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How does cultural diversity affect the management of warehouse staff?

Specifically, what processes are available to balance diversity and integrate human resources

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Abstract

Background:

In modern times it is undeniable that companies that foster diversity have been able to gain an edge over their competitors. Warehouses as every other workplace are trying to follow the trend of economic globalization and a study towards managing the diversity needs to be conducted in order to evaluate the processes that the managers within the warehouses use in order to integrate the workforce effectively.

Method:

This research uses a qualitative approach which involved semi structured interviews with 5 warehouses that operate within Jonkoping. The study is perceived through an interpretive research philosophy with an inductive research approach.

Purpose:

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how cultural diversity is managed at the warehouses within Jonkoping. Also, a further research is conducted on how the tools and processes available to the managers working within the warehouse industry can help them foster diversity within their company.

Conclusion:

The results depict that the idea of having culturally diverse work teams is becoming increasingly popular and mangers working within the warehouse industry seem to take more interest in hiring people coming from different backgrounds. The major benefits of having a racially mixed team identified by managers were creativity and innovation. The major challenge that was brought up by managers was their ability to be responsive and adaptable towards the needs of their employees.

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1. Introduction

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1.1 Research Background

In an ever-growing global business and economic environment, it is crucial and highly recommended to students to study business from an international perspective in order to enable them to work effectively across international boundaries or cultures. It is not just studying a course that enables graduates to perform better, but it is a different mindset which needs to be adapted to be relatively flexible towards globalization in order to process and gain information across countries to achieve a sense of 'connectedness' between buyers and suppliers. Studying International Management allows students to develop skills that are highly demanded and enables them to get a clear understanding of how business operations are carried out around the world. Therefore, it helps them in preparing them for a career at organizations that operate on a global scale which motivates students throughout the world to gain a degree within International Management. (Smith, 2018)

When running an organization or business, people tend to think that passion is the only thing that is needed to operate effectively. That is not true since a deeper understanding of the other key disciplines of business such as marketing, accounting, finance, strategy, operations management, and human resource management needs to be carried out to survive in the competitive business environment. While all aspects are essential, Human resources are the company's biggest asset and how the organization can manage, persuade and encourage employees can accelerate the growth of the business. (Mcpherson, 2016)

Human Resource Management also is known as Modern People Management helps in analysing various issues related to organization policies, performance, strategies, and work being carried out. (Boxall, Purcell and Wright 2007). 'Human resource management or simply HR is a function in organizations designed to maximize employee performance in service of their employer's strategic objectives. (HRM in changing organizational contexts, 2009).

Different parts within HRM include training, acquiring and managing different people from many diverse backgrounds. Therefore, a critical element that lies within HRM is diversity, as it can directly impact the organization profitability and efficiency. For example, if an individual

working for a company feel like their original culture is highly central to their identity, those individuals will have a harder time adapting to the culture within the workplace. This can then, in turn, affect how well teams perform and the overall performance of the organization as well. (Samnani,A. K., Boekhorst, J. A and Harrison, J. A 2012)

Our primary motivation for writing this thesis is since we have mainly seen that even in specific courses and programs our teachers have instructed and encouraged us to form multicultural groups to enhance our abilities and to learn how different surroundings are the future of many organizations working globally. There is no denying the fact that multicultural teams are becoming increasingly popular and widely recognized.

People through contributing and sharing opens venues that are not confined to a particular way of thinking, which enables people to think from various perspectives in order to reach an ideal solution when faced with a problem. Therefore, we decided to research extensively on how people willingly or unwillingly are paired up and how they tend to cooperate in a better way to reach targets and also the influence of different cultures on the behaviours of the people when working in a group.

1.2 Problem

Due to an ever-growing world, it is becoming more and more common that there are several cultures and diverse people in one place. As it states itself with diversity, everyone is always used to different things, some people behave in different ways or work in different ways depending on which country or culture they belong. Jönköping seems to contain many industries and big warehouses, which employs hundreds of people every day. In these warehouses, several different cultures are present within the work teams, due to the nature of the work.

The problem which arises with this is how to get all the different cultures to work together in the best way and how managers should most suitably manage these teams to get the highest productivity from the teams. When several people from different cultures work together, it is almost bound to arise problems as well as clashes between these cultures, which could lower employee motivation and the productivity of the team.

In Diwakar Singh's article: "Managing Cross Cultural-Diversity: Issues and challenges in Global Organizations," the question on how to handle cultural diversity was addressed. More specifically, how to overcome issues regarding cultural diversity in the workforce (Singh, 2011). The article mentions that there could be barriers which prohibit cultural adaptation in the workplace such as cultural shock, ethnocentrism and individualism (Singh,2011). Therefore, the main problem that has identified is that when people from different cultures come and work together, it is easy for misunderstandings and clashes to happen which can cause problems within teams which makes them less effective.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse how cultural diversity affects the management of warehouse staff. Furthermore, we are going to focus on what processes are currently available to balance diversity and integrate human resources. We will try to highlight the challenges and hopefully explore future strategies on how to cope with the challenges since we have noticed that in Jonkoping, the workforce in many warehouses come from ethnically and culturally different backgrounds.

This research would be beneficial for the students and future readers and would contribute to their Academia. It would also enable them to gain knowledge over the topic of managing cultural diversity to come up with the right procedures and strategies to manage the employees in a better way. There has been no research conducted on how multicultural teams effect on and should be managed (what processes are available if any) within the warehouse industry in Sweden, which is the gap we will hopefully fill with our research.

1.4 Research Question(s)

Our research questions are as following:

RQ1: How does cultural diversity affect the management of warehouse staff?

RQ2: What processes are available to balance diversity and integrate human resources?

1.5 Delimitations

When it comes to delimitations, we have found some that are related to our field of research. Firstly, we plan on interviewing many but not all the warehouses in Jönköping. Therefore, we,

as the authors, would only get access to a limited amount of information and individual perspective of the targeted group of our research as the analysis which relies upon limited opinions. Secondly, the focus is only on the warehousing Industry and not on other industries operating throughout this city, so the result would entirely focus upon the outcomes generated explicitly from the warehousing industry

1.6 Definitions

1.6.1 Team

Generally, when someone thinks of a team the first thing that pops up in our heads is something related to sports where players play in coordination in order to achieve their aim of winning. Although if you see the bigger picture and refer to the teams within business it leads us to a point where we understand that any group of individuals working together towards a common goal which is coherent with the instructions being given by the leader are following nothing but teamwork. (Leonard, 2018)

1.6.2 Diversity

The concept of diversity interprets itself in many ways and there are multiple opinions towards the explanation of this concept. Observable and underlying attributes could categorize diversity. Demographics such as race, gender, age etc. These factors could be considered within the observable attributes while all aspects like technical abilities, education, background all follow under the heading of underlying attributes. The reason why people try to separate the attributes is to understand how people respond due to biases, prejudices or stereotypes and how their conduct is noticeable due to these factors. (Milliken and Martins, 1996)

Diversity is nothing more than something non-identical from the majority. In any of the cultures, there is always a bigger group of people which serves as a majority and then other groups who are relatively less in number and are considered minorities thereby, culture is a set of norms that guides the society about what is acceptable and what is not. The basic standards for social interaction between different cultures could be different. As in the USA they have direct eye contact and direct negotiations are preferred while in many other countries this might not be the case. Since there is always a significant difference in how people think and behave. (EthnoConnect, 2004)

1.6.3 Culture

The term culture refers to a group or community which shares everyday experiences that shapes the way its members understand the world. These groups are what we are born into such as gender, race, and religion or at other times the groups that we tend to join or become part of such as adapting or learning about a new culture when given an ideal opportunity. The learning aspect is to ponder over the fact that people can be associated with multiple cultures at the same time, depending on the circumstances. (Axner, 2018)

2. Literature Review

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2.1 Human Resource Management

Each man, remembering their desires and conceivable outcomes, chooses an occupation and any association, remembering the necessities of the earth and accessible assets will choose how to set up its authoritative structure, characterize employments and create conspicuous culture (Shen, et al., 2009). Development of specific structures of the organization, aside from exercises with which it bargains, relies upon the readiness of old workers to adjust to condition changes and the status of new staff to grasp the way of life of the association.

On the off chance that appropriate hierarchical structure is set up, its individuals and group exercises can make an animating also, fair condition, to teach, change and to achieve their objectives. Something else, vague undertakings, powerlessness to self-basic leadership and the confirmation and horrendous working environment which results with disappointment, higher staff turnover, and poor business results. HR Management (HRM) as a business work envelops the obligations, what is more, undertakings identified with the general population, their procurement, choice, preparing and different exercises that guarantee the improvement of representatives (Kossek et al., 2006). The objective of HR the board is to help the organization achieve its essential objectives. The essential presumption of HR, the board, is that individuals are not machines and consequently, we need an interdisciplinary methodology for observatory individuals in their workplace.

