

# **Cultural Influences on Employee Dynamics and Customer Service in Multinational Fast Food Chains**

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Thesis for a Novia (UAS) – MBA degree

The Degree Programme of Service Design

Year 2024



## DEGREE THESIS

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Degree Programme: – MBA degree Service Design

Specialization:

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Title: Cultural Influences on Employee Dynamics and Customer Service in Multinational Fast Food Chains: A Case Study of KFC in Turku, Finland

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Date	Number of pages	Appendices
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### Abstract

This thesis examined how cultural variations affect customer service and workplace dynamics in a global fast-food chain, with a particular emphasis on the Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) location in Turku, Finland. To maximize employee collaboration and improve service quality in a culturally varied workplace, it is essential for employers to grasp the subtleties of intercultural exchanges. This study attempts to explore how employees' communication, teamwork, and service delivery are influenced by their cultural backgrounds and how these aspects ultimately impact customer satisfaction.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with KFC employees from diverse cultural backgrounds, and customer input was analyzed as part of a qualitative case study methodology. This study framed the investigation using cultural theories, such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Results show that cultural variations have a big impact on how employees interact with one another and communicate, which presents opportunities as well as obstacles for the provision of services. These dynamics underscore the necessity for culturally sensitive service design techniques since they also affect consumer perceptions and satisfaction levels.

Lastly, this study provided recommendations for particular service design interventions to support a more unified and productive multicultural workplace, such as customized training programs and culturally aware communication norms. These findings provide managers and service designers in similar multicultural environments with useful insights into how cultural diversity may be managed and used in the service industry.

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Language: English      Key words: cultural differences, workplace dynamics, service design, multinational companies, customer service, KFC, Finland

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## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background of the Study .....	1
1.2	Purpose of the Study.....	3
1.3	Research Questions.....	4
1.4	Structure of the Thesis .....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Cultural Diversity Theories .....	9
2.1.1	Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory.....	10
2.1.2	Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences.....	11
2.1.3	The Social Identity Theory .....	13
2.2	Cultural Diversity in the Workplace .....	15
2.2.1	Benefits of Cultural Diversity .....	15
2.2.2	Challenges of Cultural Diversity .....	16
2.3	Service Design and Its Role in Addressing Cultural.....	18
2.3.1	Understanding Service Design .....	18
2.3.2	The Role of Cultural Competence in Service Design .....	19
2.3.3	Strategies for Integrating Cultural Competence into Service Design.....	19
2.3.4	Case Study: Cultural Competence in KFC's Service Design .....	20
2.4	The Fast Food Industry Context .....	20
<b>3</b>	<b>Double Diamond design process .....</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1	Discover (Divergence) .....	24
3.1.1	Semi-Structured Interviews .....	25
3.1.2	Observation Note.....	29
3.2	Define (Convergence).....	33
3.2.1	Persona .....	33
3.3	Develop (Divergence).....	37
3.3.1	service blueprint .....	37
3.4	Deliver (Convergence) .....	39
3.4.1	Handbook .....	40
3.5	Handbook Feedback.....	42
<b>4</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.1	Recommendations for Improvement.....	46
4.2	Challenges in Conflict Resolution and Authority Perceptions.....	46
4.3	Impact of Cultural Variations on Customer Service .....	47
<b>5</b>	<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>50</b>
5.1	Interview Questions.....	50
5.2	Observation Notes .....	57
5.3	Handbook .....	61
<b>6</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>70</b>

Figure Table	
Figure 1 Thesis Structure .....	6
Figure 2 literature review .....	9
Figure 3 Double Dimond process (uxdesign,2014).....	24
Figure 4 Interview result.....	26
Figure 5 Observation Result.....	30
Figure 6 Persona 1 .....	34
Figure 7 Persona-2 .....	35
Figure 8 Persona-3 .....	35
Figure 9 Service Blueprint.....	38
Figure 10 Cultural Competence Handbook.....	41

# 1 Introduction

Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc. (NYSE: YUM.), stands as a global icon in the fast food industry, tracing its roots back to the innovative recipes of Colonel Harland Sanders over 80 years ago. Colonel Sanders' secret blend of 11 herbs and spices, coupled with his commitment to quality and service, has propelled KFC to prominence, with a presence in over 150 countries and territories worldwide.

In November 2021, KFC made its highly anticipated entry into Finland, opening its first restaurant in Helsinki's Itis shopping center. This marked a significant milestone for KFC's expansion into the Nordic region, signaling the brand's commitment to serving diverse culinary preferences while upholding its tradition of excellence.

