potential difference between the Swedish culture and the American culture being whether or not the individual is inclined to take on full responsibility of a total assignment. He claimed a noticed tendency amongst some of the members of the branch, mostly concerning the employees originating from United States in that they will successfully complete their respective part but is not likely going to consider the other areas as their responsibility. He argued the ability to take full responsibility for an assignment to be very important within Handelsbanken’s culture, but is not as commonly noticeable in the United States. As suggested by Jessica “the Swedish culture is very different from the Chinese culture” and that “the way in which the Chinese culture communicate with the world usually is milder or more obscure”. Additionally, Kerstin at the Hamburg branch suggested a clear distinction between the Swedish culture and the German culture being that in Germany, “its not bad to have a conflict”. Within the German culture, individuals simply do not mind being told “no”. She also regarded the Swedish culture in oppose to the German culture to be more founded on harmony. However, as suggested by Dzintars, the branch manager in Riga, as time moves on the individual will adapt to the
organization and its values. He also argues this being easier if you already possess the basic values that are quite similar to the organizations but nonetheless states that, “with the years you become a Handelsb tanker”. As implied by Casey, the effect of the national culture in Norway over the organizational culture is not something that has been reflected over to a great extent, simply since a bank is a bank and the management of the respective country is not consider severely different.

Noted in the findings was that the respondents might possibly feel more natural working in a home-country company. Suggested by Jessica at the Shanghai branch, it might be easier to get along with people in a Chinese company, since this ultimately might feel more natural. Meanwhile, Jesper at the Paris branch explained that some of his French colleagues would have no problem working in Sweden if they learned Swedish, and others would since they are more French in the way they are working and thinking. He described it as being “more of a cultural change if I would work for a French company”. Suggesting that the “French culture is very strong in terms of language and the working lives”, but also claimed the respective business structures to differ. Jesper’s perception is that in the Nordic countries the workforce is more involved in making decisions and this ultimately “also affects how you interact with people”. Rolf at the New York branch argued that the main differences between a home-country company and a foreign-country company is that the United States is a more “micro-managed and rule based”. The majority of the respondents did suggest various adjustments as necessary if working for a foreign-country company in terms of fitting the overall environment. As stated by Jessica there is “a lot to adjust, both on speech and act and way of thinking”. Kerstin at the Hamburg branch also argued this to be the case, but concluded that “it is me who has to adapt to the other culture” not the opposite. She gave an example from her personal experiences working for a well-known German bank versus Handelsbanken that is not so commonly known in Germany, stating that “you have to start at the very beginning” with a foreign bank as oppose to everybody already knowing about it. Another example was provided by Dzintars at the Riga office, he claimed “Scandinavian companies they have a much longer history and looking in a much longer future perspective contra local companies who does not have that many years of working”. Thus suggesting that home-country companies tend to have a more short-term perspective. This view was shared with his colleague Mārtiņš who argued that the main difference in fact would be the long-term approach of the Scandinavian companies. Moreover, as stated by Jaime “people usually need to learn a lot in order to connect with the corporate culture”. Casey concluded by suggesting benefits from working for a foreign country being the ability of personal development and the gain of new experiences, and argues working for Handelsbanken as being a good way of getting international contacts and being able to serve customers all over the world.

Most of the respondents wanted to clarify that there are challenges involved with being an international organization, but did not necessarily want to call it barriers. Jesper argued that France and Sweden indeed are very different culturally; from prior research he had seen that these were “two of the most different cultures”, and therefore considers it very important to know the French language and its culture. This was also supported by Kerstin who argued there being “no barriers, there are some differences”. In terms of languages she concludes that “overall everybody speaks good English”, which was additionally supported by Jessica implying that “language is ok, we all speak English”. Rolf at the New York branch also discussed the risks and importance of languages, in terms of formulating Handelsbanken’s way of working. He argues that “When
communicating sensitive information, the language can possibly create misunderstandings in terms of formulating Handelsbanken’s way of working”. Kari at the Shanghai branch furthermore stressed the importance of languages when establishing relationships and to create a united entity. He suggests a possible barrier being that it “takes a long time to get close to people”, but also brings up the importance of remembering that in China there is a different way of thinking in general, compared to Sweden.

When it comes to the overall values and barriers Jesper suggests these being fairly similar “values and ethics are not very different”. Kerstin furthermore suggests the similarities of values and ethics as being quite similar in Sweden and Germany, founded on the European agreements, and thus the “superior questions of our culture”. Casey claims there being no specific barriers, arguing Handelsbanken to be a bank with a lot of very committed employees that contributes with their respective competences. Also brought up by Jessica is the importance of respecting one another, thus trying to find something in common in the respective values and ethics. She brings up an example in terms of barriers regarding the Chinese way of working in response to the Swedish. Stating, “sometimes we Chinese people would intent to work hard and when we meet difficulties we seldom tell people”. By informing other individuals about the inability of handling a particular assignment, it may imply that the person is incapable of doing their job, and could possibly lead to termination. Additionally, Jessica stated that “for Swedish people when you need help, you should say it and not be afraid of saying it”. Dzintars did not consider there to be any cultural barriers, mostly due to the recruitment process - “recruiting the right people with the right attitude”. Mārtiņš argued it being “quite hard to work in an environment or in organization where you do not share the same values, or similar values as the organization”. Rolf at the New York branch suggested a possible barrier for communicating Handelsbankens way of working being that in the United States the likelihood of individuals taking full responsibility is not so common. The reasons for this he speculates can relate to a possible language barrier when communicating Handelsbankens’ culture but can also be the result of the legal system that is prominent in the United States.

Where individuals are more concerned about the possibility of getting fired, but at the same time the management are terrified of firing anyone and as a consequence of this get sued on various degrees. Another reason for this he argues being the individualistic view of the American society, which ultimately contributes to American personnel taking responsibility in their own respective area, but avoids taking the full responsibility that would be according to Handelsbanken’s values.

5.3 Strategic Leadership

A noticeable attitude amongst the interviewees is that the relationship is mostly informal, at least on a daily basis. As stated by Dzintars at the Riga branch, ”on the daily basis, we try to have fun at work as well, and we try to have a very good atmosphere that everybody can speak up about the things and what is on their mind”.

This is also supported by Jesper at the Paris branch, claiming the relationships being ”informal, but that is more dependent on that we are such a small team”. Mārtiņš at the Riga branch further states that ”majority of the time we are informal and it lets us discuss things also in a very good way”. Additionally, Kerstin at the Hamburg branch
considers the relationships and environment to be very open and informal, but still with a sense of respect for the different levels.

The employees shared a common view that the local manager’s relationship to their employees to the greatest part is informal, but also concluded that during specific occasions the leadership needs to be more formal in order for them to address serious aspects or discussions concerning the business. The branch manager in Norway furthermore agrees the relationship to depend on the situation. As stated by Jessica at the Shanghai branch “if there is some very serious thing or serious discussion in business of course you go formal”. This is also implied by the Dzintars at the Riga branch who argues that when it comes down to business related questions they are very serious and very formal. Furthermore, he considers the branch to have a “very good mix of these two”. As suggested by Kari, the relationship is relatively informal, but there also exists a type of formality when it comes to the different levels. He argues that attempts to try and minimize these senses of levels are being made, but that in the end the Chinese backgrounds shines through. Rolf at the New York branch also considers the daily work being mainly informal, but implies that there still is a sense of respect in regards to the different positions. But he also argues that this is the case at Handelsbanken’s home market Sweden, only that in Sweden people tend to ignore or pretend this type of formality does not exist. He concludes by saying that this is not only occurs within a specific culture, but emerges in all.

Three of the interviewed managers argued that they in fact have to adjust their leadership strategy to the nationalities or personalities included in the branch. As stated by Kerstin at the Hamburg branch, ”yes definitely, I think as a manager you always have to read the different individuals in a slightly different way”. She claims it being highly important to get a feeling on how to address each individual in the organization since everybody has their own characters, and should therefore not be treated exactly the same. Furthermore, Jesper at the Paris branch claims his leadership strategy to be more ”based on the personalities”, for example considering the amount of experience amongst others. He mentions one of the difficulties involved with adjusting a leadership strategy being the language. Since it requires him to think hard in order to reassure that the same is being said independently on what language is being spoken. But he concludes by saying that he does not ”adjust what I say to the different nationalities in that sense, its more actually individual”. This is also suggested by Casey, who argues a possible adjustment in leadership style based on personalities, as a branch manager you can tell pretty quickly the different personalities that exists within the branch. Rolf at the New York branch claimed this not to be the case. He agrees that as a manager you have to put more energy into specific aspects, stating that in the United States it ”takes a longer time to describe the requested employee actions necessary for the organization to take make a change”, but concludes that this can simply be the case due to the personnel being unaccustomed to these types of actions. Rolf also mentions the importance of ”having respect for things that are important here”. Kari at the Shanghai branch argues that an adjustment of this type would not be possible for him.

A noticeable pattern within the findings was the benefits involved with having a heterogeneous workforce in terms of establishing strong teamwork between members that ultimately possess different types of knowledge. This knowledge can include for instance knowledge on the specific country, in terms of new theories and models from a education and working experiences to name a few. As stated by Kari at the Shanghai
branch, it allows organization development in terms of gaining knowledge on various ways to do things, and this at the end strengthens the organization. This is also supported by Kerstin at the branch in Hamburg, "I personally think it is good to have a mixture of different people", stating that "certain people are good at this and others are good at that". Moreover, she concludes that it is still important to remain tolerant towards one another and if this is possible "the one or the other can benefit from each other". Rolf at the New York branch also argues that within an organization, you need different types of inputs, which ultimately means different competences. As suggested by Dzintars at the Riga branch, a heterogeneous workforce provides the organization with a "broader view and a broader perspective on things". Jessica at the Shanghai office also claims that a heterogeneous workforce "will bring more different opinions that will bring more inspiration to the whole branch". As well as by Mārtiņš at the Riga branch; "it allows to see things from the other angle or to get another view or fresh view". Jesper at the Paris branch provided an example that in fact illustrates why a diversified workforce is so desirable. For example, his French colleagues plays a crucial part when it comes to understanding the culture and language in which they operate in, in order for them to be able to explain things to him that he sometimes does not understand. He furthermore illustrates the importance of knowing the respective culture by stating following; "you know, culture is not just the language, its learning a bit how you can interact", and thus having the right competences to due so is required. Casey additionally adds that dissimilarities can create a sense of cohesiveness, and considers a heterogeneous workforce to contribute with strength to the organization as long as everyone is willing to work towards the common goal. Moreover, in terms of benefits involved with having a homogeneous workforce, arguments such as the one provided by Kari stating that "there is less time that has to be devoted into getting to know the specific culture" as well as by Rolf "it might facilitate an easier passage ahead". In addition to previous mentioned benefits, Casey suggests a homogeneous workforce to consequently not foster a lot of changes, which ultimately could be negative. Dzintars at the Riga branch argues that a profitable aspect with having a homogeneous workforce might be that everyone shares the same opinion and thus comes together in a good way. However, he as well as others of the respondents suggests the most profitable way being a mix of the two extremes. You should have a broader perspective of a heterogeneous workforce but also the united direction of a homogeneous workforce in order to reach a preferable result. Rolf furthermore claims that a workforce with different competences is highly desired, but at the same time it should have some limitations.

As mentioned by Dzintars, he considered the first and foremost role of his management position is being a true Handelsbanker and thus set a good example for the overall workforce. He brings up the individual responsibility of each of the members in the branch in terms of developing and enhancing in the future, but argues that as a manager he should be there to assist them, as long as their decision is according to the Handelsbanken culture. As stated by Kari, his role is mainly the cultural part, meaning, contribute with the Swedish culture and what “we stand for in Handelsbanken”. Rolf at the New York office suggest his main responsibility being reassuring that the knowledge process is ”going the right direction”. He also stresses the importance of leadership be consistent, an everyday process on ”what we will do, how we will do it, how to improve and step by step build a better organization”. But also brings up the importance of the symbolic value in terms of illustrating who is in charge, especially on a branch located in other markets than its home market, suggesting the absence of a leader to potentially create dysfunction within the organization. The branch manager in
Norway also concludes the branch manager’s role being to have clear goals and portray the image of Handelsbanken. As suggested by Kerstin at the Hamburg branch, her ability to get along with people, take responsibility and make decisions brings value for the organization. Additionally, she argues it being very important to remain honest and to try and give out potential targets for the members of the branch. Jesper at the Paris branch regarded his previous experiences within banking and his ability understand the basic banking strategies in terms of decision making as bringing value to Handelsbanken.