Human resources generally can be defined as a function of any firm, organization or a company which is responsible for the concerns or deals with the concerns related to its staff that can be staffing, defining or designing work and benefits and employee compensation. The human resource management in a company or an organization deals with the concerns of staff related to motivation, training, wellness, performance, and safety as well. Human resource management is also a deliberate methodology to manage staff in a workplace and to manage the work culture itself.

The whole process of HRM includes the hiring and developing of the staffs of an organization so that they turn out to be more appreciated to the organization. HRM comprises of leading job evaluations, planning staff's necessities, employing the right individual for the job, positioning and preparation of the staff for the staff and their training, their salaries and wages, resolving problems and connecting and cooperating with their staff at all the levels (Shena, et al., 2009).

Human resource management involves the development and management of the programs that can plan for the growth of the success of a business or an industry. It also comprises of the complete spectrum of making, supervision, and refining the relationship between the employer and employee in a workplace. Human resource management involves both strategic and comprehensive approaches to managing people, as well as workplace culture and environment.

The job of HR specialists is to make sure that an organization's most vital strength which is its human capital is being supported and sustained over the formation and administration of programs, strategies, and measures, and by adopting a positive work atmosphere over and done with an operative relationship between the employer and employee (Jabbour, 2010). The central concept ahead of human resource management is that employees who are substance to operational HRM can more competently and they successfully add to a business's full track, thus to make sure that the organization's aims and goals are obtained and met to the requirements and guidelines of a company.

Nowadays human resource management team is in authority for not just the administrative work and customary individual's tasks but much more than just that. As an alternative, fellows of a human resource management team are more concentrated and dedicated to adding value to a planned operation of the staffs. They also make sure that the staff's programs which have an impact on the business is carried out in all the positive, constructive and quantifiable ways.

A chief or a manager of stockroom or warehouse activities must have mastery and capacities in his/her expert territory, for example, the capability of the distribution centre administrator. Present day business universe of coordination is always showing signs of change by giving new complex difficulties to organizations, in this way it is imperative not exclusively to attract consideration regarding workforce/HR and spotlight on the present prerequisites pertinent to individual's capabilities, yet in addition to figure which abilities decide accomplishment later on.

As per the perspectives that skill relates to proficient exercises, it is conceivable to express; those general capacities are connected to proficient and efficient capabilities relying upon the created calling. At precisely that point, proficient abilities develop. As it were, skills are interrelated and setting subordinate. Proficient fitness includes precise capability and ability in a particular territory.

Coordination is the procedure of deliberately dealing with the procurement, development, and capacity of materials, parts and completed items (and the corresponded data streams) through the association and its advertising diverts to boost present and future productivity by taking care of requests at low expenses (D'Netto, 1999). Present day logical writing characterizes warehousing as a vital piece of the coordination framework that stores items at and between the purpose of birthplace and purpose of utilization. It also furnishes supervisors with data on the status, condition and air of things which can be taken away at a later stage.

The communication between stockroom forms and the store network affects the effectiveness results. The creator underscores that each distribution centre must have its very own individual arrangements and just individual arrangements facilitated with impediments on item streams and foundation can ensure productive activities in a stockroom.

Sharma expresses that warehousing proficiency is best dissected from the causes bringing about wasteful aspects instead of from the viewpoint of the upper hand. D. Bazaras characterizes warehousing as an arrangement of procedures and the expression "process" depicts as a legitimate grouping of occasions that are time-confined and concentrated on the item. Likewise, a warehousing procedure characterizes as a succession of discrete advances (Sharma, 2016). The executives of coordination organizations' faculty and usage of coordination forms are conceivable by the methods for electronic information preparing hardware. Such gadgets are present in the majority of the progressive structures.

The main goal of the storing process is proper product circulation. The fundamental logistics values are to upsurge warehouse effectiveness and the values are as follow
• "Stockroom zoning and development organization; The arrangement of the products flows by dropping the volumes of procedures;

• An organized method – a warehouse and its procedure planning can be carried out in a way that arriving and withdrawing features of freight flows, and also both the outer and inner boundaries are measured;

• Effective use of storing volume – most placement of the warehouse area;

• Order picking must be under significant consideration. As the stages of outbound trades are high, it is then signed to keep a firm and precise picking of order for the contentment of the requirements of customers, which is already a devoted part of the trade.

These are the essential proficiencies or competencies of a warehouse manager at certain levels mentioned by (Quigley, 1998)

Firstly, a manager evaluates warehousing location after that he manages the aims and goals of the warehouse. Secondly, a manager has to cope with loading shipment, packing and shipment of orders. Furthermore, a manager must oversee inventory and maintain the warehouse equipment. Other vital competencies a manager must possess are the arrangement of information technology in warehouse procedures, noting down the warehouse processes and make sure to control its quality. He must guarantee that all the procedures are happening according to law and order. Lastly, a manager should help in both planning and processing of reverse logistics development and also help in the procedural development of warehousing processes (Quigley, 1998).

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The above mentioned are the aims, objectives, goals, and competencies for workers of a warehouse vocational program training. To summarize, human resource capabilities are connected to skills to carry a particular exertion in the area of transport and logistics (Groutsis et al., 2014). A Warehouse worker or supervisor/manager/administrator must have keen information on the chief and foremost warehouse procedures and developments

2.2 Diversity

Diversity can be defined in most literal meaning as the variety which studies different meanings and connotations (Quigley, 1998). For instance, diversity in nature means that there are millions of different organisms, plants, animals, minerals, phenomena that exist in nature. However, if one talks about the diversity in race, it means that various people races are living on the planet with different colour, ethnicity, social values and culture. It can also discuss the

communication perspective where people had different in their language, accent and even pronunciations. Therefore, it is not easy to define distinctive factors between groups of people, objects, or anything under consideration that makes up for diversity.

Diversity is an understanding that each is different encompassing different traits such as colour, ethnicity, status, age, abilities, beliefs and other ideologies (Besong, 2015). Whereas, Muhammad Wabuna define diversity as a difference among people concerning their class, ethnicity, gender, mental ability, spiritual practice and other human differences (Wabuna, 2014).

In a defined group of people, one can find people with different colours, coming from different castes, following different religions, speaking different languages. These factors make up for diversity. In a workplace, for example, the various levels of hierarchy make up for diversity. It also discusses the individual traits of the workers. However, for a warehouse diversity among employees can be studied in terms of their hierarchical positions as well as their cultural differences.

2.2.1 Workforce diversity

Articles and journals within the field of workforce diversity that we have found are: "Managing Cultural Diversity: Implications for Organizational Competitiveness" published in The Executive and written by Taylor H. Cox and Stacy Blake in 1991. In that particular journal, there are questions raised if diversity can create a competitive advantage for a company. From the journal Delhi Business Review in the article "Managing Cross-Cultural Diversity" written in 2001 by author Subhash C. Kundu.

It describes, which opportunities arise with having a culturally diverse workforce in the company. It mentions that companies with a diverse background of employees have the advantage of diverse talents, ideas and innovations. It also highlighted that the company would have a bigger chance of becoming an international player if they have employees from different cultures. Furthermore, it interprets, that the company needs an influential company culture in order to manage all the employees from all the different cultures. (Kundu, 2001)

The positive benefits of having a diverse workforce by Sharma (2016) is an improved understanding of the customer base, increased productivity, increased creativity and innovation, improvement of new employees and retention, an overall increased skill set and a larger talent pool. Meaning, individuals from various backgrounds provide a large variety of skills.

2.3 Managing workplace diversity

Diwakar Singh's article: "Managing Cross Cultural-Diversity: Issues and challenges in Global Organizations," discusses the question of how managers can handle cultural diversity. More specifically, how to overcome issues regarding cultural diversity in the workforce (Singh, 2011). The article mentions that there could be barriers which prohibit cultural adaptation in the workplace such as cultural shock, ethnocentrism and individualism. On the other hand, differences in race, language, nationality and ethnicity can with an influential organizational culture and a well-managed workforce create advantages for the company such as a broader perspective, global impact, community relationships and improved morale.

2.3 Culture

Tylor's definition of culture is a society that involves knowledge, belief, morals, customers and any other capability acquired by people to live (Taylor, 1881). In contrast to Arnold's view, individuals adopt and grab habits, knowledge and capabilities to make up a culture (Arnold, 1932). Culture is studied in several different aspects. People living in one geographic location might not be following the same religion but would probably wear the same kind of clothes according to the climatic conditions. In an online community of Christians, the members might be sharing the same religious beliefs but will probably speak different languages. In a workplace, cultural diversity attributes to many factors such as caste, creed, colour, hometown, first language etc.

2.3.1 Cultural diversity

Integration of economies around the world and collaborative environment recently played a dominant role in cultural diversity. Cultural diversity can is when people from different ethical backgrounds come together under one roof. Universities these days are the hubs of cultural diversities. Growing businesses, full completion and collaborative environment now demands a diverse culture. Global competition in the workplace now demands a diverse educational system (Henry & Evans, 72-76).