As KFC embarks on its journey in Finland, one of its key destinations is Turku, a city known for its rich cultural heritage and vibrant culinary scene. With the inauguration of a KFC outlet in Turku, there arises an opportunity to explore the intersection of sustainability and fast food within the Finnish context.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

In an increasingly globalized world, multinational companies are embracing cultural diversity as a core component of their workforce. This diversity, while offering numerous benefits such as a wider range of perspectives and enhanced problem-solving capabilities, also presents significant challenges in terms of communication, teamwork, and management. The fast food industry, known for its high employee turnover and reliance on a diverse workforce, is particularly affected by these cultural dynamics.

KFC, a global fast food chain with outlets in over 150 countries, is no exception. In Finland, KFC is a relatively new entrant, and the branch in Turku serves as an interesting case study for examining cultural interactions in a service environment. The workforce at KFC Turku, like many of its global counterparts, is characterized by a diverse mix of employees from various cultural backgrounds. The staff includes local Finnish workers as well as individuals from countries such as Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and other nations. This cultural diversity brings together a range of languages,

traditions, and work practices, making the workplace a microcosm of global interaction.

Understanding how these cultural differences impact the workplace is crucial for several reasons. First, effective communication and teamwork are fundamental to delivering high-quality service in a fast-paced environment. Misunderstandings or conflicts arising from cultural differences can lead to reduced employee satisfaction, decreased productivity, and ultimately, lower service quality. For example, different cultural norms regarding hierarchy, conflict resolution, and communication styles can influence how employees from Nepal, India, and Bangladesh interact with their Finnish counterparts, potentially affecting team cohesion and morale.

Second, in service industries like fast food, where customer interaction is a key component of the business, cultural competence is essential for meeting the expectations of a diverse customer base. Customers at KFC Turku, like its employees, are also diverse, including local Finns as well as international visitors and residents. Employees' ability to navigate these cultural differences effectively can enhance customer experiences, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty.

Despite the importance of these issues, there is a lack of research specifically focused on how cultural diversity affects workplace dynamics and service delivery in multinational fast food chains operating in relatively culturally homogenous countries like Finland. Most existing studies on cultural diversity and workplace dynamics have been conducted in more culturally diverse environments, such as the United States or the United Kingdom, where the context and challenges can differ significantly.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the specific cultural challenges and opportunities present at the KFC branch in Turku. It will explore how employees from different cultural backgrounds—including Finland, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and other countries—perceive and navigate their work environment, how these dynamics affect their interactions with each other and with customers, and how management can leverage service design strategies to improve both employee experience and customer satisfaction. By doing so, the research will contribute to a better understanding of the role of cultural diversity in service design and provide practical recommendations for managing cultural differences in similar service settings.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of cultural diversity on workplace dynamics and service delivery at the KFC branch in Turku, Finland. Specifically, the research aims to understand how employees from different cultural backgrounds—including those from Finland, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and other countries—interact and collaborate within the work environment, and how these interactions influence overall service quality and customer satisfaction.

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Identify Cultural Differences:** Examine the cultural differences among employees from various backgrounds and how these differences manifest in their communication styles, work practices, and attitudes towards teamwork and management.
2. **Assess Impact on Employee Dynamics:** Investigate how these cultural differences affect employee relationships, collaboration, and conflict resolution, and how they contribute to or hinder a positive work environment.
3. **Evaluate Service Delivery:** Explore the ways in which cultural dynamics among employees influence the delivery of customer service, including aspects such as communication with customers, responsiveness, and adaptability in meeting diverse customer needs.
4. **Develop Service Design Strategies:** Based on the findings, propose service design strategies and managerial interventions that can help enhance intercultural understanding, improve employee cooperation, and elevate customer service quality in a multicultural workplace setting.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide practical insights for managers and service designers in the fast food industry and similar service sectors, enabling them to better manage cultural diversity in the workplace and optimize service delivery. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of cultural diversity in organizational settings and offer recommendations for leveraging this diversity to create a more inclusive, effective, and customer-oriented work environment.

### 1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the role of cultural diversity in shaping workplace dynamics and service delivery at the KFC branch in Turku, Finland. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. How do cultural differences among employees from Finland, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and other countries influence communication and teamwork in the workplace?

This question explores the specific ways in which cultural backgrounds affect how employees interact with each other, including communication styles, perceptions of hierarchy, and collaboration practices.

2. What are the key challenges and opportunities arising from cultural diversity in employee interactions at KFC Turku?

This question aims to identify both the difficulties and the potential benefits that cultural differences bring to the workplace, such as misunderstandings, conflict resolution, and the enrichment of team perspectives.

3. How do these intercultural dynamics impact customer service delivery and customer satisfaction?

This question examines the effects of employee interactions on service quality, customer experiences, and the ability of employees to meet the expectations of a culturally diverse customer base.

4. What service design strategies and management practices can be implemented to enhance cultural integration and improve service quality in a multicultural fast food environment?