5.4 Organizational Culture

When the respondents were asked to describe the organizational culture of Handelsbanken the words that came to be a recurring theme throughout the interview were “decentralized”, “long-term oriented”, “open”, “strong” and “trust”. For instance, one of the employees at the Riga branch, Mārtiņš, states that “Handelsbanken believe in people and their ability to do a good thing, which means that they have trust and respect in people”. During that same interview the respondent also explained that he experienced the bank to treat their employees in the same manner as they do with customers. Furthermore, his response was in accordance to Dzintars, the branch manager in Riga who explained the culture as the “…decentralized way of working, this is the key to our success which is the base for our organization”. A branch manager in Norway also explained how the customer and the local market are in focus. Throughout the course of the interview, it also became evident that many of the respondents in different branches talked indirectly about the culture when they for example used terms as being “a true Handelsbanker” to “become a complete Handelsbanker” or “lead the people as a Handelsbanker”. Although, their answers initially seemed to slightly differ the same key words as previously mentioned were evident at some point in the interviews. The general perception of Handelsbanken’s organizational culture seemed to be positive and appreciated by the members within the organization. This was also evident in how they identified themselves with the bank. All of the respondents claimed that they identified with the bank’s culture. The branch manager at the Paris office explained that Handelsbanken was a major part of him and that the values were complied with those of his own. The identification with the bank’s values and culture was the most prominent answer and was mentioned by nearly all the respondents. Rolf at the office in New York explained that he felt a strong connection to Handelsbanken and that he believed the culture to be brilliant and a factor for the company’s success. The importance of the organizational culture also became obvious when Dzintars explained “When selecting people, it is always very important that the base values of the employees are according to our core values as the bank as well”.

When the managers later were asked whether they believed their employees identified more or less with the organizational culture rather than their own national culture the answer proved to be rather coherent. The majority answered that there is a mixture of the two. Kari in Shanghai believed that the Handelsbanken culture were more prominent than the national culture during work. The German manager thought that her employees identified strongly with Handelsbanken’s culture but there is no denying that they are German that they identified with their national culture (Kerstin). Jesper in Paris also shared the belief of employees having multiple identifications. He explained that unless the employees comply with the culture of the organization they would not be able to
work at Handelsbanken but added; “the French culture is very strong and they are very patriotic and very proud of what France have accomplished, especially in history”. In the Norwegian branch the differences between the national culture and the organizational culture were not perceived as noticeably different and that the cultures complied with each other. Rolf was of firm belief that the Americans identified more with the American culture rather than the organization’s culture, and also assumed that they identified less with the organizational culture than Scandinavian and British employees.

Although the answers regarding the organizational culture were rather coherent, the responses regarding how the national culture affected the organizational culture were more varied. The general opinion seemed to be that the national culture does in fact affect the organizational culture, but how they differed were of numerous reasons. Kari at the Shanghai office described, “They [the Chinese employees] are used to being told what to do. That is probably kind of typical here in China, that they don’t do anything because they are afraid of doing mistakes, then it’s better to do nothing at all. Instead, you just do exactly what you are suppose to do”. At the Shanghai-office, they worked actively with Handelsbanken’s culture because it takes time for the employees there to believe in the system to understand the open nature of the bank. Kari also mentioned that he believed that this cultural integration process would be far quicker in for example Norway or Finland. One of the employees at the same branch said that Handelsbanken has not been affected by the national culture since the employees there comply with the spirit and ways of the organization. As previously mentioned, Kerstin explained that Germans don’t mind conflicts as much as Swedes and have different mindsets. In relation to this she also mentioned that the organizational structure has to be aware of the cultural difference in a country and that this awareness will help a lot. Awareness, respect and understanding of each others culture was also something that one of the employees in Shanghai emphasized. At the branch in Paris both respondents agreed that the way of conducting business is far more formal in France than it is in Sweden, with more paper work and a more obvious hierarchical structure. Conversely, Casey the manager in Norway experienced they were less formal in Norway as compared to Sweden. One of the respondents also explained Handelsbanken’s culture fit the culture of Latvia very well but should be tested to see if it fit the national culture of the host-country as he did not believe it would be applicable everywhere (Dzintars). Rolf anecdotally explained that when he first arrived in New York everyone told him that they desired to have short meetings, quick decisions etcetera. However, these so called “quick meetings” did not correspond to his reality. He described their meetings to be completely endless and also added "I felt so incredibly impatient, just like a factually oriented square".

When asked if the respondents believe that the behaviors differ between the employees in their respective branch some of the respondents said that it was not any difference. However, some of them explained that the differences were based on different personalities (Jesper & Mārtiņš). Jesper argued that people are people and that the differences are more based on personalities rather than on where they come from. This was somewhat supported by Jamie who instead implies that the national culture was the underlying reason behind differences in behavior when stating: “…of course that due to some national culture, we’ll still see the difference in the behavior. Dzintars on the other hand described the influence of Handelsbanken’s culture on the employees and how their behavior depends on the developing stage in the company. When they start
they might be more influenced from their previous employees but after some time they
grow into their role and understand how Handelsbanken functions (Dzintars). This was
coherent with what Casey who did not experienced that behaviors differed mainly
because everyone at the Norwegian branch has the “Handelsbank philosophy”. That
behaviors contrasted amongst employees had been noticed at the Shanghai and New
York branches. In Shanghai Jessica had observed that the Chinese employees are very
shy and not very open to talk compared to other employees at the Chinese branch, and
in New York Rolf observed a straighter communication as well as more
competitiveness from the Americans. He also emphasized that the Americans were
incredibly open and convivial that has a tremendously positive impact on the
atmosphere at the branch. This may be exemplified by how Americans often tend to ask
“Hi! How are you?” without expecting any answer. This, he explained, could be
something that Swedes find superficial and meaningless but that he instead thought
were positive.

The majority of the respondents described their relationship to their co-workers with
words as “very good” or “nice relationship” (Kerstin, Mārtiņš, Dzintars, Sam, Jamie,
Jessica). Casey explained that they had a landscape environment at the branch, which
facilitated open communication and open dialog without it being too formal. Moreover,
Rolf, Kari and Jesper emphasized that their relationships were based on open
communication along with teamwork and shared goals, which were recurring themes
that were used by most of the respondents frequently throughout the interviews. Seven
of the respondents also preferred working together with their team rather than working
individually. Dzintars in Latvia said “To do something you can’t do it by yourself. You
have to have a very great team”. Jessica’s answer differed slightly as she favored
working individually and explained that “Personally I would prefer working
individually, so that I can handle everything. I have everything in my control” but she
also added “But in a team, of course I will be very cooperative and do my part of the
job”. In three of the branches subcultures were to some extent noticeable at the
workplace. This was true for the Shanghai, New York as well as a Norwegian office. In
Shanghai it was noticeable during lunches when people with the same nationalities tend
to have lunch together. Additionally, although they all try to avoid speaking their native
language when other people are present this happens occasionally both from the
Chinese and the Swedish co-workers. At the New York branch Rolf explained that all
the expatriates tended to group together, although he added that he did not believe that
this was due to cultural differences but rather because of the situational resemblance the
expatriates shared. Social subgroups in terms of shared hobbies were present at the
office in Norway although it was not perceived as having a negative influence at the
branch (Casey).

When asked if they spent time with their colleagues on their spare time the answers
varied. At the Shanghai branch Jessica answered that some of them spend spare time
together. They have lunch together and sometimes organize activities such as
barbeques, sporting activities and watching movies. The manager at the same branch
however said he did not spend any spare time with colleagues, although he believed that
the some of his Chinese co-workers did (Kari). At the office in Riga neither Mārtiņš nor
Dzintars spent free time together with colleagues and explained that they have children
so it was hard to take time away from them. Rolf, Casey and Jesper occasionally spent
time with their colleagues yet still mostly when it is work related. The reason as to why
Jesper have chosen not to have a close relationship with his co-workers on his spare
time (besides occasional after-works and dinners) is because he has never really done that and also thinks it is important to keep it professional. Kerstin on the other hand spends time with the employees with dinners, after work and even went climbing last summer. She also explained; "we really try to get more to know the Swedish culture and we always have a fika”. The majority of the branches also clarified that they did had some teambuilding activities in order to facilitate the team spirit, although this may necessarily account for as “spare time”.

“There’s an open communication without barriers in both directions” is how Kerstin explained the communication through different levels of the bank. Many of the other interviewees seem to share their view as many explained it as a flat, decentralized organization with bottom up communication without barriers. However, in New York, Shanghai and Paris this differed since the national culture seemed affect how this communication worked since the employees in these branches shows a greater respect for hierarchy than in Sweden. Rolf for instance stated; “When you’re a general manager you are considered as something else rather than a regular person, and that’s just the way it is. There’s a much bigger difference compared to at home [Sweden]”. Additionally he suggested that the interest to distinguish hierarchical differences seems much smaller in Sweden compared to America.

In relation to this subject the interviewees were ask about the influences from top management. The general response was that due to the decentralized nature of the bank, decisions from top management were hardly noticeable but that there of course were some major decisions taken by the bank. It was evident in every branch that they communicate with top management, but that there is a high level of freedom and that there is not a lot of influence from the top. Rolf elaborated that they have a lot of freedom but of course within a strict framework. Casey also explained that general decisions regarding the bank came from the top management. None of the respondents had a deviant opinion when concerning influence from the top management although a couple of them mentioned “Our Way”, an internal document where the corporate culture and the Handelsbanken’s goals, ideas and way of working is described in detail. The managers were also asked whether they had experienced any internal conflicts when communicating organizational goals or information across levels and almost exclusively they all said no. Those whose answers differed explained that there were different opinions and disagreements when it comes to changes, but no direct conflicts (Jesper and Rolf). Jesper also explained that sometimes he need to be a bit more aggressive and to raise his voice and be clearer compared to in Sweden. Swedes are quite good at not raising their voices since people can find that intimidating, but in France it is normal.

Regarding the extent to which employees felt and were believed to be involved in decision making and setting personal goals nearly all the respondents considered themselves to be involved in the process. Casey described the employees at the Norwegian branch to be involved to "the highest possible extent”. The only exception from the general opinion was from Sam whom felt that there was a lack of involvement and expressed a desire to be more involved. However, all the other respondents mentioned either “very involved” “annual business planning sessions”, “the wheel”, “setting personal goals” and/or “group goals”. Dzintars explained that the level of involvement also depends of that stage the employee is at. If they are complete "Handelsbankers” and understand the consequences of their actions they can make
decisions themselves. Rolf also emphasized the importance of having an involved staff through the Handelsbanken’s culture by saying “It’s not just that we want to evangelize the culture, but there is a commercial reason. It has been shown that it is a damn effective method of banking and therefore it is important that the culture is adopted.” (Rolf).

5.5 Synergistic Elements

5.5.1 Commitment

All of the interviewees suggested themselves to be completely satisfied with their current employer, and thus an external offering would not be an option. As stated by Rolf he would “never move to another bank” furthermore concluded, “it would take a lot for me to leave the bank”. He considers his current assignment at the New York branch as important and the idea of another individual replacing him he argues will cause confusion and take up a lot of valuable time at the branch. Kari at the Shanghai office additionally does not consider there being any external offerings that ultimately can offer the same advantages as Handelsbanken. Furthermore, Dzintars at the Riga branch claimed that since 2007 no one at his branch had left the organization or considered leaving the organization, mainly because of the established love for Handelsbanken.