Students all over the world travel far and worldwide for their studies which allows students to collaborate with different people of a different culture. It also gives them the chance to learn and experience a diverse culture. People learn different languages quickly if they have friends or acquaintances different parts of the world. The globe has shrunken into a global village and it continues to do so and now, cultures are not bound to geographical locations anymore like they used to be in the past. Cultures have travelled far and wide and that is the reason that we know about so many civilizations today that we are studying cultural diversity and its impact on the lives of human beings in various aspects.

The world can cleanly segregate into two sorts of people: the well-read, well-experienced ones and the less privileged, less experienced ones. While the former is up to date, all the new changes are introduced and all the diversity in their surroundings, the latter still find it hard to adapt to it. However, since this wave of progress will not stop, and it has touched the underdeveloped countries making them into fast developing states, the gaps are expected to be bridged (Holmgren & Jonsson, 2015)

2.4 Hofstede's 6 dimensions

This thesis aims to take into concern the cultural dimensions that come with a culturally diverse workforce. Consequently, Hofstede's cultural dimensions come into play. In the Article "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context" written by Geert Hofstede, we revisit the important cultural dimensions he presented previously in his life. Hofstede's research is one of the most used among scholars when analysing cross-cultural comparisons.

The dimensions are relevant in our study on the fact that they explain how people from different countries behave generally. Hofstede's dimensions will be a seminal theory which we will use as a foundation for this paper.

The cultural dimension "power distance" has been defined as to the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Example of a high-power distance society is how subordinates are just expected to follow a leader, and how people require more respect and should be given that respect, especially by the younger members of society. In low-power distance societies like Sweden, a

worker can question the leader and have his input. Everybody is equal in the hierarchy (Hofstede 2011). In Hofstede's (2011) Power Distance Index, which shows a score for 76 different countries around the globe, he displays that western and English-speaking countries have a lower power distance. East European, Asian and African countries tend to have a higher level of power distance.

Uncertainty avoidance, which is the second dimension, should not be confused as risk avoidance. It instead indicates to what extent members in society feel either comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured situations. Also, by unstructured situations, the author means situations that are unknown, surprising and different from usual. Low uncertainty avoidance societies are more open to foreign culture and more acceptable to other people's ideas. Countries with high uncertainty avoidance tend to be higher in eastern and central European countries and lower in Nordic culture countries (Hofstede, 2011).

Individualism versus Collectivism is the degree to which people in society integrate into groups. In individualist culture countries, everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family in the first hand. Contrary, in a collectivist culture, we find that children from birth are integrated into groups with extended family members that protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty and oppose others in groups. People from collectivist societies often put relationships over tasks and not the other way around. Meaning, a good relationship with the leader is more important, regardless if one feels like the task is laborious or overwhelming. Fundamentally it comes down to an "I" vs. "We" mentality. Lastly, individualism tends to prevail in more western countries, while Collectivism tend to be higher in Eastern countries (Hofstede,2011).

Masculinity versus Femininity is the degree to which the distribution of values between the genders varies. In feminine cultures, the women have the same modest caring values as the men and there is a balance between work and family. Subsequently, in a Masculine society, work prevails over family and men does not have the same modest feelings as women. Masculinity scores high in German-speaking countries and Japan and relatively low in the Nordic countries (Hofstede,2011)

People from short-term orientation countries are more likely to be proud of their own country and their way of doing this and not particularly interested in learning from other countries. On

the other hand, long-term oriented countries are the exact opposite. Countries that fall into short-term oriented are as followed USA, African and Muslim countries. Long-term countries are Central-European and East-Asian countries, to name a few (Hofstede,2011).

The sixth dimension, Indulgence versus Restraint, was added in 2010 and served as complementary to Long-versus Short-term orientation. It involves the state of happiness experienced by inhabitants in a particular society. Indulgence stands for the level of allowance from society for people to enjoy life and fulfil basic human desires. One example can be that freedom of speech is essential. Restraint is used to describe a society that prohibits happiness through social norms and even Laws in these countries' freedom of speech is not a primary concern. Indulgence tends to prevail in western countries and North America. Restraint tends to prevail in Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. (Hofstede,2011).

2.4.1 Criticism of the chosen theory

Even if there are more researchers agreeing with Hofstede than disagreeing, there still is valid criticism of the theory that needs to be addressed. One of the most apparent being the question of relevancy (Jones, 2007). More specifically, that the study was primary use of data collection was through surveys which scholars like (Schwarts, 1999) mean can't measure a topic which is that subjective as culture is. An argument could be made that the cultural differences are outdated and could not be put to use in today's fast changing modern world. However, it should be mentioned that culture not a thing that just changes overnight. A Culture is something that has been that has been indoctrinated for centuries and not easily changed. (Hofstede, 1998)

Another criticism which is perhaps the most common is how Hofstede's study assumes just the domestic population of country (Jones, 2007). Most countries today are however comprised by many different ethnic groups which critics mean does not give an accurate analysis of the country as a whole. Moreover, it could be argued that countries are not the proper tool to analyse cultures meaning, culture is not bounded by borders between countries (McSweeney, 2000).

There are furthermore problems associated with cross-cultural research as a whole. The first one being the definition of the word culture. The word is in itself open for interpretation. There

are 164 definitions for this one word alone (Olie, 1995). As mentioned previously there are concern about how this kind of research only represents a single timeframe only. This could open up for misinterpretations if the study is used many years later.

2.5 Warehouse industry and Cultural diversity

A warehouse is a place from where a manufacturer runs the logistical operations of his business. It is where he stores his goods after manufacturing them. The orders that he receives are processed in the warehouse and shipped from there. In order for a business to run smoothly and to ensure that all the products are delivered to customers in time, and to make sure that the supply is in line with the demand, a business needs to have a steady supply chain team (Seymen, 2006). They should make an efficient team together and therefore, be able to take care of the whole logistics involved.

Apart from the supply chain team which usually and ideally consists of experienced and well-read individuals, there is the warehouse management staff which consists of not so well read people all hailing from different cultures, countries, and religions. Moreover, this is how much diversity can be seen in the warehouse management staff. Cultural diversity in such a scenario entails a difference in language, the difference in values, difference in dressing style, the difference in food preferences etc. (Hamde, 2008).

On the other hand, cultural diversity within a warehouse can have many positive impacts. Since people are streaming in from different areas of the world, bringing their unique skill-sets and work ethic models, an employer has a chance to observe and delineate the best practices among the workers which might prove useful for his business as a whole. Furthermore, it adds value and originality to the collective skill set of the overall workforce of an organization (Groutsis et al., 2014).

A language barrier means there will be disrupted communication within the staff, which can potentially lead to misunderstanding. For the operations of a warehouse, it is imperative for the staff to communicate appropriately and adequately to bring everyone on the same page, giving them an understanding of what is to be done. This communication does not only mean the communication between individuals but also means interdepartmental communication (Perez & Ohlin, 2009). With a language barrier, this communication is made less functional and therefore, the operations of the warehouse are endangered. Furthermore, if the workers are not

able to communicate correctly, they will not be able to generate healthy discussions that would lead to solving problems via critical thinking.

Usually, people coming from different countries might find it challenging to adapt to their new surroundings, thereby affecting the quality of their work and their productivity and efficiency. It is possible that owing to the difficulty faced by a worker in adapting to the surroundings; his productivity is so affected that it starts hindering the overall operational capacity of his team, bringing about a domino effect, having a definitive impact on the operations of the warehouse as well (Martensson, 2000).

Coming from different ethnic backgrounds, people usually uphold different values. They can have a hard time adjusting their ethical code to the moral values of a specific organization. For example, the simple fact that one worker comes from a foreign culture where alcohol is forbidden, and pork is not eaten, starts to find it hard to live amongst and work with co-workers for whom it is standard practice.

Besides, in warehouses, where there is cultural diversity, there is a huge chance that people sharing cultural values might team up together and bond in an unexpressed brotherhood. In such a scenario, there can be clear minorities and majorities where the minorities might feel overpowered. This entails mild to severe workplace politics, which is, in the long run, never in favour of an organization, especially in a warehouse. Minorities might work more while the majorities might easily claim the credit. The orders and shipments might be delayed (Krumbholz et al., 2000). Or in the worst-case scenario, other illegal dealings might as well be carried out by the stronger groups under the guise of the business as a whole.

Sweden is a fertile ground for many global enterprises for several reasons. For one, it offers sophisticated business conditions such as skills, innovations, excellent infrastructure, and sophisticated. Furthermore, there can be witnessed high language skills and high computer skills with low employee turnover. All this contributes to a very competitive business platform (Eriksson & Hägg, 2016.). Therefore, the warehouse industry is a booming business in Sweden and there is an influx of warehouse workers in the region from all other parts of the world, contributing towards cultural diversity in warehouse management systems. This makes Jonkoping a very desirable model for the proposed study.