This question seeks to propose actionable strategies based on the research findings, aimed at fostering better intercultural understanding, teamwork, and customer service within the organization.

These research questions are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural diversity affects both internal operations and external service delivery, offering insights that can inform better management and service design practices in multicultural service settings.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized into five main sections: Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology, Findings, and Conclusion. The Introduction encompasses the Background of the Study, Problem Statement, Research Objectives, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, and Scope and Limitations. The Literature Review includes an Introduction to Cultural Diversity Theories, Cultural Diversity in the Workplace, Service Design and Cultural Competence, and the Fast Food Industry Context. The Research Methodology section details the Double Diamond Method, Case Study Approach, Data Collection Methods, Data Analysis Techniques, and Ethical Considerations. The Findings section presents Customer Perspectives and Impact on Service Delivery. Finally, the Conclusion summarizes Key Findings, Research Contributions, Limitations of the Study, and Suggestions for Future Research (Figure 1).

# Thesis Structure

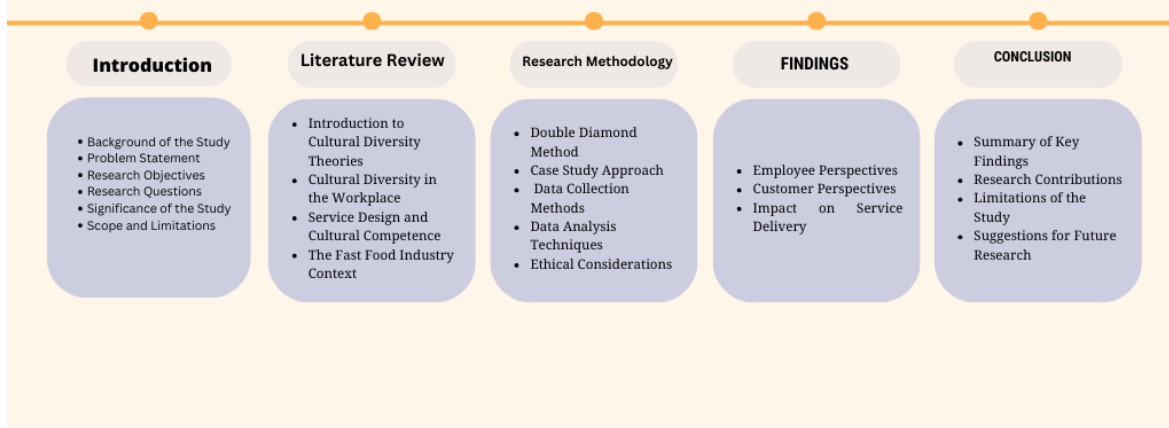


Figure 1 Thesis Structure

## 2 Literature Review

In today's globalized world, workplaces are becoming increasingly diverse, with employees coming from various cultural backgrounds. This is particularly true for multinational companies like KFC, where team members may hail from countries such as Finland, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and more. Cultural diversity can bring a wealth of ideas and perspectives, which can lead to greater creativity and innovation. However, it can also present challenges, such as misunderstandings and conflicts among employees who may have different ways of communicating and working.

Understanding cultural diversity is essential for creating a positive work environment and ensuring effective teamwork. Research has shown that when employees feel valued and included, they are more likely to contribute their best efforts to the organization. This is crucial in the fast food industry, where high-quality service is key to customer satisfaction.

Moreover, cultural diversity impacts not only employee interactions but also how services are designed and delivered. Companies must be culturally competent, meaning they should understand and respect the diverse backgrounds of both their employees and customers. This cultural awareness can improve customer experiences and lead to better business outcomes.

This literature review will delve into existing theories and research on cultural diversity, examine its effects on workplace dynamics, and explore its significance in service design, especially within the fast food sector. By understanding these concepts, businesses can create strategies to leverage cultural diversity for improved collaboration and enhanced service quality.

KFC, officially known as KFC Corporation, is an iconic American fast food restaurant chain renowned for its specialization in fried chicken. Founded by Colonel Harland Sanders in 1930 in Corbin, Kentucky, KFC has evolved into the world's second-largest restaurant chain by sales, following McDonald's. As of April 2024, KFC operates over 30,000 locations in 150 countries and territories, cementing its global presence. The chain is a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, a parent company that also owns well-known brands such as Pizza Hut and Taco Bell (Yum! Brands,2023).

Colonel Sanders began his journey during the Great Depression, selling fried chicken from a roadside restaurant. His culinary innovation included a secret recipe of 11 herbs and spices that would become a cornerstone of KFC's offerings. In 1952, Sanders recognized the potential of the franchising model, leading to the establishment of the first "Kentucky Fried Chicken" franchise in Salt Lake City, Utah. KFC played a crucial role in popularizing chicken in the fast-food industry, successfully diversifying the market and challenging the dominance of hamburgers. Through his branding as "Colonel Sanders," Harland became a significant figure in American culture, and his likeness remains an enduring symbol in KFC's advertising today (Yum! Brands,2023).