Jessica at the Shanghai branch suggested the atmosphere at the branch and her already established relationships with colleagues and customers as factors that ultimately would make it hard for her to abandon Handelsbanken. When it comes to internal offerings from Handelsbanken, Dzintars at the Riga branch argues that he would consider the offering, but it should “be meaningful for both me and for the bank, and challenging at the same time”. Mārtiņš supportively suggests a potential attractiveness in the challenge, but also concludes that it has to be something he can gain from and the same time gives something to the organization. Kari at the Shanghai office argues that at the present he would deny the offering. Arguing to be “very satisfied with the work I am doing at the moment”. As suggested by Kerstin it is “always good to change jobs for the experience”, but concludes that this would have to be within Handelsbanken since this is an organization she really enjoys working for. She furthermore explains that although offerings from external organizations occur, this is not something she considers herself interested in. Casey furthermore argues that an offering within Handelsbanken might be of interest, since it would allow a possibility of developing. However, any external offerings would not be relevant due to the existing desire of remaining with Handelsbanken. Additionally, Dzintars concludes by saying that “money is not the motivation itself” and instead motivation should be the result of the perceived meaningfulness and challenges involved in a job. All of the respondents have a positive attitude towards the organization. For example as stated by Kari, he considers himself being a highly loyal staff member and would work hard for the benefits of the organization. Kerstin at the Hamburg office claims to have a positive attitude towards Handelsbanken and regards herself as loyal towards the company. Additionally, Jessica at the branch in Shanghai states that she “feels honored to be one of the Handelsbankers… and proud being a Handelsbanker”.

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The respondents untidily suggested the employee commitment being strongest towards the organization. As suggested by Kari, individuals who see themselves as Handelsbankers has a desire to perform better and for the organization to continuously improve. He argues that for him, the process of adapting to Handelsbanken and its way of thinking has been very easy. Kerstin furthermore claims that a commitment towards the organization is simply "just necessary”. But so is a commitment towards the teams and Handelsbanken customers. Jessica at the Shanghai branch suggests the employees to be committed towards the customers and the team members. Additionally, Jesper argues it being a mix between the company and the customers, but further argues that "of course you work as a team so you are committed to the team”. He concludes by saying that normally "you are more committed to the persons that you are having a day to day contact with” that being clients or customers. Furthermore, the branch manager in Norway argues the employees to be committed towards the colleagues at the respective levels, but concludes by saying that there of course is a commitment towards the management and the general bank. Mārtiņš additionally claimed being committed towards the customers and the company of which he works for. As explained by Dzintars the customers and the company are the foundation on which employee commitment is established on. Kerstin additionally argued the employee commitment to not be created towards the supervisor, however, Rolf suggest there potentially being individuals who in fact could be committed towards him. However, he highly proposes this commitment to not be exaggerated and continues by suggesting that the main commitment at the branch is established towards the company and the work environment.

Noteworthy, is that all of the respondents consider themselves eligible to go beyond the requirement of the job in order for them to deliver high quality services to the customers. Thus, there is a desire to perform sufficiently in order to satisfy the customers and thus being committed towards their respective job. As suggested by Kari at the Shanghai branch, he claims going beyond the basic requirements whenever needed in order for Handelsbanken to retain satisfied customers, which is also supported by Mārtiņš at the Riga branch. He argues that he in fact would go beyond the requirements if there were something related to the customers that make them more loyal to the organization. This is additionally supported by Dzintars who claims that he would "do a bit extra than is expected" for the benefit of the organization. Kerstin at the Hamburg branch also suggest that she would be eligible to go the extra mile for the success of the bank and ultimately for herself. And argues that "if its something special you of course go beyond the requirements, but I would say that this is normal”. She bases this on hers and her coworkers’ high loyalty that has been established towards the customers and the organization. Additionally, Jesper at the Paris branch concludes that even though he would go beyond his job requirements, desirable would be to know why and why it is necessary. Kari also suggest that even though you would do a lot for the benefits of the organization, some things are excluded, he bases this on the fact that his life not merely involves working. But concludes by saying that Handelsbanken’s culture is direct in the sense that it does not count the hours of time devoted to the organization, rather the actions and results it brings.

Factors such as the consistency of the individuals working in the organization but also the informal structure that is being adapted were considered reasons as to why the atmosphere remains the same during managerial absence. As stated by Jesper at the Paris branch "its hard to say, honestly here we have such an informal structure so I do
not think it actually changes so much”. Jessica at the Shanghai branch argues that even though a feeling of loneliness is prominent, the ability of the manager to delegate responsibility to someone else makes the work continue on as normal, thus allowing them to cope with any emerging questions of customers. Dzintars at the Riga branch suggest the atmosphere to remain the same even when he is absent, basing his arguments on customers’ perceptions. Kerstin also agrees with former respondents, stating, “I think it is the same”. Mārtiņš argued that the understandability of the employees in terms of what has to be done and the desire to work in order to satisfy the client needs prohibits the atmosphere from changing. He exemplified this by saying “we always have to keep our promises and get everything done in time”. Casey furthermore adds that even though there is a sense of respect, it does not necessary need to be regarded in a negative way. In the short time, Rolf at the New York office regarded the atmosphere to remain somewhat normal, since this atmosphere is decided on the way in which the employees work together. In the long term, there is a possible risk that the everyday work could get out of control. Furthermore, as suggested by Kari, even though the employees know what has to be done, there might be a tendency to relax and talk more during the course of the day. However, he does not recommend intense managerial guarding of the employee job performances, he suggests that merely the presence of the managers promotes a more efficient workforce.

5.5.2 Trust

When asked whether or not employees feel safe or unsafe communicating their ideas and opinions with other colleagues or manager, all of the employee respondents agreed that communication of this form is considered very safe. This was also supported by the managerial perceptions implying that employees can communicate openly. Kerstin at the Hamburg office suggested the employees feeling safe and based this on that “we have an open communication and everybody can say his or hers opinion”. Jesper furthermore suggested open communication to be something they try to encourage at the branch, and is indeed a very important part of the culture. The organizational culture is additionally regarded as a factor that contributes to an increased trust for its members. As suggested by Mārtiņš, Handelsbanken ability to have faith in the performances of their employees, ultimately illustrates a sense of trust and respect for their work force. Furthermore, the development opportunities and the overall support of his coworkers are two factors that ultimately contribute to Dzintars at the Riga branch experiencing senses of trust for the bank. Kari, at the Shanghai branch suggest the branch to face some challenges concerning the establishment of employee trust for Handelsbanken’s systems and culture. He argues that this is not something that is achieved over the night and will in fact take a long time. Kari provided an interesting example where he based the willingness of communicating ideas and opinions on the different backgrounds. In China he speculates, the different ways of thinking have a potential effect on the likelihood of the individuals to communicate openly. Also a noticeable pattern in the Chinese background is the avoidance of any type of failure, which ultimately can affect whether or not the individual feels inclined to share their opinions. He additionally provides yet another example from his own background, where he discusses the similarities between the Chinese culture and his hometown in northern part of Sweden. He claims that individuals from this part of Sweden also have a tendency to be more careful regarding taking decisions. Additionally, he suggests this being stronger in China and thus more noticeable.
As suggested by Mārtiņš, he does not notice any type of internal competition between the colleagues. Additionally, Jessica at the Shanghai branch argues feeling safe communicating with both her colleagues and her manager, and she feels very free to say whatever she is thinking without hiding something. She also argues her relationship to the other co-workers being founded on trust, and that this is something she has won over the years. Rolf at the New York office and Dzintars at the Riga office furthermore consider the employees feeling safe communicating with either one of the parties. Concerning the aspect of trust, when discussing the influence of the Swedish management over Handelsbanken in New York, a noticeable top-level trust in the branch manager’s actions and decision emerges. He argues that although they keep a close look on the branch itself, the Swedish management most often allows the branch management to take this decisions that he or she deems are necessary and that in the end can benefit the organization.

When asked whether or not the management actions are considered consistent with their words, all of the respondents regarded this to be the case. In a sense their words are consistent with their actions, at the same time as the behaviors are compatible for the achievements. According to Jesper, the importance of consistency in terms of words and actions are important, basing this on a real life example between parents and children. He furthermore states, ”if you say something and then you do something completely different, it’s very hard for the team to understand”. Rolf at the New York branch also supports the importance of consistency, and actually acts on the promises being made. This is important in order to create a united entity. Kari also regards the management actions to be consistent the words, in a sense that ”what is initially said tends to be congruent”.

5.5.3 Job Satisfaction

The answers varied when the respondents were asked what the most important aspect of their job was, and varied between having interesting work tasks, working with people, learning something new everyday, customer contact and satisfaction and probably the most recurring response was working well together with their team (Sam, Kerstin, Jesper, Jamie, Kari, Rolf). Jesper and Dzintars also mentioned that they found it rewarding to communicate with different people from different nationalities. In Norway the manager believed it to be important to act as a good leader and follow the goals of the organization. Dzintars also added ”and also of course the job is challenging, it should be challenging and I love it”. Jessica and Mārtiņš’s answers contrasted compared to the other responses as Jessica found the possibility of “change in the job role” the most important aspect. Mārtiņš on the other valued that the organization follows the guidelines that are written in ”Our Way” and that the actions are comparable to their written words.

When asked how the employees express satisfaction or dissatisfaction within the branch all the managers besides Rolf and Kari experienced that their employees communicated issues with them directly. Casey had not experienced a situation in which the employees had expressed apparent dissatisfaction. Jesper on the other hand explained that the employees brought up issues directly or as a team it affects everyone. Dzintars and Kerstin further explained their roles when these situations occur. They both emphasized
the importance of listening and assisting with guidance in order to solve problems. Contrastingly, Rolf and Kari believed that their colleagues expressed their opinion with the other employees rather than to the managers. Rolf mentioned in a previous question regarding differences in behaviors amongst the employees, that the manager is always the last one to know about problems. Due to the competitive nature of the Americans at his branch, and their desire to appear as “good employees” they tend to avoid expressing dissatisfaction with their manager. He further discussed a concept of “file-thinking” amongst his employees where he explained that employees believes that if they bring up issues with their manager, the manager will keep this in a fictitious “file” that makes it easier to fire them later on.

According to the employees in China, they bring up possible issues with the department head either directly or by email. Sometimes they try to solve the issues themselves as Jessica explains; “when there is a problem, we just raise it in an easy way or a nice way because our target is to resolve it”. This was also somewhat true for the office in Riga. Mārtiņš explains that they have weekly meetings where they can express satisfaction and dissatisfaction but that they can also talk to the manager if necessary. All but one of the employees expressed an increase in satisfaction since their start of their employment. For instance, the manager at the Paris office expressed “It has changed, and of course it’s more satisfactory to affect a bit, to work through a group and to actually achieve goals so of course that’s more satisfactory” (Jesper) and the manager in New York said that “The first two years it has become quite a strong increase in affinity as well. Since then it has remained at a very high level” (Rolf). For some of the Handelsbankers it appears that the level of satisfaction is dependent on the accumulated work experience (Jessica, Dzintars). Dzintars also explains how he has been growing into the culture of Handelsbanken, which has had a positive effect in his level of satisfaction. Conversely, Sam was the only one who felt that her level of satisfaction had remained at the same level since the beginning of the employment. Due to the high satisfactory level from the respondent it came as no surprise that they all felt that they were being very well treated within the organization and had positive attitudes towards it. The most frequently occurring words were “respected”, “fairly treated” and/or “treated well”. Furthermore, all the respondents also claimed to find personal meaning and fulfillment from their jobs. Casey acquired this through the enjoyment of work whilst Sam explained that the variety of the work was important whereas respect and trust were key factors for Jessica; trust in the organization was also important for Dzintars. For Jesper the importance of receiving personal meaning and fulfillment is crucial, he explained that unless that was evident then you should try to change your job since ”It’s very important and a big part of my life”.

5.5.4 Motivation

As previously mentioned, Handelsbanken is well-known for being a organization that conducts a limited amount of external marketing, and when the respondents were asked if they experienced that Handelsbanken utilizes internal marketing, the majority of them had noticed it. The common perception was however that Handelsbanken’s internal marketing had a positive effect on how they later marketed the bank externally with clients. One example of this perception was by Jamie who said ”I think that we are gaining our reputation through our good service with our customers and internal marketing actually is quite important”. This statement was supported by Rolf and
Jessica who said that the internal marketing has to comply with the actions of the employees since you represent the branch. Kerstin mentioned the document Our Way as really strong internal marketing that supports the corporate identity. Both Mārtiņš, Casey and Jesper mentioned that they have an internal network which was related to Dzintars statement that “Especially in a decentralized organization it’s important with personal relationships between the employees in many countries”.