2.6 Conclusion of literature review

What can be concluded from this literature review is that all these different sections provide a theoretical understanding of the purpose of our research questions. Since this is primarily an HR topic, the most significant part in our literature review would naturally be to explain how different scholars previously defined it as and how it is applicable in the context of this thesis. The other major components of this thesis are diversity, workforce diversity and cultural diversity along with Hofstede's dimensions. The literature review provided a clear extinction between these and how all impact business in today's world. Since our thesis aims to explore the diversity in the warehouse industry, a section was explicitly needed for how cultural diversity differs in the warehousing industry in comparison to other industries. The topic of how cultural diversity affects the workplace have been explored by previous researches as well as human resource management within businesses and it has shown both positive and negative effects.

The gap which became apparent through the literature review is that very little has been researched about what tools are available for managers in warehouses to balance this diversity, notably, in the warehouse business here in Jonkoping. We will follow the dimensions created by Hofstede's to complement the findings we generate from our data collection.

3. Methodology

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3.1 Research Philosophy

Using Interpretivism as our research paradigm allows us as researchers to make our personal biases, assumptions explicit when we describe our research contrary to positivist who use a different genre to report their research. Positivist pays little attention to those matters. (Goldkuhl, 2012) According to Weber (2017), Interpretivists believe that reality and the individual who observes it cannot be separated.

Our perceptions about the world are bound to a stream of experiences we have had throughout our lives. Interpretivism allows the researcher to be socially constructed, subjective and he/she can change along the process (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill,2009). Regarding the Epistemology, it was found that Interpretivism allows subjective meanings and details in motivating actions and situations constitute as research and adequate knowledge in a researcher point of view (Saunders, et al. 2009).

That is highly applicable in our case since we want to find out what managers think with possible a subjective mind from the start. We are upon for change and whatever course the findings and our interviews lead to. The dismissal of positivism in our case could be credited to that positivists believe that only observable phenomena can provide credible data and facts. (Saunders, et al. 2009) An interpretive philosophy allows the research to be understood based on the people who directly experience the questions that are to be answered.

There are in total 5 different assumptions a researcher could undertake. Those are: Positivism, Interpretivism, postmodernism pragmatism and critical realism. (Saunders, et al. 2009) A similar yet different approach we could have undertaken would be critical realism which allows us to view the world from our senses and have an objective mind where we as researcher understand that what we are observing is not the complete picture in the world (Saunders et al. 2009). But since our paper focuses only on Jonkoping, we have no need to understand the rest of the world. We only need to see it from an interpretive philosophy where managers in Jönköping are directly experiencing the elements of cultural diversity within warehouse management.

3.2 Research Strategy and Approach

There are primarily two different ways of collecting data, qualitative and quantitative Different research styles fall into either the quantitative or qualitative approach. Methods like interviews, grounded theory fall into qualitative while, surveys could be characterized as quantitative data. Qualitative data is, therefore, associated with an interpretive paradigm with the emphasis is on the quality and depth of the data collected. Therefore, one does not need to analyse the data using a statistical tool. (Collis and Hussey 2013) The most suitable approach for this thesis was to use qualitative data. Since we are using an interpretivism paradigm to gather information about the warehouse managers views on managing culturally diverse work-teams in warehouses.

According to Saunders et al. (2009), a qualitative analysis is useful when you, as a researcher, want to grasp individual opinions, values and traits. Furthermore, qualitative data is highly applicable when one as a researcher wants to find out the meaning behind a specific action or decision. We deem these specific advantages with Qualitative study to be the reason why it is better suited for our study than quantitative.

It should also mention that Qualitative research allows us to gather the information needed through a limited number of interviews regarding how cultural diversity affects the managing of warehouse staff and the processes that are available to balance diversity and integrate human resources. Since our topic needs the use of personal information from the managers and the organization, it cannot be obtained using statistical data, which is the norm for quantitative studies.

After deciding our research philosophy, we need to find a consistent research approach to fulfill the purpose of our paper. There are three main research approaches we could undertake those are: deductive, inductive and abductive. The main difference between the two first approaches is the starting point. When using the deductive approach, a researcher starts the study by analysing theory; then the researcher creates an experiment based on the literature. It starts with general reasonings to specific reasonings.

On the other hand, an inductive approach would start with gathering data to investigate and then, later on, develop a theory. An inductive approach moves from specific reasoning to more general reasons. The third approach abductive, is a combination of both deductive and abductive. Abductive approach can be explained that it starts from one or possibly several observations which the researcher then tries to find a different explanation to best explain the observations (Saunders et al. 2019).

Dubois & Gadde (2002) describe the main objective of any research is to confront theory with the empirical world. This thesis aims to use inductive methods with a comparative nature and intends to do just that. An inductive approach allows the researcher to move from the specifics to more general propositions about the data that has been collected. It allows for more interpretations of the observations made.

This will be done by observing multiple companies and managers. (Yin (1994) argues that multiple sources are likely to be much more convincing if it is based on several different sources claiming the same outcome.

Moreover, an inductive approach is the most fitting approach because it lets it flow from the more general data gathered to cutting it down to the specifics and to get to the correct conclusions. It provides a straightforward approach to deriving findings from the interviews, Moreover, its less complicated than using other approaches to qualitative data (Thomas, 2006) In order for it to work particularly well for our study as it will allow us to start and look at the general ideas of management of cultural diversity to the specifics of balancing diversity and integrate HRM inside the warehouse industry.

4. Method

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There are several different methods one can choose between when conducting this type of qualitative research. It could include interviews, focus groups or observations. The purpose of our thesis is as mentioned to analyze cultural diversity in warehouses from a manager's perspective and see what processes are available to balance diversity and integrate human resources. To extract this information from the managers, we intend to do semi-structured interviews with managers from different warehouses in the region. Semi-structured is chosen in order to allow additional questions to emerge during the interview and have room for information and the interviews to flow somewhat freely based on how the interviewee answers the questions.

Furthermore, the reasoning behind why it was chosen in this thesis to apply interviews in the research rather than focus groups and observations is because interviews allow us to get personal insights within the warehouses from the people directly dealing with our research questions at hand. In order to do an observation, one would need a long period observing cultural diversity in a warehouse which is not realistic or practical for us. Furthermore, we would need expertise knowledge beforehand about the processes that are available to balance diversity and integrate human resources. Since we do not have any experience in this matter beforehand, it would not be sufficient for our study to observe the practices.

As we are conducting a qualitative study, we will gather primary data from the interviews of the managers of warehouses here in Jonkoping.

Since interviews are generally not the optimal choice for gaining information from a broad audience, due to that, they are time-consuming and not practical in those cases. Instead, the focus was to choose a fewer number of managers which will provide us with more detailed information about the topic at hand. Furthermore, five interviews in total will be conducted, which we believe will give us enough information since this study is only conducted in the Jonkoping and revolves manager working right here.

The interviews will be conducted face-to-face which allows the interviewer to take advantage of social cues, such as voice, intonation and body language (Opdenakker, 2006). As mentioned all the interviews previously are conducted here in the Jönköping region making the budget for traveling and time, not an issue as it would be if the interviews were further off, in another city for example. Since we are two researchers, we will do the interviews separately. However, each interview will follow the same structure and will be performed the same way.

The semi-structured interview allows for open-ended questions with open-ended answers. We have to as researchers evaluate in the moment if we feel that other questions need to be asked to gain an even clearer picture of our original questions. Since we cannot know what their answers will be beforehand, we have to be able to identify in a moment if there is something more that needs to be added. Therefore, we feel that semi-structured interviews will be the best method to collect the data in order to get the best answers that can help us fulfill our purpose. Others method to data collection could be through structured and unstructured interviews. However, this will not allow for us as interviewees to steer the interview why still allowing for the voice of the interviewee to come through.

Below will be presented a table covering relevant information about the five people who were interviewed, given information about their job title, works experience and some general information. It also provides an overview of how long in time each interviewee was, that took place. For each interview, a slot of roughly one hour had been set aside by each interviewee so we would not have to feel stressed and the interviewee felt they could take their time to think about and answer the questions in the most proper way. Therefore, the interviewees ranged from around 43 minutes to 1 hour. Furthermore, the questions which were asked to each interviewee can be found under Appendix 1.

Table 1 - Interviews conducted

Interviewee	Job title	Years working as a manager	Gender	Age	Duration of interviewee
Manager 1	Production manager	5	Male	35	42:50 min

Manager 2	Production manager	6	Male	41	56:10 min
Manager 3	Team leader	1	Male	23	50:24 min
Manager 4	Terminal leader	2	Male	29	48:41 min
Manager 5	Supervisor/production manager	10	Male	36	1:02:04 min

4.1 Research process steps

To gather the data and conduct our research, firstly, we needed to find out whom we could interview where we could get access data which would be useful to answer our purpose and research questions. Therefore, the decision was to gain access to information through personal contacts firstly as well as get contact established through emails and a phone call to different managers within Jonkoping.