KFC was one of the first American fast-food chains to expand internationally, opening outlets in Canada, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and Jamaica by the mid-1960s. Despite experiencing mixed fortunes domestically during the 1970s and 1980s—largely due to ownership changes and transitions that often involved individuals with limited restaurant experience—KFC continued to thrive internationally. In the early 1970s, KFC was sold to Heublein, a spirits distributor, which was later acquired by the R. J.

Reynolds food and tobacco conglomerate. Eventually, PepsiCo purchased the chain and propelled its overseas growth, including the pivotal opening of the first Western restaurant in China in 1987. This entry marked a significant milestone, as China has since become KFC's largest market. In time, PepsiCo spun off its restaurant division, which rebranded as Tricon Global Restaurants and eventually became Yum! Brands.

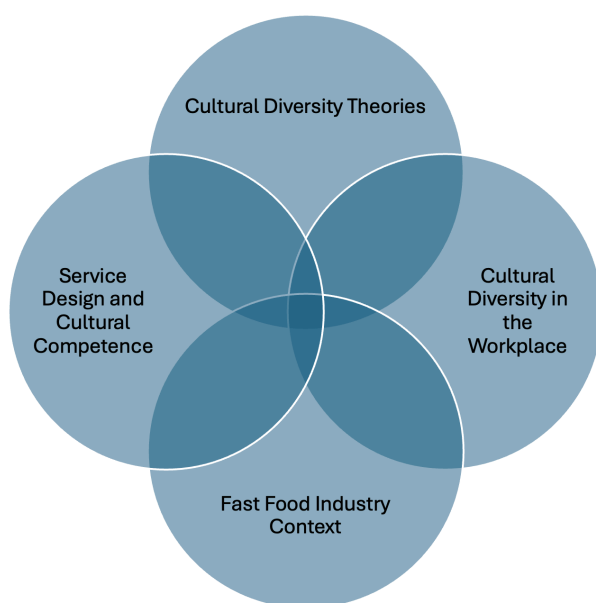
The original offering at KFC consists of pressure-fried chicken pieces, seasoned with Sanders' signature recipe. A defining feature of the chain is its iconic cardboard "bucket," which was introduced by franchisee Pete Harman in 1957 and has become synonymous with KFC's branding. Over the years, KFC has diversified its menu, expanding beyond its original product to include chicken fillet sandwiches, wraps, salads, and various sides like French fries and coleslaw. The restaurant chain also offers desserts and soft drinks, primarily supplied by PepsiCo. KFC is recognized for its memorable slogans, including "It's Finger Lickin' Good!", "Nobody does chicken like KFC," "We do chicken right," and "So good."

As KFC continues to navigate the competitive landscape of the fast-food industry, it faces various challenges, including changing consumer preferences towards healthier food options and the growing demand for sustainability. In response, KFC is innovating its menu to include healthier items and focusing on sustainable sourcing practices. The company is also leveraging technology and digital marketing strategies to enhance customer engagement and streamline operations, ensuring it remains a prominent player in the global fast-food market.

KFC operates in a diverse global marketplace, necessitating a strong understanding of cross-cultural dynamics within its working environment. With over 30,000 locations in 150 countries, KFC employs a multicultural workforce that includes individuals from various backgrounds, such as those from Finland, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. This diversity enriches the company by fostering creativity and innovation, as varied perspectives lead to a broader range of ideas and solutions (Harrison, 2018). To effectively manage this cross-cultural workforce, KFC invests in training and development programs that promote cultural awareness and sensitivity, enabling employees to understand and appreciate cultural differences (Sharma, 2021). The company also adapts its menu offerings to reflect local tastes and preferences, which helps employees connect with their communities and enhances customer satisfaction (Yum! Brands, 2023). However, KFC faces challenges associated with cultural

differences, such as language barriers that can impede communication and varying attitudes toward authority and teamwork that may affect workplace dynamics (Harrison, 2018). To address these challenges, KFC emphasizes open communication and conflict resolution, fostering a culture of respect and collaboration (Sharma, 2021). Additionally, the company is committed to promoting inclusion and equity, ensuring that all employees, regardless of their cultural background, are treated fairly and have access to opportunities (Yum! Brands, 2023). Effective leadership in this cross-cultural context requires KFC leaders to be culturally competent, allowing them to manage and motivate diverse teams while aligning the company's objectives with local practices (Sharma, 2021). Overall, KFC's dedication to fostering a cross-cultural working environment not only enhances employee morale and retention but also contributes to the company's success in a competitive global market (figure 2).