From the interviews it also became evident that most branches utilizes internal recruitment strategies. Jessica for instance mentioned that; “This is one of the encouragement to Handelsbanken staff, that you can apply for another job within the branch. Usually this is very much encouraged.” This was a common perception shared by many of the respondents (Jamie, Sam, Mārtiņš, Dzintars, Kari, Rolf). At the office in Hamburg, Kerstin explained that internal recruitment was somewhat limited within Germany since they do not have as many to recruit from, although when it is possible she believes it to be a good strategy. Jesper experienced at his previous workplace in Stockholm that a lot of the recruitment was aimed towards students yet the process was more evident there than in Paris. This type of recruitment was also evident at the office in Norway. Casey also explain that Handelsbanken utilizes internal recruitment and that there are lots of opportunities both in Norway and abroad. The perceived benefits of this strategy were the creation of loyal employees that got opportunities to gain experience and grow as well as creating mobility within the company, thus creating an attractive employer. Furthermore, they would have a pre-understanding of the culture and the values of Handelsbanken, which would facilitate the indoctrination of the work. Dzintars at the office in Riga explained, “It’s best that they come from the company, with the corporate culture and with experience in many areas. So that gives continuity in the bank”. Conclusively, the responses from the interviewees suggested that an internal recruitment strategy would benefit both the company as well as the employees. The common notion of the downsides with this strategy would be that there would be no new input or perspectives from external sources since all information would come from “Handelsbankers” (Kari, Sam).

When asked the question ”Would you say people are more focused on collaboration, controlling, competition, or creativity?” the answers almost exclusively were collaboration. At the offices in Riga, Paris, Norway and Shanghai the participant also added that they had creativity (to a certain possible extent). Jamie on the other hand expressed a desire for more creativity within her branch. There were some tendencies towards competition in the offices in Paris and New York. Jesper explained that this was not internal competition amongst each other but a more external type of competition. Rolf on the other hand believed the underlying reasons towards the competitiveness stemmed from the cultural background of the Americans. Kerstin’s answer differed slightly from the others as she said that, ”I think it depends on each and every character, from my point of view the most important thing is that people are motivated”.

The respondents were asked how employees are encouraged to grow and develop their competencies within Handelsbanken there were two common answers that varied from “you have to do that independently” (Sam) to they “encourage the department to have internal job rotations on regular basis so people can learn different things throughout the job” (Jamie). Some of the respondents also had an answer that was a combination of the two where for example Dzintars stated ”They should take their own responsibility for
development” and “we always support the employees to expand their knowledge in different areas”. Kerstin and Rolf explained that their employees get a lot of responsibilities that they have to handle independently which in turn will encourages them a lot and makes them develop further. Through meetings and so-called “PLUS samtal” (meetings concerning planning and personal development), the individual is encouraged to establish individual goals at the Shanghai branch. However, Kari also emphasizes that the individual must have an understanding that each and every individual have to figure out his or her own goals. One answer stood out from the other because of a difference in the French business system where Jesper explained that all companies in France are obliged to put away money for training and education. However, he also said that he encourage the team to do all sorts of things that could benefit the bank.

There were two apparent themes when the respondents were asked about their role in achieving organization’s mission and vision. The first theme was to serve their customers in the best possible way (Sam, Mārtiņš, Jessica) whereas the second was to clearly be a “cultural ambassador” by communicating Handelsbanken’s culture and goals (Jamie, Kari, Rolf, Dzintars, Jesper, Kerstin, Casey). One example of the first theme is from Mārtiņš who said “My role is to service the customers and find out their needs and find the solutions to satisfy their needs according to their business model and the things they need.” At the same branch Dzintars explained how he aimed to “be a good example of how it should be done and how we should stick to our core values”. Conclusively, Jessica at the Shanghai branch explained herself as one of many small parts crucial for the organization - “I am one of thousand screws - tiny but important to maintain”. 
6.0 ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to analyze and discuss our empirical findings in relation to prior literature introduced in the theoretical framework chapter. The analysis and discussion chapter will be divided into the five themes introduced in the practical methodology chapter and thus start with the background, followed by national culture, organizational culture, strategic leadership and lastly the synergistic elements of workplace well-being. Although the analysis is divided into themes some content have been interwoven in a connected theme due to its relevance.

“A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.”
- Mahatma Gandhi

6.1 Theme 1 and 2 - Background & National Culture

After the compilation of the empirical findings some interesting discoveries emerged. Our preconceptions assumed that the national culture of the respondents would have an effect and depending on their country of origin their perception of the organizational culture would vary. Since our respondents originated from a wide range of nationalities it is difficult to generalize results. Four of the interviewees are from Sweden but worked in a foreign country and the other six worked in their respective home-country. However, they all have at least one thing in common - they all work for a Handelsbanken, a Swedish bank with a strong organizational culture. Handelsbanken’s organizational culture became evident as a strong contributor as to why the respondents chose to work for the bank, moreover the attractiveness of the decentralized structure, the organizational values or the overall culture. Furthermore, following words came to be a recurring theme throughout the interview “decentralized”, “long-term oriented”, “open”, “strong” and “trust” when describing the organizational culture. From the interviews we also found that nearly all of the managers did not consider themselves required to adjust the way they normally behave when working at Handelsbanken. Hence implying Handelsbanken’s utilization of strategic leadership, as indicated by Ireland and Hitt who argued that strategic leaders encouraged openness amongst the members towards different values, belief and behavior arising from being a international organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, pp. 50-51). Noteworthy though was that three out of the four employees exemplified that they in fact had to adjust their behaviors to a more business appropriate behavior in order to fit with the culture of the organization. This is highly connected to the social identity theory introduced in the theoretical framework, whereby individuals activate a particular identity based on the overall situational fit and requirements (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 229).

In the New York branch the empirical data suggested there being some significant differences in the American branch compared to the organizational culture in Sweden. Rolf claimed this being the case and based that on the American companies usually being more micromanaged and rule-oriented, and that the local employees tend to be more competitive and in general prideful in regards to their cultural heritage, but at the same time he argues them being open and friendly. The complies with previous research by Hofstede who suggests that due to the nation’s overall high score in individualism a tendency to compete is prominent (2001, p. 215; Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 260). The
normative nature furthermore confirms proposals regarding pride (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 316). Our findings furthermore indicated that a cultural assumption in this case was correct as the New York manager explain how the locals emphasized their achievement, an assumption that cohere with Hofstede’s research (2001, p. 297). Yet another cultural difference is also evident as when Rolf stated: “When you’re a general manager you are considered as something else rather than a regular person, and that’s just the way it is. There’s a much bigger difference compared to at home [Sweden]”. This can be related to Gannon and Pillai’s metaphorical comparison of the American culture to football where individual players are treated as heroes (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 252). Hofstede also explain that managers in corporations are recognized as heroes (Hofstede, 2001, p. 318).

The empirical data furthermore confirmed some cultural differences in China compared to Handelsbanken’s culture, where the respondents explained that Chinese culture as being very hierarchical, centralized and more formal. The also described how the locals value harmony, which may serve as an underlying reason as to why they are afraid of making mistakes and not very open to talk. These statements also correspond to previous research findings and stems from the nations high level of power distance (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 73). Also due to their collectivist nature, confrontation is often avoided (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 106). Gannon and Pillai also have established the Chinese cultural metaphor as a Family Altar, where their strive for harmony is one of the key characteristics. In the French branch the respondents explained that the national culture of France differed compared to Handelsbanken’s culture in the sense that the host-culture is more centralized, formal and with more extensive work. These descriptions highly comply with previously conducted theories that argues the French culture to be founded on hierarchy in a sense that decision usually are made with the approval from the top (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 235). Furthermore supported, the inhabitants have been suggested to have a tendency to work hard during the weekdays (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 236). The respondents also argued France to be a very prideful culture, which is also coherent with prior literature, suggesting the French culture to be founded on purity, thus proundness (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 232). In regards to the German culture and whether or not it can be considered to cohere with the Handelsbanken culture, the empirical findings suggest Germans having less of a tendency to avoid conflicts, which can be related to prior studies by Hofstede and his coauthors implying the Germans to possess a higher level of acceptance for contradiction (2011, p. 339).

6.2 Theme 3 - Organizational Culture

The interviewees demonstrated a strong identification with the bank culture, and throughout the interview the benefits involved with the culture in terms of its values, teamwork, shared goals, long-term perspective, decentralized and flat structure along with open communication were mentioned. The overall illustration of the workforce identification with the organization was further enhanced by the fact that nearly all the respondents at some point during the interviews mentioned terms as being “a true Handelsbanker” to “become a complete Handelsbanker” or “lead the people as a Handelsbanker”. However, in terms of organizational values there is a noticed consistency amongst the different branches concerning the corresponding Handelsbanken values. Relating this to prior theories introduced in the theoretical framework, we can see that trust is enhanced when a group of
individuals possesses the same values furthermore the same language and ultimately culture (Henderson, 2010, p. 367). We believe this to possibly be the result of the organizational exploitation of strategic leadership. Meaning, the organization is able to control the various areas of the organization and successfully integrate the Handelsbanken culture, hence being able to handle possible cross-cultural conflicts (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51). The consistent and mutual agreement amongst the branches in terms of respecting the overall values of Handelsbanken consequently covers the relatedness need of humans, whereby a close relationship is established on shared values and ultimately feelings (Schneider & Alderfer, 1973, p. 490). The deep relationship between Handelsbanken and its workforce can ultimately be explained through the ‘sacred cow’-metaphor, whereby the existing commitment to the culture and the organizational core values is considered to be strong (Alvesson, 2002, p. 33). Notably, none of the respondents had a deviant answer that stood in stark contrast to the other interviewees, instead all seemed to have rather conformable answers. The reasons for this strong identification can potentially be the organizational utilization of strategic leadership in terms of successfully communicating the company vision, the organizational structure establishment and the strategy in terms of the organizational decision-making process, all of these ultimately included in the organizational culture (House & Aditya, 1997, pp. 462-463; Hickman, 1998, p. 560). The use of the organizational culture through the means of strategic leadership has furthermore been argued to provide the organization with a strong competitive advantage over its existing competitors, all over the world (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51).

From the interviews it became evident that the managers believed that their employees identify with the organizational culture but also to the national culture. This is coherent with the social identity theory, which described salience of multiple identities (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001, p. 32). Additionally, the existence of multiple identities is coherent with research within the field of national culture that ultimately describes that eventhough the number of identities may be restricted by culture, an individual usually have more than one identity (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 43-44). Some of the managers described that although there is no denying that employees in fact possess certain cultural traits the organizational culture is more prominent during the working hours. Although, multiple identities may cause difficulties and negatively challenge the organization if not be shared by all the members (Pratt & Foreman, 2000, p. 21), this was not something apparent in the branches. It is of our belief that since Handelsbanken seem to presumably obtain such a strong culture, the employees’ organizational identity become more salient than the national culture. Rolf in New York hypothesized that Americans in general identifies less with corporate culture than for instance Scandinavian employees. We believe that this is due to the fact that Americans has the highest score when it comes to individualism (Hofstede, 2001, p. 215). As mentioned, the extent of identities may be restricted the culture and is connected to collectivism and individualism. Countries that possess a high score in individualism in a business context do not find it desirable to stay with one company as much as a collectivistic nation (Hofstede et al., 2011, pp. 43-44). Furthermore, these nations also prefer working within a home country rather than a host country, and that the corporation is not responsible for the employees (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 218-219). From this theory we suggest that contrasting values of identification stems from their high score in individualism. We believe that since the Americans are working within a foreign company along with the fact that they not necessarily find it preferable staying with one company, they do not identify with the corporate culture as much as countries with lower score. As suggested by Chao and Moon (2005, p. 1135) there might be subcultures within a company, however as illustrated by the empirical findings this was in most cases not applicable to the branches included in this study. Thus, this was only implied to exist within the Shanghai branch were subcultures in terms of nationalities, age and gender to some exist had been
noticed. In the New York-branch and in the Norwegian branch, there were no evident subcultures, although particular groupings based on situational similarities and shared interests were evident.