We will maintain this contact by calls in the case we have additional questions for the managers after the conducted interviews are completed. Since we have had some prior experience of working in different warehouses ourselves, we had already established contact with some of the managers already, which were all willing to help us. Time and place were arranged by phone. Since we are flexible in our schedules, we allowed the interviewees to decide exactly at what date and time the interview should take place. The interviews will later be transcribed by those interviewees who allow it. Otherwise, notes will be carefully written down and observed later on. This process, however, is not as optimal since the description of the interviews would be dependent on our memory and notes only. Before the interviews take place, we have also decided to send out the questions to those we will interview beforehand, so they have a chance of looking through them and gathered the information needed to answer the questions in the best way.

Many of the interviews will take place roughly two months into the start of the thesis writing which may seem limited, but as much contact is established through our networks the access to the information is easy to maintain and the dates for the interviews have already been quickly established. After all data have been gathered and transcribed, it will be analysed with the chosen method. Later analysis and conclusions will be drawn from the qualitative data with comparison to the empirical findings.

4.2 Method for Data analysis

Once our research is conducted, we have to analyze it. The approach we have decided to use is thematic analysis. The advantage of this approach is that it is compatible with a qualitative study with an interpretivism paradigm that has been chosen for this paper to fulfill our purpose (Peterson, 2017). Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within the qualitative data that are collected and from that bring forward conclusions and ideas about the research. It is furthermore very flexible and can apply to many areas of research (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Thematic analysis is an easy way to analyze qualitative data and be able to take out the main points from data collected, without too long processing of the data. However, we will consider the possible pitfalls that might exist with using thematic analysis, such as concentrating the themes on the types of interview questions and not on actually trying to analyze the data. The themes and code words which have emerged from the literature and the empirical findings can be found below in the "themes" section, which shows an overview of how each theme got identified and from where they emerged in the data of the interviewees.

Some of the codes that were identified were diversity, team management, efficiency, productivity, teamwork, creativity, conflicts and respect. The-6 steps thematic process by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied. The data is first transcribed into a written form where we re-read it several times to become familiar with the data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second step in the process revolves gathering all data which is relevant to each potential theme.

The initial codes diversity, team management, efficiency, productivity, teamwork, creativity, conflicts and respect were predefined and generalized into human factors, demographics and conflict resolution as is suggested by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) The third phase involves the search for the potential themes after the coding has been done (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The

codes that were identified had to be analysed to get an understanding on how to merge them all in order to identify a potential theme.

In the fourth phase, the researcher has to start reviewing the themes concerning the coded extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase we should have a general view of which themes could be used and how relatable they are to each other. Some of the themes may have to be removed if there is not sufficient data to support them. In the fifth phase, the author should start defining and naming the identified themes to generate clear definitions and names of themes. In the last step, which is the final opportunity for analysis it allows the authors to write the thesis with finalized themes. Furthermore, the authors need to present the collected data by providing vivid examples relating to the theoretical framework and the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.2.1 Themes

The themes which were identified after proper coding of the transcript data were narrowed down to three major ones. These were: human factors, demographics, and conflict resolution. The themes were common throughout each interview and were dominant overall. The human factors theme identified through interviewees mentioned several reasons why individuals behave the way they behave, which was due to their personality and the culture they were raised.

The environmental influences came from the managers talking about the group as a whole working together and how physical aspects of for an example, the warehouse could influence how people worked together. Lastly, conflict resolutions were something which came up from managers when they mentioned several ways in which they try to lead these people's different characteristics and what they have at hand in order to do so. As many managers mentioned that conflicts were inevitable, they put a focus on explaining how they would have to deal with this.

4.3 Reliability and Validity

It is essential in any research to convince the reader about the validity and reliability of the research being conducted. (Collis et al., 2014) Consider validity to be the credibility of the research. It represents to which extent the arguments and the results presented demonstrate the

purpose of the research. The misleading substance in the research, such as small sample can lower the validity of the overall research.

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the level the data being collected can be applied to describe the topic being delved into. The findings should accurately be able to explain how the research has been done to the point that if someone else tries to do the same study as us, it will yield the same results. This process is called the repeatability of findings (Collis et al., 2014)

There are several other factors which could also impact the validity and reliability of the study. Every individual is subjective in his/her nature and we as researchers are no exception. Our assumptions, opinions and values could come into play and impact the study. Furthermore, our interpretations of the study could be different from that of another.

It is, therefore, of importance to have an accurate description of the research process as a whole to avoid disrupting the balance between validity and reliability. When we did our interviews with the managers which numbered out to five interviews, in the end, we found out similar points being brought up by them which indicate that the repeatability in the study is in some form present.

4.4 Ethical considerations

Some of the ethical considerations that could come into play in our research are the anonymity and confidentiality of our interview subjects. We will inform the interview participants of their right on being anonymous if they wish so. This will be done because negative subjectivity regarding our questions could occur, there is a potential risk that the participants of the interview feel that some of the questions we ask are to "personal", and they do not feel like answering them. We need to handle the information we received from the managers carefully and not expose the name of the managers unless he/she agreed to.

This process of handling data is backed by (Collis et al, 2014) which states that when the participants choose to be anonymous, their identity and opinions will not be disclosed and should be treated with the uppermost care. Other considerations we need to take into concern are explaining thoroughly what this research is about to the participants so that they clearly understand their role in our research. There should be no confusion on what the

research/interview addresses, which helped in creating trustworthiness between the managers and us being interviewed.

4.5 Method of literature review

In this study, it was chosen to conduct a thematic literature review where we scan past literature that has covered the broad topic of workforce diversity. The research allows us to identify and critically evaluate the findings we made. We have used sites as primo search as well as google scholar to find journals applicable to our thesis. Furthermore, search words like "workforce diversity"," diversity", management", "international human resource management," and "cultural diversity workforce."

From these search words, we have been able to find a wide range of journals covering the topics which are of immediate interest to us. We have since then tried to narrow down the number of journals. The intention was to draw a more unobstructed, more narrowed view on exactly which journals are useful to us and will help us locate a research gap in previous research if it ever was one.

5. Empirical Findings

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The following empirical findings will show an overview of the primary and secondary data that was collected through interviews with five managers working at warehouses here in Jönköping.

The primary data that is presented are that collected from the interviews, and secondary data is collected from each own warehouse website in the case some information was needed which the interviewee did not directly talk about.

5.1 Demographics of the workforce within Sweden

Figure 1 - Gender distribution in Jönköping
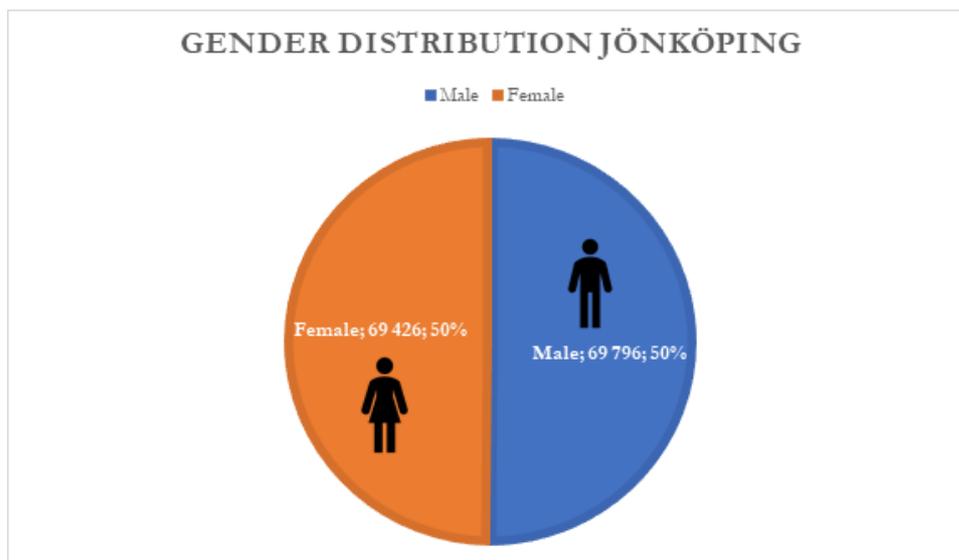
(SCB, 2019)

An attempt was made to gather all the crucial data regarding demographics within Jonkoping and upon investigating; we came up with some statistics regarding the gender distribution within this particular city. It is one of the few cities in Sweden where the population of men and women is almost the same, which was quite exciting for us to know. Two of the managers mentioned that a bigger problem in the warehouse is how uneven gender distribution is. They felt like their companies did well with employing people from all cultures. However, they had a harder time finding women who wanted to work there. They feel it could be credited to that warehouse jobs are often hard and therefore not that attractive to female applicants.