## Literature Review



**Figure 2 literature review**

### 2.1 Cultural Diversity Theories

#### What is Culture?

Culture can be understood as the collective beliefs, values, behaviors, customs, and practices that characterize a group of people or a society. It encompasses everything

from language, art, and religion to social habits and norms that shape how individuals interact with one another and understand the world around them. In essence, culture is what gives a group its identity and sense of belonging (Thomas, K. W., & Ely, R. J. (1996).

Culture is learned and passed down from generation to generation, influencing how people think and behave in various situations. For instance, the way people celebrate holidays, conduct business, or communicate can vary significantly between cultures. This diversity in cultural expression enriches human experience and fosters greater understanding among different groups (Hofstede, G. 2001). As noted by Geert Hofstede (2011), culture is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others," emphasizing that culture plays a crucial role in shaping individual and group behavior.

Moreover, culture is dynamic; it evolves over time as societies change, adapt, and interact with one another. In today's globalized world, cultural exchange is common, leading to the blending of traditions and practices. Understanding culture is essential for effective communication and collaboration, especially in diverse settings, such as workplaces and international relations.

### **2.1.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory**

Cultural diversity theories explore how varying cultural backgrounds influence individual behaviors, workplace dynamics, and organizational effectiveness. One of the foundational theories is **Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory**, which identifies six key dimensions that help to understand cultural differences across countries: Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence vs. Restraint (Hofstede, 2010). This framework enables organizations to navigate cultural diversity by recognizing how these dimensions impact communication styles, leadership preferences, and employee motivation.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, developed by Geert Hofstede in the 1970s, provides a framework for understanding how culture influences behavior, particularly in organizational contexts (Hofstede, 1980). This theory originated from an extensive study on workplace values and initially identified four key dimensions, later expanded

to six to offer deeper insights into cultural differences (Hofstede, 2010). The dimensions help explain how societies manage power dynamics, balance individual versus collective interests, define gender roles, cope with uncertainty, plan for the future, and approach the pursuit of pleasure. For example, the power distance index (PDI) shows the extent to which a society accepts unequal power distribution, with high PDI cultures tending towards hierarchical structures and low PDI cultures favoring equality and participative decision-making (Hofstede, 2011).

The theory also highlights the individualism versus collectivism (IDV) dimension, distinguishing cultures that emphasize personal achievements from those that prioritize group harmony and loyalty (Hofstede, 2011). Masculinity versus femininity (MAS) reflects whether a culture values competitiveness and success (masculine) or nurtures relationships and quality of life (feminine; Hofstede, 2010). Furthermore, the uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) measures how comfortable a culture is with ambiguity, where high UAI cultures prefer structured environments and low UAI cultures exhibit flexibility (Hofstede, 1980). The long-term versus short-term orientation (LTO) dimension assesses whether a culture focuses on future planning and perseverance or respects tradition and seeks immediate results (Hofstede, 2010). Finally, the indulgence versus restraint (IVR) dimension explores the extent to which societies allow or suppress the gratification of desires (Hofstede, 2011).

Hofstede's framework has become a foundational tool for organizations operating in global and multicultural settings, helping them align management practices, communication, and marketing strategies with cultural values (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). This alignment can foster better collaboration, reduce conflicts, and enhance engagement by acknowledging and respecting cultural differences. However, while influential, it is important to note the limitations of Hofstede's theory, including the potential for oversimplifying complex cultural traits and the need for continual adaptation to the evolving dynamics of a globalized world (Hofstede, 2010).

### **2.1.2 Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences**

Another prominent theory is **Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences**, which outlines seven dimensions of culture, including Universalism vs. Particularism and Specific vs. Diffuse cultures (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). This model

emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural context in business interactions and decision-making processes.

Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences, developed by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, is a framework that provides valuable insights into how cultural variations impact business practices and interpersonal interactions across different nations (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). This model identifies seven dimensions that highlight the distinctive ways in which cultures approach rules, relationships, emotional expression, status, time, and their relationship with the environment.

The universalism vs. particularism dimension assesses whether societies apply rules uniformly or adapt them based on relationships and circumstances. In universalist cultures, such as the United States, rules are applied consistently to all individuals. In contrast, particularist cultures, such as China, may interpret rules differently depending on personal relationships (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). The individualism vs. communitarianism dimension contrasts cultures that emphasize individual rights and achievements with those that prioritize group goals and community welfare. For example, while the United States highly values personal achievement, many Asian cultures emphasize collective success and community support.