In terms of possible organizational barriers that might occur as a consequence of Handelsbanken operating abroad, we expected these to be of a significant challenge. Surprisingly for us was that the language was suggested to be the main barrier, and even this barrier was considered minimal. It was mentioned by some of the respondents that the language could cause some difficulty in terms of misunderstandings. This is highly related to prior literature, where communication across languages is considered a challenge in terms of misinterpretations, and can thus affect the motivations and the behaviors amongst the workforce (Henderson, 2010, p. 360). Furthermore, these interpretations can ultimately influence the established trust (Henderson, 2010, p. 377). We moreover consider the actions explained by one of the branch managers in terms of recruiting individuals who cohere with the values of the organization to illustrate the strength of the Handelsbanken culture. Since this will ultimately prevent barriers and collisions in terms of personal and organizational values and allow the person an easier identification process. This is related to prior theories on the social identity process, whereby benefits such as increased job satisfaction and employee motivation is enhanced by the individual completely defining him or herself by the beliefs and values of the organization (Pratt, 2001, p. 4). Dzintars recruitment strategy may be related to a desire for an organizational prototypicality and is as previously mentioned, a phenomenon described by Moreland and his co-authors. They explain this to be a way to facilitate socialization, commitment and collaboration, thus shorten the acclimatization at the workplace. All the respondents identified with the organization however some also implied that in order to fit with the environment some minor adjustments have to be made. Moreover introduced through the empirical findings is the ability of the branch managers to adapt their respective leadership strategies, not to the culture itself, but to the personalities within the culture. We regard this as highly supported by prior literature, which suggest the strategic leader responsible for recognizing not only core competencies within the organization, but should also realize that the core competencies mainly originating from the organizational human capital such as skilled labor (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 49). This skilled labor has been argued to be a critical source of an increased organizational productivity (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 50). From the empirical findings we also noticed a tendency amongst most of the respondents to value a heterogeneous workforce in a beneficial light, arguing that a diversified workforce can contribute with additional input and understandings on the respective culture. This highly supports prior theory implying that a workforce that originate from a specific region has a better understanding of the culture and its inhabitants and is a valuable asset for the organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999, p. 51).

Gathered from the empirical findings, noticeable benefits originating from the strategic utilization of an informal leader-member relationship, which ultimately means the organization is able to establish an environment where the members feel safe communicating and openly share their opinions. Previously conducted studies regards the informal leadership as the true and morally correct way of motivating the staff towards the common goal of the environment, hence ensuring a collective understanding of equality amongst all of the members (Pielstick, 2000, p. 111-112). Additionally as implied by the empirical findings, the utilization of a decentralized business structure provides the organizational members with a sense of freedom and trust, furthermore it allows employee participation in the decision making process. The decentralized structure and the authority power of each branch will ultimately allow the employees to set their goal in accordance with each respective branch, and thus connect the success of the members to the success of
the branch and ultimately the organization. The data also suggests that there are no communicative barriers, and that the structure is built upon bottom-up communication and low influence from top management. Prior literature suggest this type of structure to foster emotions of freedom amongst its members, which in fact will contribute to a more motivated, innovative and creative workforce (Lee & Choi, 2003, pp. 205-206; Amason et al., 1995, p 27). Moreover, instead of decision being made at high levels, this structure provides lower level managers with decision-making authority and in this way is able to tailor the organization towards the respective environment (Ouchi, 2006, pp. 299-300).

6.3 Theme 4 - Strategic Leadership

Although, important to include when analyzing the well-being of the workforce is the success of a leader-member relationship. As argued in prior research, there can be difficulties in establishing a relationship that is ultimately high in quality when the two parties originates from different parts of the world, since this can cause cultural misunderstandings (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, p. 165). However, as implied by the findings, managerial action such as guidance, leadership consistency, and setting a good example, are mainly a few of ways in which the Handelsbanken managers minimize possible misinterpretations. Behaviors on the other hand, did not seem to differ to a great extent amongst the Handelsbanken branches in China, USA, Latvia, Germany, France and Norway. Reasons for this can be the overall individual identification with the organization, as according to the social identity theory. However, some of the respondents did in fact argued there being a difference in behaviors, mentioning words such as “shy” and a more “open communication” amongst many others. These differences could be assumed to exist because individuals still do not completely identify with the organization and its culture and this could consequently act as a contributor to the little behavior variability (Pratt, 2001, p. 14). Findings furthermore support this by arguing that the behavior mainly depends on where in the developing stage the employee is at, a newcomer might not necessarily identify with the organization in the beginning, but can come to do so in the future. Ultimately, this complete identification does not occur over the night. As stated by prior research, a strategic leader constitute the “ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization” (Ireland & Hitt., 1999, p. 43). Hofstede furthermore explains that ones personality is specific to an individual and is based on both inherited and learned traits, experiences and attributes whereas, culture is specific for groups and is learned during the course of life. Since a person is not born with the cultural aspects it should therefore be separated from personality of individuals (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 22-23). When the managers were asked whether or not they adjusted their leadership to various cultures within their respective branch, half of them said they did not and the other half explained that they did adjust their leadership but in an individual and personality based manner rather than a cultural. Kerstin explained “I think as a manager you always have to read the different individuals in a slightly different way”. This implies that there is an overall agreement that culture and personality differs and is separated when these managers utilizes different leadership strategies. The ones that adjust their leadership do this as mentioned earlier based on an individual level.

Throughout the empirical findings we noticed there being a mix of leadership styles prominent at the various Handelsbanken branches. Noticeable amongst some of the managers was the utilization of a coaching leadership style, this became clear from the empirical findings arguing managerial attempts being made with the purpose of assisting the staff members with business related issues or further development desires. The gathered
information additionally suggested the symbolic leadership value and the leadership consistency to prevent dysfunction thus ultimately coach the members towards future achievements and goal according to Handelsbankens way of working. We based our current assumptions on prior literature on coaching leadership style, whereby the leader is identified through his or her’s ability to encourage the organizational members towards reaching their respective goal. Moreover the leader is known for providing the organizational members with his or her’s assistance whenever they should need it. Significant features of this leadership style constitutes positive feedbacks, which ultimately allows the employees to find their respective strengths and weaknesses. This leadership style has been known as the “I believe in your” style, good for establishing employee commitment (Goleman, 2000, p. 87). Based on the empirical findings, a tendency amongst the managers interviewed to adapt a democratic leadership style became evident. We mainly based this on the fact that the employees are considered to be involved in the decision-making. The collected data implied this being the case due to Handelsbankens adoption of annual business planning sessions through the utilization of the wheel, hence allowing for employees to set their own goals in accordance with the organizations. Consequently, the involvement was suggested to allow for open communication amongst the members, thus allowing everyone to be able to share their opinions, which is ultimately in accordance with the organizational culture.

Furthermore, the managerial ability to have faith in the performance of the organizational members, both in regards to top-level management belief in branch managers, as well as branch managerial belief in the employees. The empirical findings suggested the established managerial faith in the members to ultimately contribute to a trust creation. A democratic leadership style is as previously mentioned known for including the employees in the decision making process, and through this is able to foster employee commitment. The style is regarded to be flexible and responsible and allows for employees demands to remain realistic (Goleman, 2000, p. 85). Although the collected data implied there being an employee desire for greater involvement in the decision making process. Additional explanations backed this up by suggesting the level of involvement in making decision to stem from the potential stage of the employee.

Moreover although it can be considered as small, we still noticed some of the managers adapting more of an affiliative leadership style at work. This was illustrated by managerial actions such as team building activities during special occasions but could also be more common day activities such as the group going out for lunch or coffee. Prior literature referred to this as the affiliative leadership style, whereby a greater deal revolves around the people working for the organization, thus a likelihood of the leader joining the group during lunches is considered strong and this ultimately creates a sense of belongingness.

6.4 Theme 5 - Synergistic Elements of Workplace Well-Being

Concerning the elements of well-being at the workplace, the open communication, good relationships with each other together with the ability of the organization in terms of including their employee in the decision making and setting their own goal, as for example through the business plan process of the wheel. That ultimately can act as a positive contributor to the employee wellbeing. Furthermore, it has been suggested important for organizations to not only concentrate on maintaining an open communication amongst its members, but additionally focus on making decisions that ultimately benefits the entire organization and all of its members (Burchell & Robin, 2010, p. 1). As demonstrated by the empirical findings Handelsbanken does not focus on money rewards, thus questioning the
overall success of this type of motivation technique. As proposed by previous literature, money and other similar practices do not necessarily lead to an increased well-being amongst the employees. Instead they argue, the long-term relationships to improve the workplace well being (Burchell & Robin, 2010, pp. 3-4). Notably, the authors implied there being five dimensions of a great workplace. They divided these into the established credibility in terms of trusting their leader, respect arising from being a valued member of the organization and fairness from being treated equally. These previously mentioned dimensions were followed by pride in working for the organization and camaraderie established on the basis of enjoying the individuals involved in the organization (Burchell & Robin, 2010, p. 4). These will be covered throughout the analysis of the synergistic elements below.

In regards to the employee commitment towards Handelsbanken and its organizational culture, the majority of the respondents did at some time during the interview mention that they in fact did not have any desire in leaving the organization, simply because they feel completely satisfied with their current employer, the overall culture of the organization as well as its structure and the challenges the organization provides. Moreover, as mentioned by Dzintars at the Riga branch, they have not had a single employee leaving the branch since 2007, simply due to the staff members established love for the organization. Also noticeable is that some of the respondents have been loyal Handelsbanken employees for years. Jesper for instance has worked for the organization for a total of 17 years, followed by Dzintar who is currently on his 16th year and Rolf who has been a Handelsbanken employee for 12 years. We have calculated an average on all of the participants and the average duration of employment was 9 year. We furthermore located a web page that presented the tenure at a job, for France there was an average of 11.5 years and for Sweden an average of 10.5 years. In oppose to United States where the average time spent at a job was 4 years and thus the lowest (Statistic Brain, 2013). Relating previously mentioned employee commitment towards Handelsbanken to prior research introduced in the theoretical framework it is in our belief that Handelsbanken’s employees possess an affective commitment towards their organization. That ultimately means that the commitment is founded on a persons own desire towards reaching the organizational goals, simply due to the level of identification and attachment the employee feels towards the organization and its culture (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 305; Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67).

As indicated by the respondents, the atmosphere, the established relationships, the current customers, and the job enjoyment are a few of the factors that promote this type of commitment. These factors highly relate to the idea of human needs provided by Alderfer through the use of the ERG theory, thus allowing us a clear connection between the factors promoting commitment to the human needs of relatedness. The relatedness needs of humans concerns the establishment of relationships on the foundations of values and feelings shared amongst the group (Schneider & Alderfer, 1973, p. 490). Gathered from the empirical findings, the respondents are individually responsible for their development and further advancements. Thus it is each individual’s own responsibility for satisfying his or hers human needs of growth. Human needs of growth simply is the needs of humans in terms of being creative through innovations and challenges, as well as the importance of being productive for the good of the environment, it has been mentioned that these needs should be covered before the individual has the ability of utilizing its core competencies and develop new ones (Schneider & Alderfer, 1973, p. 490).

We furthermore base our assumptions of Handelsbanken employees having an affective commitment on the empirical findings where the respondents confirmed that external
offerings in fact had occurred, but were declined due to the desire of remaining with Handelsbanken. However, we cannot exclude there might be underlying influences that could contribute to the employee commitment in the form of a continuance or normative commitment. The former due to the high cost of abandoning the organization, and the latter based on the obligation the employee feels towards the organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 305; Meyer & Allen, 1991 p. 67). Nonetheless, the empirical findings consequently allow us to assume the affective commitment to be strongest within Handelsbanken. We furthermore argue this commitment as being highly beneficial for Handelsbanken when operating within branches internationally across different cultures. And bases this on prior literature that argues the importance of the workforce being completely committed towards the overall values and goals within the organizational culture, since differences in national cultures can come to influence its overall outcome (Collier & Esteban, 2007, p. 30).