Figure 2 - Work distribution in Sweden
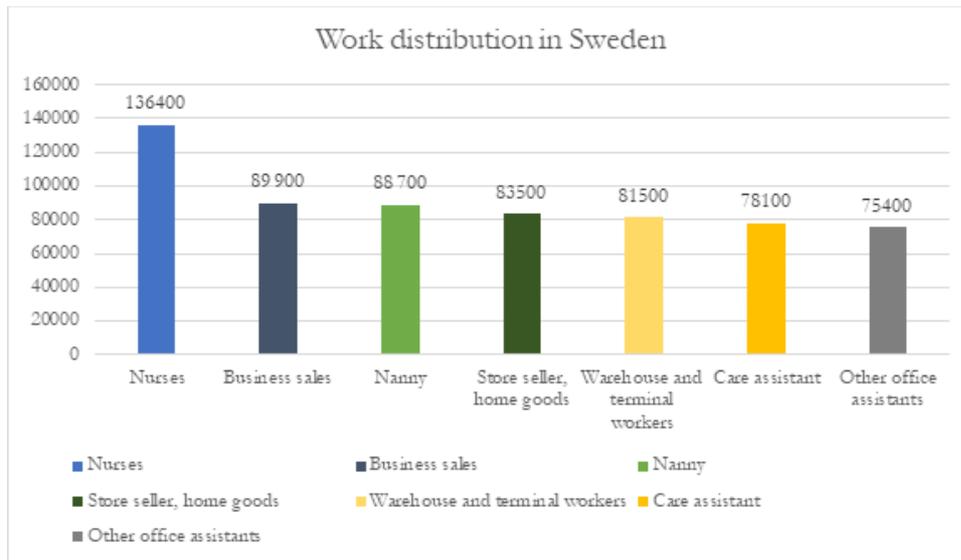
(SCB, 2019)

Looking upon the statistics from SCB (Statistiska centralbyrån) one can evaluate the number of people working within different sectors throughout Sweden. Although there have been some minor fluctuations over the years, most people employed in Sweden are within the health sector and the most opted profession is a nurse. We can also analyze that Warehousing and terminal workers are among the top 5 sectors with the highest people employed.

Warehousing ranks number 5th when looking at the number of people employed within the respective sector. Around 81500 people are employed within the warehouse industry which accounts for around 12.86% of the working population which is quite a high number from which we can interpret that warehousing industry is becoming increasingly popular among the people residing in Sweden.

Population of Jönköping

Table 2 - Population in Jönköping 2014 - 2018

Gender	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Women	66 404	66 987	67 823	68 722	69 426
Men	65 736	66 323	67 474	68 759	69 796

(Jönköpings Kommun, 2019)

Table 3 - Distribution of migrants/Swedish locals

Status	Amount of people
Migrants	24600
Swedish locals	114622

(JönköpingsKommun, 2019)

Looking at the population that exists in Jonkoping, It can be identified that this city has many economic migrants since out of the total population 21.46% of the people residing in Jonkoping are outsiders coming from different countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Balkan states (JönköpingsKommun, 2019). In just Torsvik, which is right outside Jonkoping, roughly 5000 people are working (Palm, 2017).

Torsvik is one of the biggest logistic hubs in Sweden (Hulten, 2019). Every manager mentioned that there is a large number of culturally diverse people from all over the world, working in each of their warehouses. Their ideas depict that out of Jonkoping's 24600 migrants. A considerable amount is working in the warehouse industry.

5.2 Warehouse Industry

The industry that we attempt to focus on is warehousing. Since we wanted our field of study to be more specific, we picked an industry which is becoming increasingly popular throughout the province and especially in the city that we are currently residing in, Jonkoping. Jonkoping is the logistic hub of Sweden and all major companies have made their warehouses here to ship goods not just within Sweden but to other countries in the world.

Among so many warehouses that we could choose from, we decided to pick five companies which had over 100 employees working in Jonkoping and decided to make a comparison between all these big giants. All these companies have a massive annual turnover and are one of the biggest employers in this city. To compare them more adequately, we decided to focus less on the production industries and instead put more emphasis on the companies which handle different type of goods and ship them later to different destinations.

Most of the companies that we picked have multi-cultural teams who operate in a unique environment to get the best results. Individuals possessing different skills are meant to collaborate due to their shared passion for working within the logistics industry. Tasks like

handling cargo, managing shipments, fixing returns and shipping final goods to different destinations are among the significant tasks that are carried out within these warehouses.

The empirical data will below be presented according to the major themes which were identified through the thematic data analysis method. What was collected from each interview will be compared and contrasted against each other to see how many managers agreed on similar points and was there any difference in ideas between them. It will purely be based on ideas presented from the interviewees and no own reflections or inputs from the researchers of this thesis.

5.3 Human characteristics/factors

A common theme which was found from all interviewees was that many different factors related to each played a significant part in how well they worked in a team. It depicted how easy they were to manage and how the manager played a role in being able to manage these people, some of these human factors being cultural diversity, personal characteristics and style of leading.

5.3.1 Cultural diversity in work-teams

All the managers agreed that having a culturally diverse work-team benefited them. One point that was mentioned from all five managers is that people from different countries may be a bit hard to manage, but the benefits an organization can draw from having people from a different background is mostly beneficial. Some practical benefits the managers saw with having cultural diversity in work teams was that the productivity and willingness to worked increased, they got more creative solutions to problems and were able to use their characteristics to benefit the team as a whole.

> *"We can learn a lot from each other when everybody come from such diverse backgrounds, - Manager 2*

Many managers also mentioned that people from different cultures are always to be targeted in a different way than others. Some employees always have a more social personality and are more open about their ideas and criticism while the others take the leader more like a formal figure and are reluctant to open up. The feedback to these people should always be given in a

way which is per how a person's behaviour and attitude towards work assignments in order to attain positive outcomes, some of the difficulties that were perceived by the manager in regards to culture in the work teams can be found underneath.

> *"For some people you should be cautious of how to approach them since some people can take things personal while others can be more frank and could take the feedback in a more casual manner'' - Manager 5*

All the managers also agreed on the fact that although diversity at workplace brings a lot of good things and positive energy there were some things that were not positive. Manager 2 talked about how people coming from different backgrounds have a different way of working which, helps in generation of new ideas, but sometimes the ideology of the "outsiders" differs from the locals. This difference of opinion makes it harder for the economic immigrants to function in an effective way which could be per the processes followed by the company. A similar sentiment was shared by Manager 5.

> *"To bring your own mindset from back home could sometimes be a negative trait because it makes it harder for them to adapt to the company procedures"- Manager 5*

5.3.2 Personal characteristics

It was found from four out of the five managers that there are some individual characteristics which each person brings with them which can make them harder or easier to manage and a worse or better fit in the work team. There are always certain people, regardless of where they come from who feel like they are way too good for a warehouse job and are only doing this merely for money. This behavior is reflected in their way of working since the effort they put in is not sufficient enough, which leads to positive energy not being spread at the workplace.

> *"People who are lazy as a person and come from a culture where hard work isn't seen as a must, then they don't care about anything and just do whatever...these characteristics don't benefit the team…" - Manager 5*

> *"The people who are lazy in general and don't fulfill the task that is required of I would say are the most difficult to deal with" - Manager 1*

Some of the managers also felt that people who have a certain mindset since they have been brought up in a different way than others are sometimes hard to deal with. These people are so used to their way of life and way of dealing with things that they try to use the traditional ways and their personal beliefs when faced with a situation which is not so flexible and effective.

> *"People who bring religion, culture and the same mindset from back home are the hardest to deal with. When they try to bring their beliefs and influence over other then it becomes a problem." - Manager 2*

Manager 2 underlined that in order to avoid this, one needs to hire the right people from the start, which he believes many warehouses fail to do. Some managers also highlighted the fact that employees who have been in a company for a long time are aware of how the processes are supposed to be done.

They also know how the work is carried out, but sometimes people tend to become too confident and stubborn that they fail to realize the fact that not everything lasts forever, and processes need to be revised over the years. Thus, they need to let go of their traditional way of doing things and be more adaptive to changes for the company to grow.

> *"The people who have worked for many years think they already know what needs to be done at all times but this is not always the case" - Manager 4*

Some managers also highlighted the fact that when new employees join a company, majority of them have to learn a lot of new things and do ambiguous tasks but these subordinates are the ones who ask many questions and want to clear all the confusions. Not only are the new employees eager to learn but they are more open to performing a variety of tasks in different ways which are not taken seriously by the employees who have been at a company for a long time which makes it easier for a leader in managing them.

> *"The new employees are the easiest to deal with since they are open to learning" - Manager 4.*

Manager 4 was initially shocked how many of his workers always needed to attend prayer on Friday's. He adjusted to this fact by allowing employees additional breaks whenever needed. Furthermore, all five managers felt that there were many misunderstandings which arose due to the instructions given out in Swedish. Since the everyday meeting was generally held in Swedish within the warehouses, some people who came from different backgrounds could not understand the language properly and misinterpreted the guidelines provided to them which led to a lot of mistakes and wrongdoings.

> *"We also face a lot of problems due to people not understanding the instructions since our meetings are held in Swedish and for people who come out of Sweden it's hard sometimes to get a hang of the language immediately". Manager 3*

5.3.3 Style of leading

Every employee who comes from different cultural background have different needs to be met as well; they learn in different ways, which is something the leader has to cater with the way they are leading these people. Three out of the five managers talked about how they learn from the people in the team and that everyone, due to their grooming, needs to be led differently.