The neutral vs. affective dimension explores how emotions are expressed. Neutral cultures, such as Japan, typically keep emotions controlled and maintain a composed demeanor, whereas affective cultures, like Italy, openly express emotions (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). The specific vs. diffuse dimension examines the degree to which work and personal lives are kept separate or overlap. Specific cultures, such as the U.S., tend to compartmentalize professional and personal interactions, while diffuse cultures, such as those in Latin America, blend personal relationships with professional activities (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

The achievement vs. ascription dimension focuses on how status is assigned. In achievement-oriented cultures like the United States, status is gained through accomplishments and demonstrated skills. Conversely, in ascription-oriented cultures, such as Saudi Arabia, status is often determined by attributes such as age, gender, or social connections (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). The sequential time vs.

synchronous time dimension looks at how cultures perceive and value time. Sequential time cultures, including Germany and the United States, see time as linear and place a high value on punctuality and schedules. In contrast, synchronous time cultures, such as many Latin American countries, view time as more fluid and prioritize relationships over strict adherence to schedules (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). Finally, the internal direction vs. outer direction dimension explores how people relate to their environment. Western cultures with an internal direction believe in controlling their surroundings to achieve goals, whereas outer-directed cultures, such as those in Asia, emphasize harmony with nature and adapting to external circumstances (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

Trompenaars' Model is especially valuable for global organizations as it helps leaders and employees navigate cultural differences effectively, leading to improved communication, stronger collaboration, and tailored management practices that align with the cultural values of a diverse workforce (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). This understanding fosters a more cohesive and productive international work environment, aiding organizations in adapting to the complexities of cross-cultural interactions.

### **2.1.3 The Social Identity Theory**

The Social Identity Theory, proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), explains how individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, influencing interactions and perceptions within multicultural environments (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the workplace, this theory sheds light on how cultural identities impact teamwork and collaboration, as individuals may show preference toward in-group members, potentially affecting their interactions with those from different cultural backgrounds (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The Cultural Intelligence (CQ) theory, developed by Ang et al. (2007), emphasizes the importance of an individual's ability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings. CQ consists of four main components: Cognitive, which relates to knowledge of different cultures; Metacognitive, which involves awareness during intercultural interactions; Motivational, which indicates an interest in cross-cultural exchanges; and Behavioral, which refers to the ability to adapt behavior to various cultural contexts (Ang et al., 2007). Organizations that promote cultural intelligence among their

employees are better positioned to manage diversity, as CQ improves communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork across cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Edward Hall's theory of High-Context and Low-Context Cultures, introduced in *Beyond Culture* (1976), differentiates between cultures that depend heavily on implicit, context-based communication and those that favor explicit verbal communication. High-context cultures, such as Japan, China, and many Arab countries, rely significantly on non-verbal cues, shared experiences, and relationships. These cultures value indirect communication, emphasize building strong personal connections, and use non-verbal signals like body language and tone (Hall, 1976). High-context cultures often align with collectivist values, focusing on group harmony and shared objectives.

Low-context cultures, on the other hand, including the United States, Canada, and Germany, are characterized by direct and explicit communication. These cultures rely primarily on spoken and written words for clarity, with minimal dependence on context (Hall, 1976). In low-context cultures, communication is clear, task-oriented, and emphasizes individuality and personal opinions, with less reliance on non-verbal cues.

Understanding the differences between high-context and low-context cultures is crucial in a globalized workplace. Misunderstandings can occur when individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact, leading to confusion or perceived rudeness. For instance, a person from a high-context culture may view the directness of a low-context communicator as abrupt, while the low-context communicator might find the subtlety of a high-context counterpart unclear (Hall, 1976). By being aware of these distinctions, organizations can adapt their communication approaches to improve intercultural interactions and strengthen relationships in diverse teams (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

These theories are essential for multinational organizations like KFC, as they help facilitate communication, collaboration, and overall effectiveness in cross-cultural settings. Applying the insights from the Social Identity Theory, Cultural Intelligence, and Hall's High-Context and Low-Context framework supports the development of strategies that respect and integrate cultural differences, fostering an inclusive and

productive work environment (Ang et al., 2007; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

## **2.2 Cultural Diversity in the Workplace**

Cultural diversity in the workplace refers to the presence of employees from a variety of backgrounds, including different ethnicities, races, religions, genders, ages, sexual orientations, and abilities. As globalization continues to influence workforce dynamics, organizations increasingly recognize the importance of cultural diversity in fostering innovation, enhancing employee performance, and improving overall organizational effectiveness. However, managing cultural diversity also presents unique challenges that require strategic approaches to create an inclusive work environment.

### **2.2.1 Benefits of Cultural Diversity**

Enhanced creativity and innovation are significant benefits of a diverse workforce. Teams composed of individuals from varied backgrounds bring a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas, which can lead to more creative and innovative solutions. Research suggests that organizations with diverse workforces are better positioned to develop new products and approaches, as team members can tackle problems from multiple viewpoints (Deng et al., 2020; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2018).