Additionally, we can conclude a strong commitment amongst the interviewees towards Handelsbanken. In a sense that all of them considers themselves eligible to go beyond the minimum requirements of their job in order to benefit the organization and retain loyal customers. These findings moreover supports previous research arguments where a relationship discovery between high performance and the ability of the respondents to go the extra mile in order to provide high quality service to their customers for the benefit of the organization (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 994; Kim & Rowley, 2005, p. 109). Through the empirical findings we have been able to identify that employee commitment is regarded strongest towards the organization as a whole. The idea of seeing oneself as a Handelsbanker, promotes better performance and continuous improvements. There is an evident relation between the noticed organizational commitment, and prior theories that suggest a positive relationship between organizational values, which ultimately are included in the organization and its culture, and the overall commitment strength of the employee (Finegan, 2000, p. 164). Thus implying that an affective commitment can be founded on the organizational culture, when the organizational values entirely confirms with the personal values (Meyer et al., 2004, p. 1002). In addition to the commitment to Handelsbanken as an organization, our findings illustrates that commitment in fact can come to stem from being part of a team, for providing high quality service to the customers as well as the commitment towards management. In terms of commitment towards the customers, finding implies that the commitment Handelsbanken employees feels towards the customers allows them to continue their hard work even during managerial absences.

All of the respondents expressed that they found personal meaning and fulfillment from their jobs and most of them feel that they are encouraged to grow and develop. Furthermore is has become evident that Handelsbanken utilizes an internal marketing and recruitment system which is not only noticed but also appreciated by its organizational members since it allows for mobility and motivation. This supports prior research by Rafiq and Ahmed, who describes that internal marketing is an efficient tool for motivating the workforce which is considered crucial in a service minded industry (2002, p. 453). Surprisingly, all of the participants (besides one) described their level of satisfaction to have increased since their initial employment. As previously mentioned, all of them also expressed that they found personal meaning and fulfillment from their jobs. This contradicts with the honeymoon-hangover effect that instead suggests the opposite (Boswell et al., 2005, pp. 883-884). We can thus conclude that there is a high satisfactory level amongst the respondents. In relation to this there is not a lot of dissatisfaction expressed to the managers or perceived by the managers. Interestingly enough, Jessica at the Shanghai-branch claimed that whenever there are problems that she wants to address, she would send an email or attempt to solve them themselves, which can be related to research by Hofstede and his co-authors that explain how the Chinese culture tends to avoid confrontation by communicating indirectly. Additionally,
Rolf perceived that there was not a lot of dissatisfaction that was expressed directly to him due to previously mentioned ‘file’-thinking. This could also stem from the Americans’ competitive nature, and that they do not want to be perceived as problematic and thus can solve anything by themselves (Hofstede, 2001, p. 215).

As demonstrated by the empirical findings, all of the respondents suggested the Handelsbanken employees to feel safe in communicating their ideas to their colleagues and managers. The environment was described as very open and as mentioned by one of the managers there are consistent attempts in encouraging open communication amongst the members of the organization, since this ultimately is a crucial part of Handelsbanken’s culture. As implied by prior theory, a collective understanding between employees and managers regarding the organizational culture can furthermore act as a foundation upon which trust if founded on. This type of trust is created through the means of harmony and allows an understanding that is shared amongst the members in terms of organizational values and purposes (Tzafir & Dolan, 2004, p. 127). Trust founded on the dimension of harmony can furthermore be supported by empirical findings that ultimately suggest the managerial words and actions to be consistent with each other. Thus preventing any potential employee misunderstandings in terms of organizational values and objectives. Based on this it is in our belief that the employee trust in Handelsbanken is in fact to some extent founded on the aspects of harmony.

Additionally, previously conducted research argues organizational trust to be the potential result of communicative behaviors in terms of openness and honesty amongst the members of the organization (Mohamed et al., 2012, p. 1). Moreover, as supported by Paine, communicative behaviors and openness strategies was argued to be strong contributors to the establishments of trust (Paine, 2003, p. 5). As demonstrated by the empirical findings, we can assume some of the respondent trusts in the organization and its co-workers to be founded on the basis of an open communication and the overall openness of the Handelsbanken culture. This assumption is based on the findings that ultimately suggest collectively shared emotions of safety in communicating within the organization. Nonetheless, in addition to previously mentioned dimension of trust there appears to be another factor upon which trust to a certain extent has been founded. That is the trust arising from the support of the co-workers as well as the overall organizational confidence in the performances of their members. These findings can be highly related to prior research arguing trust to consequently be founded on membership concern in terms of the well-beings of the other co-workers. Trust established on the basis of concern ultimately relates to the individual ability in regards to nurturing and respecting their respective relationship within the organization (Tzafir & Dolan, 2004, p. 127). This can furthermore be supported by Paine, who claimed one of the components of trust creation being the interactions between its members in terms of teams or alliances. Ultimately, from these empirical findings we can assume trust created on the basis of concern to be prominent within Handelsbanken.

In addition to previously stated, the empirical finding also suggests trust to potentially be founded on the ability of the organization to have faith in the members’ performances. Thus trust originating from the expectations of the trustor in terms of the trustee performing as promised (Tzafir & Dolan, 2004, p. 127). Through the empirical findings information regarding possible challenges in terms of establishing employee trust for the organizational system and culture emerged. That consequently was suggested to be the result of the various membership backgrounds and could consequently affects the employee’s willingness to communicate their opinions and ideas with their respective co-workers. The findings hence indicate a challenge in establishing trust for the organizational culture and its
overall structure. Furthermore, the process of this trust creation will not be achieved over the night; instead it is considered to be a long-term process. These findings can ultimately support prior research implying trust to be the antecedent of a particular culture where personalities and experiences are shared amongst the members (Schoorman et al., 2007, p. 351) Additionally, as mentioned by Paine trust can be culturally rooted, thus the values and beliefs of the individual is closely connected with those incorporated in the organizational culture (2003, p. 5) A collective understanding amongst the members in terms of values, norms and behaviors allows them to establish a strong relationship founded on trust (Dietz et al., 2010, p. 19). Ultimately, individuals have been suggested to trust what is similar in regards to cultures, languages and values, and a possible trust creation will take longer time when feelings of dissimilarity is prominent (Henderson, 2010, p. 367). Based on the empirical findings, the establishment of trust towards the organization and its environment has been regarded to be a long-term process and is in fact something that has to be won over the years. Supporting prior theory by Mishra and Morrissey, whom argues trust to be fragile, in a sense that it will take a long time establishing it and has the possibility of being destroyed instantly (1990, p. 444).
7.0 CONCLUSION & CONTRIBUTIONS

In this chapter, we will introduce the reader to our final conclusion and thus answer our research question. Thereafter reflections on the theoretical contributions and practical recommendations will be provided, which will be followed by suggestions for future research.

“An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.”
- Jack Welch

7.1 Conclusion

Our aim with this research was to investigate how organizational culture is prominent in the synergistic elements of workplace well-being at branches in different countries. Thus we wanted to investigate the presence of cultures within corporations and how this is utilized as a strategic tool for creating work-force motivation, commitment, trust and job satisfaction. The research was conducted through acquiring relevant theories that were used for establishing and formulating a research question and purpose. This case study was conducted in a qualitative manner, where in-depth data was collected from a chosen sample of managers and employees at various branches in Handelsbanken. Through this data our aim was to answer our research question:

“How are organizational cultures evident in synergistic elements of workplace well-being within international branches?”

We expected there to be a cultural ambiguity affecting the members of the organizations in various branches located in United States, China, Latvia, France, Germany and Norway. Our initial assumption was that the national culture would have a greater influence on individuals and affect the organizational culture within the respective branches. Although this was not completely supported by prior theories theorists such as Geert Hofstede defined national culture as “collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 19). Culture was argued to be something that people learn and adopts throughout the course of life and described as rooted in ones behavior through norms, behaviors, traditions and values (Hofstede et al., 2011, p. 22). Research has also shown that dissimilarities within a working relationship consequently can cause distrust and misunderstandings whereas culturally similar parties develop trust through shared cultures, languages and values (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, p. 165; Henderson, 2010, p. 367). Conversely, argued by prior researchers, the situation can ultimately determine which of the individuals’ identities becomes salient since these can be contextually determined (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001, p.32). However, during this process our initial assumption came to transform into the opposite and instead we came to the conclusion that the organizational culture in fact constitutes more than just superficial values, and instead integrated into the members of the organization mind-sets. Due to the fact that the organizational culture has been identified through this research as an important strategic tool for international corporations, we consider it crucial to keep in mind when expanding abroad and integrating into a new culture.
From this research it became evident that a strong culture such as the one within Handelsbanken requires newly recruited individuals with different values to adopt and possibly de-personalize themselves in order to fit with the organizational culture. Thus, we found that if a corporation holds a strong culture that the members within it can identify to with, the national culture will end up in a lower place in the identity hierarchy and organizational identity will become more prominent. We furthermore found the synergistic elements of workplace well being gathered from prior research to be highly noticeable to the culture of Handelsbanken and its overall values and beliefs. Hence allowing us to conclude the benefits involved with their strong corporate culture in terms of attaining a motivated, committed, trustworthy and satisfied workforce. Conclusively, it is of our belief that international organizations holding a similar structure ultimately can utilize organizational culture as a strategic tool to facilitate workplace well being.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions

We consider our conducted research to ultimately contribute with additional theoretical knowledge on the area of organizational culture and its relevance when it comes to fostering employee well-being at a workplace. Although much research has been conducted within organizational culture, culture and synergistic elements of well-being (Alvesson, 2002; McAleese & Hargie, 2004; Hofstede, 2001; Mohamed et al., 2012), no one has, to our knowledge, conducted a research in a qualitative manner and investigated factors that we have decided to utilize. Our findings highly support prior research arguing the importance of establishing and maintaining a strong corporate culture and how this can come to benefit the organization. Hence the conducted research was able to provide information on the relevance of utilizing the organizational culture as a strategic tool for creating workplace well-being at the organization and is therefore considered to be a contributor to the formation of a competitive advantage. Moreover, our findings provided information that ultimately contradicted that of previous research in regards to job satisfaction and the concept called honeymoon-hangover effect, where research suggest that the entrance in an organization was described as generally being more positive, but that the level of satisfaction tends to decrease over time (Boswell et al., 2005, pp. 883-884). This honeymoon-hangover effect is not supported in our research but instead suggested the opposite. The respondents in our research had instead an increased level of satisfaction, which ultimately does not support findings by Boswell with co-authors and therefore provides a new angle to previously conducted researches.

7.3 Practical Recommendations

Through this research we have gathered information that ultimately stresses the importance of organizations to use the organizational culture as a strategic tool, and thereby be able to create a strong competitive advantage over its rivals. Our research has illustrated the benefits that could arise from this action in terms of acquiring a highly motivated, committed, trustworthy and satisfied workforce. Although this research has been conducted with Handelsbanken, we believe that many other organizations with could benefit from our research. Organizations that do not currently possess a strong culture could surely contemplate upon integrating a more evident organizational culture that could benefit the company. Our recommendation to organizations in international
settings is to devote time to understand the cultural impact on the organization. If companies cannot handle these cultures this may ultimately lead to a decreased or low employee well-being that in turn could create an anger or reluctance towards foreign cultures. Therefore, not only the company but also the society as a whole may be implicated by limited understandings of cultures. Also, on the contrary, if this understanding instead were to increase, societies and companies would benefit.

Furthermore, we deem this research as highly relevant for any organization where the human resources and their significant competencies stands as a necessity in providing their customers with high quality services. We regard our research to foster societal contributions in terms of benefits arising from corporations utilization of the organizational culture in order promote well-being at the workplace. This will ultimately contribute to employees being motivated, committed, trustworthy and feels satisfied with the work he or she is doing. Moreover, this will not only contribute a healthier and happier work force, it will allow them to provide their respective customers with better quality service. Thus significantly improving the superiority of the offerings and leaves the customers satisfied with their purchase. Furthermore, the possibility of corporations utilization of the organizational culture in a strategic manner can ultimately foster greater competitiveness amongst the rival companies. Conclusively, the increased competitiveness puts pressure on not only the products and services needed, but also possibly causes the prices to decrease. This consequently provides the society with the ability to acquire an extensively larger amount of products or services for the same price.