The work teams are comprised of different individuals who work differently from others. Some employees possess attributes like self-confidence and open-mindedness and can think outside the box and find their ways of coping with the stress related to work. Others are more dependent and immature thinking wise and are reluctant to take risks associated with working on different tasks. What all the manager feel benefits them is that they feel like they know their workgroup personally.

These people tend to believe that instructions given from other people to do certain things will always help them reach their targets then following what their gut states, so it is imperative for a leader to know his staff well in order to motivate them in the right possible way to get the best out of everyone. Manager 2 explained that you have to be prepared beforehand to deal with the employees and have answers for everything and it could at times be exhausting.

"Some people come from cultures where they are used to deciding over themselves and whatever they want to do so they can survive with less strict directions...however others need direct leadership to even be able to do something…" - Manager 3

Many managers believed that leadership is an ongoing process which involves much learning. Some of that learning is practiced through years of experience while most of it comes along the way. Working with different people directly not just helps a leader know more about cultures, ethnicities etc. It also helps in identifying the key differences.

"I believe we as leaders can learn from the team and how to manage them...we don't know everything directly but we learn as we go" - Manager 1

Almost all the managers highlighted the fact that since they worked previously as ordinary employees within the same production area, they know exactly how to target the people in the right way and how to utilize them in the best manner. If they had not been in the production before then their way of dealing with employees would have been different since they would have to try different alternatives to figure out the best processes to produce effectively.

"I worked as an ordinary worker for 3 years and I know how hard people have to work in order to achieve the desired results". Manager 4

"I have climbed my up from an ordinary employee to a shift leader and now to a Team leader, so I know what are the things that employees appreciate and what are the things that they criticize on" Manager 3

Furthermore, one of the managers that we interviewed believed that leaders should be careful in the way they behave with their subordinates. The type of behavior depicted by a leader can either led to an employee to want to pursue the positive characteristics of the leader or the negative.

"A leader needs to lead by example by bringing out the best out of people regardless of where they come from" Manager 2

5.4 Conflict resolution

Most of the managers that we interviewed emphasized the fact that there is never a sure-fire way to resolve a conflict. It solely depends on the nature of the situation since some situations demand immediate actions while others are to be pondered upon a little more than usual. However, all of them insisted on the fact that leaders need to develop their personality in a way that they can come up with solutions immediately in order to maintain a healthy atmosphere at work.

"We have guidelines that are provided to us to deal with conflicts but different situations demand different measures, so it solely depends on what the situation is". Manager 2

Leaders working in a warehouse highlighted the fact that their companies wanted them to behave in a certain way when they were faced with a conflict over an issue that had happened previously. The companies made sure to give some tools to the leaders to avoid harsh consequences, be it by sending them on training programs or different courses. In these courses and programs, they were taught how to solve problems by giving them certain situations and providing them with the right feedback. However, guidelines are only helpful if the managers can analyze them effectively.

'We are given certain opportunities where they make us learn but the leaders have to take inspiration from those instructions and figure out how to implement them in their decision-making" Manager 5

Every manager that was interviewed for this paper mentioned that no education or course could prepare them to how exactly they should deal with their subordinates. Lastly, it comes down to dealing with human beings and everyone is different. Every single individual is different and requires a different way of interaction. A leader cannot just adopt a particular style and expect it work correctly for everybody without any adjustments whatsoever.

"People are different in the way they think and act so we need to understand that until we work with people in different teams, we can never really understand how to solve

different situations involving people and no education or course can help us figure that out unless we experience it ourselves. "Manager 3

"You have to explain "why" somebody should change their manners and not just that they need to change." Manager 4

6. Analysis

6.1 Cultural diversity in work teams

There has been written substantially about cultural diversity in organizations as a whole by previous research. However, there is not one model which directly explain how managers should balance cultural diversity within the workforce. There is no one model which could be implied in every case. This is one of the few things all managers agreed on.

What was found were similarities between the managers and companies who were interviewed. Scholars like Kundu (2001) described the positive effects of balanced culturally diverse work-team, which is a sentiment shared by Groutsis et al., 2014).

"I think the benefit is that everyone brings their own mindset like "I used do it this way in in my previous company or country" which is completely different from what you would hear from the Swedish half of the company would sit down and tell you. They can come up with "local solutions" which can actually be applied to a top ten company like the one I'm working in. We get tiny ideas which are actually really good ideas "Manager 5

This sentiment is also shared by Sharma (2016) who, explained that one of the benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace was increased creativity and innovation.
Manager 5 said that in some cases, bringing one's own 'mindset' of doing tasks could be a negative trait. There were instances where workers sometimes feel like the way they did things previously, there is automatically the best way of doing things and they are not eager to adapt to a new company. This in turn, could hinder their productivity (Martensoon, 2000)

Hofstede (2011) theorized model could be looked upon as Hofstede's explained that individuals from short-term oriented countries tend to be proud of their way doing things. However, Hofstede's dimensions do not cover the process of actually adapting to individuals from short-term oriented countries, but it gives the inclination on how they are behaving and what to expect from a manager's point of view. Therefore, the dimensions could in a sense be used as guidelines for the managers.

6.2 Personal Characteristics of employees

The personal characteristics of the employees have a considerable impact on how the manager adapts his style of leading. Almost all managers identified different characteristics which are hard to deal with. Manager 3 mentioned that language barriers between him and the workers could sometimes make it difficult to express how something should be done.

It's highlighted by Perez & Ohlin (2009) that it is vital for the operations of the warehouse to communicate appropriately in order to bring everyone on the same page. Each needs to have an understanding of what needs to be done. The rest of the managers share this opinion and felt that communication was the key to success and was something that was essential for creating a better work atmosphere.

Manager 5 expressed laziness among workers to be his primary concern, which is a sentiment shared by Manager 1. Both managers expressed that people who have difficulties fulfilling the tasks required by them are the hardest to deal with. Moreover, they believed that stems primarily from laziness.

In findings under the heading 5.3.2, Manager Four believed that older workers who had worked in his company for some time had preconceived notions on how everything already works are the hardest to deal with. Subsequently, he felt that new employees who were eager to learn and adapt were the easiest to deal with. This could be credited to how some people from different countries have a hard time adapting to their new surroundings. The selected situation could thereby affect the quality of their work and the overall efficiency of the company (Martensson, 2000).

Manager five, however, as mentioned in the findings said that in some cases bringing own "mindset" of doing tasks could be a negative trait. There are instances where workers sometimes feel like the way they did things previously there is automatically the best way of doing things and they are not eager to adapt to a new company.

Manager 2 expressed that people who bring their religion, culture and the same mindset from back home to the workplace are the hardest to deal with. If those people try to bring their influence over others, then it becomes a problem. Manager 2 has avoided such instances by always looking to employ the right type of person from the beginning, which he feels other

warehouses fail to do. The choice of employing people is not based on which culture or religion an individual. Instead, it is an observation of how he/she is as an individual. (Shena, et al., 2009) describes how a substantial part of HRM involves hiring the right people for the job.

Manager 4 expressed how his workers from Pakistan need to attend Friday prayer. That was utterly foreign to him how some people could be that religious. Singh (2011) mentions how cultural shocks like this prohibit the cultural adaptation for the culturally diverse people in the workplace. Nonetheless, Manager 5 felt that it is nothing difficult to adjust with, It was just a question of adapting as manager and give 5 min breaks.

Manager 5 expressed that he felt that people with migrant backgrounds were happier and they feel almost privileged to have a job in their organization. He could sometimes experience that people who had lived in Sweden their whole life could, in a sense, feel entitled and that they feel that the job is beneath them. This behavior is quite unusual since Sweden is low uncertainty avoidance society where people have no problem changing jobs if they do not feel good about it Hofstede (2011) yet the Swedish nationals who feel this way are still working there.

Manager 4 valued their work ethic and added that people from culturally diverse backgrounds never complained about the hard labour and flexible schedules (where you sometimes have to work long hours) that comes with a warehouse job which is detailed by (Eriksson & Hägg, 2016). The authors mention how low employee turnover contributes to an overall, more competitive business. Individuals from masculine societies like many of the people working in Manager 4 company tend to have a mindset where work prevails family (Hofstede, 2011) Meaning; they will not argue as much if they have to work a few hours extra sometimes or jump in on the weekend and so on.

The arguments mentioned above shows that even if Sweden is individualist society, the company still experience a high level of collectivism where one takes away the opportunistic behavior and the political side of it and that is maintained by the organizational culture (Hofstede,2011). The workers with migrant backgrounds do not complain about hard labour or if their schedules have changed. They put the relationship over the task and not the task over the relationship (Hofstede, 2011).

6.2.1 Personal Characteristics of the managers

Four out of the five managers that were interviewed were themselves either a first-generation migrant of children from immigrant families. Only one was an ethnical Swede. The interviews provided interesting different answers on precisely what traits are essential for being a leader. What was mostly identified is how all the manager regarding their original heritage all adopted the "Swedish way" of being and leading according to the dimensions by Hofstede with slight adaptations towards their culturally diverse staff.