Diversity also contributes to improved employee performance. An inclusive culture where employees from different backgrounds feel valued and respected results in higher engagement and job satisfaction. Studies have shown that organizations prioritizing diversity experience enhanced employee commitment and productivity (Choi et al., 2021; Roberson et al., 2017).

Moreover, a culturally diverse workforce broadens an organization's market reach. The ability to understand and connect with a diverse customer base enables businesses to tailor their products and services to better meet the needs of different demographics. This cultural competence can lead to increased customer satisfaction and stronger market penetration (Vila et al., 2022).

Lastly, fostering diversity and inclusion helps increase employee retention. Employees who perceive their workplace as inclusive are more likely to stay, reducing turnover and preserving valuable organizational knowledge. This not only minimizes

recruitment and training costs but also supports long-term growth and stability (Shore et al., 2020).

### **2.2.2 Challenges of Cultural Diversity**

Cultural diversity in the workplace presents both significant challenges and valuable opportunities for organizations. Communication barriers, such as language differences and varying communication styles, are common in diverse teams. These differences can lead to misunderstandings if team members are not aware of or fail to appreciate the diverse ways in which people communicate, potentially undermining collaboration and productivity (Hofstede, 2001). Furthermore, cultural differences in values, beliefs, and work approaches can result in conflicts that hinder team cohesion and negatively impact performance (Thomas & Ely, 1996). In some cases, employees who have worked in homogeneous environments may resist diversity initiatives. This resistance, which can manifest as biases or reluctance to collaborate with colleagues from different backgrounds, may affect teamwork and morale (Shen et al., 2009).

To manage these challenges effectively, organizations must adopt best practices for promoting cultural diversity. Inclusive leadership is crucial for fostering an environment where all employees feel valued and respected (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Training programs that enhance leaders' cultural competence enable them to better understand and appreciate the unique contributions of a diverse team (Groggins & Connell, 2014). Additionally, implementing diversity training programs for all employees helps raise awareness of cultural differences, unconscious biases, and the importance of inclusion. This can improve communication and collaboration within diverse teams (Roberson, 2006). Encouraging open dialogue and creating safe spaces for employees to share their experiences and concerns fosters mutual understanding and breaks down barriers (Klein & Harrison, 2007). Celebrating cultural events and diversity-related initiatives not only creates a sense of belonging but also helps employees feel appreciated for their unique backgrounds (Shen et al., 2009).

By embracing cultural diversity and actively managing it, businesses can create an inclusive environment that enhances teamwork, drives innovation, and improves performance (Jackson & Joshi, 2011). Moreover, an inclusive workplace better equips organizations to serve a diverse customer base, positioning them for success in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world (McLeod & Lobel, 1992).

At the KFC branch in Turku, Finland, cultural differences among employees from Finnish, Nepali, Indian, and Bangladeshi backgrounds significantly shape the working environment. These cultural variations affect communication, teamwork, work ethics, and employee satisfaction, presenting both challenges and opportunities for enhancing workplace dynamics. One key area is cultural communication styles. Finnish employees typically value direct and clear communication, where honesty and straightforwardness are prioritized (Hofstede, 2001). In contrast, employees from South Asian cultures, such as Nepali, Indian, and Bangladeshi backgrounds, often communicate more indirectly, relying on context, non-verbal cues, and subtle expressions (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). This difference can lead to misunderstandings if team members are unaware of each other's communication preferences.

Team dynamics and collaboration are also influenced by cultural values such as individualism and collectivism. Finnish culture leans towards individualism, valuing personal autonomy and self-expression, while South Asian cultures often emphasize collectivism, focusing on teamwork and group harmony (Hofstede, 2001). This difference can impact decision-making processes and how employees interact during work tasks. In terms of conflict resolution, Finnish employees are more likely to address issues directly, expecting open discussions, while South Asian employees may prefer a more subtle approach to avoid disrupting group cohesion (Ting-Toomey, 1999). The approach to work ethics and attitudes further reflects cultural differences. Finnish culture places strong emphasis on work-life balance, with employees valuing personal time and autonomy (Korpela & Ylönen, 2017). Conversely, employees from South Asian backgrounds might have different expectations regarding work hours and commitment, potentially leading to varying approaches to overtime (Lundin & Antonsson, 2017).

Cultural differences extend to cultural celebrations and recognition in the workplace. The KFC branch in Turku benefits from a diverse mix of cultural events such as Dashain (Nepal), Diwali (India), and Pohela Boishakh (Bangladesh), which can be celebrated to promote inclusion and a sense of belonging among employees (Shen et al., 2009). Additionally, employee recognition preferences vary: while Finnish employees may appreciate direct acknowledgment, South Asian employees might prefer communal celebrations that highlight group achievements (Aycaan et al., 2000). Training and development methods also need to accommodate different learning preferences. For example, South Asian employees may benefit from more hands-on, practical training, whereas Finnish employees might prefer structured, formal training sessions (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Similarly, feedback delivery differs across cultures; Finnish employees may expect direct, constructive criticism, while

South Asian employees often appreciate more tactful and supportive feedback to maintain relationships (Gudykunst, 2004).