7.4 Future Research

In terms of recommendations for future research within this area, through the process of this research we have noted specific angles that could be relevant for future research to focus upon. Due to the time constraints placed upon us the possibility of gathering large quantity information from each branch was limited, instead our focus was towards acquiring information from a larger quantity of branches through a cross-sectional research design. Thus our recommendation for future researches would be to perform a longitudinal design, and through this gather information that was beyond our reach. A longitudinal research design would furthermore allow future researchers the possibility of acquiring a larger quantity of respondents from each branch, and thus get wider and more extensive data collection. Furthermore, future research could additionally focus on performing a similar study on an organization that in oppose to this research adopts a centralized business structure. Thereby allowing the researchers to investigate whether or not any significant differences stem from the chosen business structure, and if this could possibly affect the strength of the organizational culture. We furthermore advise future researchers within this particular area to include one additional bank in their study, it is in our belief that this will promote interesting information since it will allow the researchers to notice particular deviations between the two. Furthermore, this type of investigation could possibly reveal whether or not the actions of one of the parties are more efficient or inefficient than the other. Another possible suggestion for a future research within this area could be the selection of a different industry operating on an international market and through this be able investigate the overall prominence of the organizational culture in the synergistic elements of well-being at the workplace within that specific sector.
8.0 TRUTH CRITERIAS

The last chapter of this research will consist of reflections in terms of the trustworthiness – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as well as the authenticity of this research.

“Anyone who doesn't take truth seriously in small matters cannot be trusted in large ones either.”
- Albert Einstein

In order for us to pursue a trustworthy study it is important to address the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of our research. In terms of research credibility it is important to ensure that the research is carried out in the correct manner and according to what has been agreed. Due to the fact that the interviews were conducted over two different means of communication, these being by telephone or through Skype, it was of most importance for us to not only record the interview but also transcribe the overall interview conversation. This was necessary in order for our respondents to be able to confirm that our understandability was correct and that there were no severe misunderstandings. This was conducted through the use of a respondent validation, whereby we made sure to sent out the first draft of the empirical finding to our interviewees for their conformation and thus ensured that there were no misinterpretations on our behalf (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 396). This is as mentioned by Bryman and Bell extremely important when performing a qualitative research since there is a desire to confirm cohesiveness between the empirical findings and the participant experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 396).

In terms of transferability, that is whether or not the findings from a qualitative research such as this one actually hold in other social context, furthermore if it can possibly hold in the same context but during a different time period. That ultimately means whether or not the findings from this particular study can be used as a database for other studies to utilize, hence indicating its transferability (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). A preferable way to regard the intentions of transferability would be to divide the word into two different parts, transfer and ability. It is in our belief that this research is highly transferable, although no generalization will be made the findings will be useful for other social context involving issues concerning business and culture related material. We regard our findings as a detailed and in-depth source of information on the use of the organizational culture as a strategic tool. Accessing beneficial information from employees working for a company that focus a lot on maintaining an advantageous organizational culture.

Regarding the reassurance of dependability of our research, records of our entire research process has been gathered over the course of the study. As suggested in prior research, the authors have the absolute responsibility in guaranteeing a logical, traceable and clearly documented research process (Tobin & Begley, 2003, p. 392). This ultimately allows others to examine and follow the entire research process. In terms of the conducted research, we consider the structure of the research very easy to follow. Furthermore, the practical method section and the detailed presentations in regards to the different themes that ultimately will be covered during the data collection, the
analysis and nonetheless the conclusion is considered to provide additional clarifications for the reader.

In terms of the research conformability the importance of the researchers to remain objective cannot be stressed enough. Although there can be specific challenges involved with remaining objective throughout the course of the study, it is important to clarify that the overall actions of the researchers were done in good faith. Thereby demonstrate that the research and the overall findings are not the result of the researchers own personal values or preferences (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Although as mentioned it can be hard to remain completely objective through the research, we have strived to due so to our fullest extent. Based on our pre-understanding introduced in the scientific methodological section of this thesis, we have attempted to remain critical to our own pre-conceptions throughout the whole process. With these pre-conceptions in the back of our mind it is in our belief that the research is confirmable. Furthermore, we consider our ability to value the opinions and advices of our friends, supervisor and from prior seminars to consequently increase the confirmability of the overall research. When assessing a qualitative study it is not enough to simply include previously mentioned trustworthiness criteria but one should also consider the criterias for authenticity. These criteria consist of fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity as well as tactical authenticity. First and foremost, the criteria of fairness simply means the extent to which the research represents a variety of members and their respective viewpoints across a particular social context (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 398-399). We furthermore consider our research fair, in the sense that we not merely included the viewpoints of Handelsbanken managers, but also the employees at various branches across the world. Although our original wish was for the employee participation rate to be somewhat higher we regard the opinions of the existing respondents as highly sufficient.

In terms of ontological authenticity, that being the likelihood of the research to contribute with additional understandings on the social environment amongst the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 399). This is supported by the fact that the respondents showed interest in acquiring the final result from us when the research has been completed. Moreover, when asked particular questions we received answers such as ”I have not really though of that before” from some of the respondents throughout the interview. Indicating that new knowledge can arise from our findings and analysis. As suggested by Creswell and Miller, this can ultimately indicate an ontological authenticity within the performed research (2000, p. 107). Furthermore, it is in our belief that our research promotes an educative authenticity in a sense that it provides the respondents with the ability to consider the context from different perspectives, furthermore amongst the different cultures (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 399). We consider this to ultimately increase the overall understanding of the individuals who participated in this study but also the potential readers. We additionally regard the input and material provided by the respondents stands as a necessity in order for this research to be feasible. The possibility of performing this study on an authentic company has provided us with beneficial empirical findings and ultimately allowed us to perform this scientific study. It additionally allowed us the possibility of reflecting over the relatedness between our findings to the already existing theories, which consequently provided us with relevant knowledge. Together, ontological authenticity and educative authenticity constitutes the overall level of awareness that has originated from this research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 122).
REFERENCES