Manager 5 expressed that a manager needs to have a combination of the right personality and right experience in order to function with a large number of people.

"I base that I am doing a good job with diversity on the feedback I receive from the non-Swedish employees" Manager 5

Manager 5 shows a high level of open-mindedness since he bases his performance on the feedback from his employees and not of his assumptions. This manager also highlighted the fact that an individual has to reach solutions in the company, which makes everyone happy.

Manager 2 credited experience to be the main factor of being a good manager along with a good and positive attitude towards your job. Since an organization's most significant strength is its human capital, it is vital to adopt a positive work atmosphere to have an operative relationship between a leader and a worker (Jabbour, 2010)

Manager 1 explained that an ambition to learn and evolve is what makes a good leader. Since he had no prior education within his field, he had to learn and adapt. He believes a leader should try to behave himself and treat everyone equally and help employees come into their roles as soon as possible.

Manager 4 comes from a similar background where he was just an ordinary worker. He believes his drive is what landed him a leadership role. Furthermore, he believes that an internal drive is what stands out in this line of business. Manager 3 also credits previous work experience in the same company and a strong desire to assume leadership to be reasoning on why he became a leader at such a young age. What they have in common is that all three of them have hands-

on experience in the type of production that they are leading now, which has enabled them to deal with people more efficiently.

Moreover, Manager 3 believes that being a leader is one of the best experiences he has ever had. He believes that stems from that he can help people evolve and aspire to become leaders themselves and it has helped shape his leadership style. All of these traits help the managers to become better leader. Since different experience and preparation beforehand guarantee the improvement of representatives (Kossek et al., 2006)

Manager 2 says that a leader should lead by example and bring out the best in people regardless of who the person is. He believes the staff will follow when you lay the foundation on how to behave as a leader. He believes that managing culturally diverse staff has enriched him and made him more understandable and adaptable. According to Besong (2015) this shows that the managers have an understanding of diversity since they understand their workers abilities and beliefs which are all a part of diversity.

Many of these managerial personality traits can be linked to how Sweden is ranked as a low uncertainty avoidance society where people are more open to ideas and are curious to foreign people who may be different from them. They are accepting of the fact that they do not know everything, they learn along the way (Hofstede, 2011).

6.3 Conflict resolution

One of the significant barriers which disrupt the managerial process of balancing cultural diversity and integrate HRM is conflict within the company. Manager 1 and Manager 5 highlighted that they have been to management education courses. The courses provided them with guidelines on how to behave as leaders and deal with people. (Kossek, et al.,2006) could again be applied since preparation beforehand helps to certain extent with how to deal with conflict even if every situation differs.

However, both agreed that a course and education could only take you that far. Real-life experience is always different. This sentiment is also shared in the findings by remaining managers 2, 3 and 4 whom all emphasized that every situation needs to be dealt with individually since every situation is different.

Moreover, where some opinions differed from others was in how to approach the conflict. Manager 4 insisted that he enjoyed the responsibility of dealing with the conflict all by himself. While manager 3 experienced that it is much pressure and emphasized that a manager needs to be prepared for every argument and have an answer before going in and talking to a subordinate. So, in some instances, he would bring in a superior to do the talking for him if he felt that he was unprepared to deal with the conflict on whether the managers take help from anyone else in the company.

Manager 3, 4 and 5 insisted that in disputes they first talk with the subordinates themselves. However, if there were a situation where it would get violent or threatful, they would bring the matter further up in the company. It needs to be mentioned that all managers said that luckily, they had not had any severe instances that required drastic measures. What they are dealing with mostly is usually small disputes. A manager's role in logistic company involves making sure all procedures occur within the boundaries of the law (Quigley, 1998) If one employee misbehaved in such a fashion, it would be their obligation to act on it.

Manager 3 mentioned that it is crucial to explain "why" someone needs to change if they were misbehaving and not just that they have to change. When they accept the "why," they will change their manners more easily.

All managers feel like they know the people they are working with personally and by showing respect to their culturally diverse workers, they gain respect back. According to Hofstede (2011) people from high "power distance" countries demand respect in order to fulfill their tasks and subordinates are expected to do what they are told without much questioning. Where it differs in Sweden is that employees are allowed to influence decision making if their input is valuable and practical. These interactions help the managers learn how to deal with employees along the way.

7. Discussion

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7.1 Contributions

With our study we were able to extent on the current state of research within the area of human resource management and cultural diversity, to provide a little insight to how cultural diversity can be managed especially within the warehouse industry. It was discovered through the research that this area is very little researched, especially in the context of Sweden. Therefore, our research contributed to the understanding of this industry in this country specifically. With the help of Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions, we were able to extend on the usefulness of the framework for managing diverse warehouse staff.

7.2 Limitations

As we have noticed throughout this thesis, the warehouse industry is just one of the many industries that operate within Sweden. Although, many studies suggest that the warehousing industry is among the top employers within Sweden. There is not enough information available that gives us a bigger picture of how many economic migrants are working within this respective industry at Jonkoping

In order to get a deeper understanding of the topic and relating it even better to dimensions presented by Hofstede it would be very interesting to actually have the data of exactly where every employee originates from. However, this is bit tricky in Sweden since it's almost impossible to find the demographics in every warehouse. It's a sensitive subject to label people by their ethnicity. However, it would make for a more interesting study we believe where one could make direct comparisons to see if Hofstede's dimensions actually apply to each specific country and individual.

Furthermore, we also noticed that most of the managers in the leading companies that we interviewed were men. Since we struggled to find females who had managerial positions within the warehouse industry hence in future, a qualitative study needs to be done. The new study should take into account both genders while given managerial positions within this type of industry has to be conducted in order to evaluate the performance of the workforce.

7.3 Suggestions for future research

As we can see throughout our thesis, the concept of workforce diversity within the warehouse industry is implemented by many managers across this city. Although, in order to get a better understanding of the subject, more data needs to be collected in the future. The findings that we derived in this research are mainly focused on the ideas of the managers that we interviewed. More detailed research could also take into account some warehouses which do not want to have diverse teams at all and also those who do not have the diverse teams currently but are planning to integrate more with the economic migrants in the upcoming future.

We can also evaluate that since our study was based on warehouses within Jonkoping and how managers integrate culturally diverse people into work teams, a future study could also be done which compares how the results we obtained by a study in this city differs with the other cities in Sweden. The research in the future should be conducted in order to get a bigger picture of how the warehouse industry is operating within this whole country.

In addition to that, a study based on a quantitative approach could also be conducted instead of a qualitative approach. The data could be collected as to how the performance of the company has improved or gotten worse due to using multi-cultural labour force. Factors such as employee turnovers and other vital numerical methods could be compared in order to study this topic from a different perspective. This way of gathering data could be beneficial for managers who are less reluctant currently towards using international labour force.

8. Conclusion

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Coming to a conclusion, it can be identified from all the five interviews that was conducted that many of the managers agreed on specific ideas and processes to be followed and practiced in order to focus more on diversity within the several warehouses that they worked for. There were some questions where managers had a different point of view and did not agree with each other, which helped us in discovering new aspects to our relevant field of study.

To answer the first research question of "how cultural diversity affects the management of warehouse staff," we can see from our empirical findings that the managers emphasized on the fact that although this type of industry needed more Swedish speaking people previously over the years, this has changed completely. Diverse teams at the warehousing industry have contributed a lot towards the success of a company and firms are emphasizing more on recruiting more people who seem to be 'right for the job' regardless of the fact if they come from an international background or are locals. Workforce diversity is now seen by- managers as something worth putting the effort to integrate into the work teams as it will benefit the company as a whole.

Our second research question of "what processes are available to balance diversity and integrate human resources," it was evident that there is no established theory or management tool of how to correctly behave as a leader. Although guidelines like educational courses for the leader and company code of conduct are beneficial to a certain extent. We can conclude that in this type of industry all the managers that we interviewed had been working previously within the same kind of production and it was evident that the work experience had a more considerable influence than a college degree which made them manage their production more efficiently.

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10. Appendix 1

Interview question to managers
- What position do you have currently in your organization?
- How long have you been in this position?
- What have you worked within the past before this position?
- What do you think made you get this position? (was it your work experience, education etc?)
- What is your definition of workforce diversity?
- What type of people do you find the most difficult to deal with?
- How do you deal with conflict?
- What tools are available to deal with conflict?
- What has been the most difficult being a leader?
- How do you work with people to create or foster diversity at your organization?
- Can you explain the benefits of racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the work-teams?
- What efforts have you made or been involved with to foster multicultural understanding and cultural competence?
- Do you personally think that employees from different culture backgrounds have different learning needs? (If yes then have do you cater those needs?)
- What efforts have you made to help achieve a more diverse workforce?
- What measures have you taken or been involved to make an employee feel comfortable when other employees seemed uncomfortable with his/her presence?
- Has diversity in work teams played a role in shaping your teaching or advising "style "? (if yes, how?)