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## APPENDIX I - Summary of Responses, Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent &amp; Background</th>
<th>National Culture</th>
<th>Organizational Culture</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Synergistic Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rolf Marquardt</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience with the banking industry</td>
<td>Minor adjustments in behavior when working</td>
<td>Expectations on managers is higher compared to Sweden, considered to be something else that just a regular Joe</td>
<td>Informal relationship with employees</td>
<td>Would reject external job offerings with similar pay and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked for Handelsbanken for 12 years</td>
<td>Handelsbanken have strong influences from the Swedish culture which influences working behavior</td>
<td>More direct communication at the branch compared to Sweden</td>
<td>Respect from hierarchical levels</td>
<td>Believes that the expatriates especially are committed to the organization and customers and to some extent to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American companies more micromanaged and rule-oriented</td>
<td>‘File’-thinking</td>
<td>Does not adjust leadership style to individuals</td>
<td>Believes that the atmosphere changes to some extent when a manager is not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barriers in terms of language can cause misunderstandings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Differences in terms of American laws and regulation, people are scared of getting fired or sued</td>
<td>Greater respect for hierarchical differences compared to Sweden</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
<td>Believes that the employees feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American culture is more competitive, are also open and friendly</td>
<td>Employees are involved in decision making, Corporate mobility</td>
<td>Helps people grow and pushes them to take on work of increasing difficulty</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Americans are proud to be Americans and prideful of their culture</td>
<td>The Wheel and PLUS-meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Believes it to be important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notice influences from the top management when it comes to general decisions regarding the bank, and how the branch is progresses</td>
<td></td>
<td>Values the importance of teamwork and person-job fit, a good mix of people, and the possibility to progress the branch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Huge amount of freedom within a strict framework</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a lot of expression of dissatisfaction, because of ‘file’-thinking</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts, but at times different points of view</td>
<td></td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Locals identify more with the national culture, and less with the company culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Treated very well, with respect.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finds personal meaning and fulfillment from the job. Gets energy from customers and the job itself</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork and good dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Believes Handelsbanken to be a good and well-managed company</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance oriented and competitive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Notices internal recruiting and marketing, explains its intention of creating a sense of pride for the organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
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<td>Subcultures or groupings because of shared situational similarities, Expatriates</td>
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<td>Majority of the time informal atmosphere</td>
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<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Synergetic Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kari Pessa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous experience with the banking industry</td>
<td>Do not adjust natural behavior when working</td>
<td>Works a lot with integration of Handelsbanken's culture, takes time to integrate.</td>
<td>Believes the integration of then organizational culture would be faster in physically closer countries</td>
<td>At the time he would reject and internal external job offerings with similar pay and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in Handelsbanken for 5 years</td>
<td>Swedish culture has influence on working behavior</td>
<td>Greater respect for hierarchical differences compared to Sweden</td>
<td>Does not adjust leadership style to individuals</td>
<td>Believes the employees to be committed to the customers and the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No barriers, but differences in terms of thinking, takes a long time to get close to people</td>
<td>Open communication. Easy communicative access to superior</td>
<td>Brings value by communicating the Handelsbanken's culture</td>
<td>Believes that the atmosphere changes when a manager is not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local employees afraid of making mistakes</td>
<td>Employees are involved in decision making,</td>
<td>There is a symbolic value of being a manager</td>
<td>Believes the employees feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More hierarchical</td>
<td>Individual and group goals</td>
<td>Brings value to the organization by making sure the branch constantly improves, develops and progresses in the right direction</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese more formal that Swedes</td>
<td>The Wheel</td>
<td>Continuous leadership</td>
<td>Values teamwork and good, knowledgeable co-workers. Also values focus on customer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swedish management style, but not many influences that affects the branch</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
<td>Believes dissatisfaction/ satisfaction to be expressed amongst the employees themselves, since he has not experienced expressed dissatisfaction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>Tries to communicate open communication</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everyone is driven by shared goals</td>
<td>Does not often spend time with colleagues outside work</td>
<td>Treated very well</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive attitude towards Handelsbanken</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyal and not negative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subcultures in terms of nationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notices internal marketing and believes it to have a positive effect on customer encounters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterogeneity provides various viewpoints, but homogeneity is less time consuming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mainly own personal responsibility to grow and develop competencies, PLUS-meetings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Handelsbanker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and some creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Synergistic Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dzintars Salavs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous experience with the banking industry</td>
<td>Do not adjust natural behavior</td>
<td>Important to recruit the right people that understands the culture of Handelsbanken</td>
<td>Informal relationship with employees</td>
<td>Would reject external job offerings with similar pay and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in Handelsbanken for 16 years</td>
<td>Everyone's behavior affected by culture and understanding of others' culture</td>
<td>Handelsbanken has a very long-term perspective</td>
<td>Values recruitment of right the people</td>
<td>Internal job offerings could be considered if it is meaningful for both parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scandinavian-companies have more long-term perspective</td>
<td>Important that the organizational culture fits with the national culture</td>
<td>Brings value to the organization by being a true Handelsbanken</td>
<td>Money should not be the motivating factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Important to recruit the right people</td>
<td>Behavioral differences depends on the developing stage in Handelsbanken</td>
<td>Inspiring and assisting in development process</td>
<td>Believes that the atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definitely bottom-up communication, works well.</td>
<td>When information comes from the top, it is very openly communicated</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
<td>Believes that the employees feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latvians more expressive/emotional compared to Swedes</td>
<td>Level of decision making depends on developing stage, a complete Handelsbanken can make their own decisions</td>
<td>Does not spend time with colleagues outside work</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>Values the possibilities to communicate with many different people from different nationalities, and the challenging work tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared values within the branch</td>
<td>Shared values within the branch</td>
<td>Shared values within the branch</td>
<td>Issues are brought up to him who gives guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low employee turnover</td>
<td>Low employee turnover</td>
<td>Low employee turnover</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment, due to the increased knowledge of the organizational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees have both national and Handelsbanken culture, multiple identities</td>
<td>Employees have both national and Handelsbanken culture, multiple identities</td>
<td>Employees have both national and Handelsbanken culture, multiple identities</td>
<td>Very fair and very good treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td>Finds personal meaning and fulfillment from the job, and thinks the bank provides personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
<td>Trusts the bank</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td>Notices internal marketing and recruiting, thinks it is important</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Majority of the time informal atmosphere</td>
<td>Majority of the time informal atmosphere</td>
<td>Majority of the time informal atmosphere</td>
<td>Mainly own personal responsibility to grow and develop competencies, but also provides guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity, gives a broader perspective.</td>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity, gives a broader perspective.</td>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity, gives a broader perspective.</td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Synergistic Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesper Hellström</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Long-term perspective, without specific goals.</td>
<td>Serving clients what is most important</td>
<td>Informal relationship with employees</td>
<td>Would reject external job offerings with similar pay and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not adjust natural behavior when working</td>
<td>Handelsbanken have strong influences from the Swedish culture which influences working behavior</td>
<td>Personality-based differences at branch</td>
<td>Personality-based leadership style</td>
<td>Internal job offerings could be considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would be bigger transformation if working in a French company, due to its strong culture</td>
<td>Decentralized</td>
<td>Brings values to the bank in terms of experience, knowledge and decision making</td>
<td>Believes that the employees feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in Handelsbanken for 17 years</td>
<td>No barriers, but differences in terms of culture and systems</td>
<td>Bottom-up communication works very well. Less bottom-up communication compared to working in Sweden</td>
<td>Believes the employees to be committed to the organization, customers and the team</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French culture more formal</td>
<td>French are prideful</td>
<td>Everyone is involved in decision making</td>
<td>Believes that the atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present</td>
<td>Employees expresses dissatisfaction/satisfaction to manager directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France is more communicative (Greetings etc.)</td>
<td>Employees have mix of national and Handelsbanken culture, multiple identities</td>
<td>Encourages open communication</td>
<td>Enjoy working at the bank and developing new leaders and new staff</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment due to increased level decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are influences from the top management, but not so much</td>
<td>Encourages open communication</td>
<td>Enjoy working at the bank and developing new leaders and new staff</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment due to increased level decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts, but at times different points of view</td>
<td>Enjoys working at the bank and developing new leaders and new staff</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment due to increased level decision making</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment due to increased level decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees have mix of national and Handelsbanken culture, multiple identities</td>
<td>Treated very well</td>
<td>Treated very well</td>
<td>Treated very well</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Encourages the personal development</td>
<td>Encourages the personal development</td>
<td>Encourages the personal development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
<td>Does not often spend time with colleagues outside work</td>
<td>Positive attitude towards Handelsbanken</td>
<td>Positive attitude towards Handelsbanken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td>Notices internal recruiting and marketing, intranet</td>
<td>Employees are very much encouraged to grow and develop. In France companies obliged to put away money for training and education</td>
<td>Employees are very much encouraged to grow and develop. In France companies obliged to put away money for training and education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity</td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and external competition maybe some creativity</td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and external competition maybe some creativity</td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and external competition maybe some creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Synergistic Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerstin Fuchs</td>
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<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Adjusts in terms of communication</td>
<td>Handelsbanken has long-term perspective and is very human and individual.</td>
<td>Informal relationship with employees</td>
<td>Would reject external job offerings with similar pay and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the banking industry</td>
<td>Swedes more harmony minded, Germans have less tendency to avoid conflict</td>
<td>Awareness of differences in terms of cultures within the organization is important</td>
<td>Employees have respect for hierarchical levels</td>
<td>Internal job offerings could be considered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worked in Handelsbanken for 9 years</td>
<td>Important with personal adaptation to the foreign culture</td>
<td>Not a lot of difference in behavior at the branch</td>
<td>Personality-based leadership style</td>
<td>Does not believe that the employees are committed to the manager, but instead to the organization, the team and the customers</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very good, open communication without barriers in both directions</td>
<td>Brings value to the organization through decision making, strive for reaching their goals and taking over responsibility</td>
<td>Believes that the atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present</td>
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<td>No barriers, but there are some differences.</td>
<td>Equal treatment</td>
<td>Gets along well with everyone</td>
<td>Believes that the employees feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>Honest and communicative</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Believes the employees identify strongly with the culture</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
<td>Values working with people, the daily contact with colleagues and customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees have both national and Handelsbanken culture, multiple identities</td>
<td>Encourages personal development for employees</td>
<td>Employees expresses dissatisfaction/satisfaction to manager directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td>Spends time with colleagues outside work</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
<td></td>
<td>Treated very well, friendly and open with good and bad critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finds personal meaning and fulfillment from the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity. Good to have a mixture of people with different competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive attitude and loyal towards Handelsbanken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Synergistic Elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Adjusts the behavior when working in terms of Handelsbanken's culture. Culture similar to Sweden but Swedish culture more formal, whereas Norwegians tend to be more informal.</td>
<td>Handelsbanken is long-term, locally oriented with customer focus.</td>
<td>Informal relationship with employees.</td>
<td>Would reject external job offerings with similar pay and benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience with the banking industry</td>
<td>No differences in behavior since everyone has a 'Handelsbank-philosophy'.</td>
<td>Personality-based leadership style.</td>
<td>Internal job offerings could be considered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in Handelsbanken for 9 years</td>
<td>Does not take long to become 'a true Handelsbanker'.</td>
<td>Leadership requires some formality.</td>
<td>Believes that the employees feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Values personal development and contact with different nationalities.</td>
<td>Brings value to the organization by setting clear goals and being a Handelsbanker.</td>
<td>Believes that the atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flat structure.</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions).</td>
<td>Believes that the employees are committed mostly towards other colleagues and to some extent management and the organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees very involved in decision making.</td>
<td>Values being a good leader and follow goals.</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch goals</td>
<td>Notice influence from top if it concerns general issues of Handelsbanken.</td>
<td>Talks often about personal development.</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction is not really expressed, everyone seems satisfied.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch goals</td>
<td>Notice influence from top if it concerns general issues of Handelsbanken.</td>
<td>Does not spend time with colleagues outside work.</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Treated very well, feels trusted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian culture and Handelsbanken's culture is quite similar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have experienced personal growth and development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer working in a team compared to individually</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finds personal meaning and fulfillment from the job. Enjoys the job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subgroups in terms of social interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive attitude towards Handelsbanken.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority of the time informal atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notices internal recruiting and marketing, intranet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity, gives different perspectives. As long as everyone works towards a common goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In achieving the organizational objectives, the role is to helping the employees develop.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and creativity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summary of Responses, Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent &amp; Background</th>
<th>National Culture</th>
<th>Organizational Culture</th>
<th>Synergistic Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Martin Freibergs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience with the banking industry</td>
<td>Do not adjust behavior, his behavior feels natural.</td>
<td>Handelsbanken has trust and respect in employees and towards customers and does not treat the customers differently than the employees.</td>
<td>Would reject external job offerings with similar pay and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in Handelsbanken for 4 years</td>
<td>National culture does not affect way of working</td>
<td>Personality-based differences at branch</td>
<td>Internal job offerings could be considered and value adding for both parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian-companies have more long-term perspective</td>
<td>No cultural barriers in branch since all share the same values</td>
<td>Bottom-up communication that works well</td>
<td>Committed to the organization and the customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Way</td>
<td>Very involved in decision making. Employee have to set personal goals and follow them together with branch manager</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
<td>The atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present, everyone knows what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not notice big influences from the top</td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>Feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td>Preference of teamwork or individual work depends on the task and situation</td>
<td>Solve issues through consensus or via manager</td>
<td>Values that the organization follows guidelines that are written in our way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment</td>
<td>Solve issues through consensus or via manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity, gives different perspectives</td>
<td>Regular meetings</td>
<td>Treated very well</td>
<td>Is encouraged by the fact the the bank is an international organization with lots of opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal relationship with manager</td>
<td>Informal relationship with manager</td>
<td>Finds it satisfactory to exceed customer expectations</td>
<td>Focuses on customers to achieve organizational objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notices internal recruiting and marketing, via internal networking</td>
<td>Does not spend time with colleagues outside work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Synergistic Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Liao</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in Handelsbanken for 9 years</td>
<td>Adjustments in terms of communication with people from Sweden</td>
<td>The &quot;spirit&quot; of Handelsbanken is customer satisfaction and decentralization, local knowledge and close to market decision making</td>
<td>Enjoys her current job and atmosphere, but might consider an external offering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese culture value harmony</td>
<td>Chinese employees comply with the Handelsbanken &quot;spirit&quot; and ways</td>
<td>Committed to the customers and the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lot to adjust, both on speech and act and way of thinking when working in a foreign-company</td>
<td>Behaviors differs from person to person</td>
<td>The atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seldom tell people when encountering difficulties</td>
<td>Bottom-up communication</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China has more centralized business structures</td>
<td>Feels involved in decision making</td>
<td>Feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese are very shy and not very open to talk.</td>
<td>Our Way</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Values the possibility of change in job role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicate satisfaction/dissatisfaction via email or directly, or trying to solve issues by themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer working individual compared to in a team, but is very cooperative in a team</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment, due to increased experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub culture in terms of age and gender</td>
<td>Treated with respect, being valued and trusted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority of the time informal atmosphere</td>
<td>Finds personal meaning and fulfillment and personal growth from the job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity, gives different perspectives</td>
<td>Feel honored and proud to be one of the Handelsbankers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal relationship with manager</td>
<td>Notices internal recruiting and marketing, challenges staff and the latter has positive effect on customer satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraged to grow and develop through external training by inviting professionals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focuses on customers to achieve organizational objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spends time with colleagues outside work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
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<td>Synergistic Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusts the behavior when working in terms of Handelsbanken’s culture</td>
<td>Handelsbanken is decentralized and trusting</td>
<td>Would reject external job offerings with similar pay and benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National culture rooted in one’s behavior. Might be more natural in a home-country company</td>
<td>Solve problems through teamwork and reach consensus</td>
<td>Internal job offerings could be considered because of a desire to learn more about the bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural barriers in terms of language, more detailed.</td>
<td>Important to respect and understand the organizational culture</td>
<td>Committed to all parties of the organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New employees have to adapt to culture.</td>
<td>Everybody is different. Behaviors are different due to cultures, but they try to minimize these differences</td>
<td>The atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present, there is consistency in their work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open communication, flat structure, bottom-up communication</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular meetings and managers pass on information</td>
<td>Feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managers act as good cultural ambassadors</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>Values support and teamwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td>Communicate satisfaction/dissatisfaction directly, or trying to solve issues by themselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has increased since beginning of employment, due to communication and exchanging of ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subcultures in terms of nationality</td>
<td>Treated equally and with respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority of the time informal atmosphere</td>
<td>Finds personal meaning and fulfillment from the job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity is good, but everyone should have similar values</td>
<td>Feels recognized by co-workers and managers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal relationship with manager</td>
<td>Notices internal recruiting and marketing and thinks it is important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraged to grow and develop through organizational mobility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In reaching organizational objectives it is important cultural ambassador and try to lead the people as a Handelsbanker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spends time with colleagues outside work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation and sometimes controlling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent &amp; Background</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Synergistic Elements</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sam</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked within Handelsbanken for 6 years</td>
<td>Adjustments in terms of communication with people from Sweden</td>
<td>Handelsbanken's culture strong and very revolved around Sweden, low employee turnover</td>
<td>Feels attached to the current branch and do not know what to respond to an internal or external job offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longer working hours, fewer breaks and heavier work-load in host-country</td>
<td>No employee differences in terms of behavior at the branch</td>
<td>Committed to the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More centralized structures, decisions from higher levels</td>
<td>Bottom-up communication</td>
<td>The atmosphere does not change when a manager is not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not very involved in decision-making</td>
<td>Believes there to be management consistency (in terms of words compared to actions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notice influences from the top management when it comes to general decisions regarding the bank</td>
<td>Feels safe communicating ideas and opinions with colleagues and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No internal conflicts</td>
<td>Is eligible to go beyond the requirements of the job when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good relationship with employees</td>
<td>Values the learning process, learn something new everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer working individual compared to in a team</td>
<td>Satisfaction/dissatisfaction is not really expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have not noticed any type of subculture</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction has been stable since beginning of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefers heterogeneity over homogeneity</td>
<td>Treated very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal relationship with manager</td>
<td>Finds personal meaning and fulfillment from the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive attitude towards Handelsbanken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notices internal recruiting and marketing and thinks it is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Does not feel encouraged to grow and develop competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focuses on customers to achieve organizational objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Occasionally spend time with colleagues outside work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees focuses on cooperation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II - Cultural Dimensions

Figure 1 - Cultural Dimensions, Sweden

Figure 2 - Cultural Dimensions, Sweden and Germany
Figure 3 - Cultural Dimensions, Sweden and France

Figure 4 - Cultural Dimensions, Sweden and Norway
Figure 5 - Cultural Dimensions, Sweden and USA

Figure 6 - Cultural Dimensions, Sweden and Latvia
Figure 7 - Cultural Dimensions, Sweden and China