Finally, cultural norms and practices such as punctuality and dress code can impact the workplace. Finnish culture generally values punctuality, while attitudes toward time may vary among South Asian employees (Hofstede, 2001). Moreover, cultural differences in dress and personal appearance may affect how employees express their identities, necessitating an inclusive environment that respects cultural diversity while maintaining company standards (Klein & Harrison, 2007).

In conclusion, the KFC branch in Turku showcases the richness of cultural diversity within the workplace. By recognizing and adapting to these cultural differences, KFC can create a more harmonious and effective environment. Tailoring communication, training, and recognition strategies to reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of its employees will not only improve teamwork and collaboration but also enhance employee satisfaction and overall performance (Shen et al., 2009).

## **2.3 Service Design and Its Role in Addressing Cultural**

Service design focuses on creating and optimizing services to enhance user experiences and organizational efficiency. It is inherently user-centered, addressing the needs, preferences, and behaviors of customers through a holistic view of the service journey, encompassing all touchpoints and interactions. In a globalized and diverse society, incorporating cultural competence into service design is essential to meet the varied needs of users from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural competence refers to the ability to understand, appreciate, and effectively engage with people from diverse cultures (Nguyen et al., 2022).

### **2.3.1 Understanding Service Design**

Service design aims to craft user-centered services that provide value by addressing both customer and organizational needs. It employs tools like customer journey mapping, service blueprints, and the Double Diamond model, which consists of four stages: Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver (Stickdorn, 2018). This model facilitates a structured approach to understanding user problems and developing solutions that are aligned with those needs.

Incorporating cultural competence into service design involves recognizing and respecting the cultural backgrounds of diverse users. It requires designers to be aware of different cultural norms, values, communication styles, and potential biases that could influence user experiences. This approach not only enhances user satisfaction but also ensures the inclusivity and accessibility of services.

### **2.3.2 The Role of Cultural Competence in Service Design**

Culturally competent service design plays a crucial role in enhancing user experience by tailoring services to the cultural contexts of diverse user groups. For example, adjusting language, symbols, and communication styles in service touchpoints can significantly improve the experience for non-native speakers or individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Sangiorgi & Prendiville, 2017). This cultural adaptation helps ensure that users feel understood and valued, fostering a positive service experience. Additionally, cultural competence helps reduce miscommunication and conflict, which can often arise in direct customer interactions. By anticipating and addressing potential misunderstandings, service providers can minimize conflict and dissatisfaction, leading to smoother interactions (Berry, 2020). Creating an inclusive service environment, where all users, regardless of cultural background, feel respected and valued, is also key. This can be achieved by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives during the service design process, ensuring services are universally accessible and meaningful (Chung, 2020). Furthermore, culturally sensitive training for employees is essential in this context. It ensures that staff members understand and respect cultural differences, thereby enhancing the quality of service delivery and fostering a supportive, inclusive work environment (Friedman & Antal, 2017).

### **2.3.3 Strategies for Integrating Cultural Competence into Service Design**

To create culturally competent services, it is essential to conduct thorough cultural research to understand the backgrounds of target users. Designers can employ ethnographic research methods, such as interviews and observations, to explore cultural norms, values, and behaviors that influence how users interact with services (Stickdorn, 2018). Additionally, involving stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds through co-creation workshops or focus groups ensures the service addresses the needs of all users. This collaborative approach helps uncover cultural nuances that could impact user experiences (Blomkvist & Segelström, 2019).

Moreover, designing services with accessibility and inclusion in mind—such as offering multilingual support or using culturally appropriate symbols—can make services more accessible to a broader audience. For example, designing digital interfaces that account for different reading directions or providing alternative formats for users with visual impairments can enhance inclusivity (Norman & Nielsen, 2020). Lastly, conducting iterative testing with diverse user groups allows designers to identify potential cultural issues early in the design process. The feedback gathered from these groups helps refine the service to better meet the needs of all users (Mager, 2020).

#### **2.3.4 Case Study: Cultural Competence in KFC's Service Design**

In a multicultural environment like KFC's Turku branch, which employs individuals from Finland, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh, cultural competence is essential for creating a positive work environment and delivering high-quality service. Implementing culturally competent service design could include providing culturally tailored training programs for employees, ensuring the menu and promotional materials are culturally sensitive, and creating an inclusive atmosphere that respects all cultural backgrounds (Friedman & Antal, 2017).

Integrating cultural competence into service design is critical in today's globalized world. By understanding and addressing the diverse cultural contexts of users and employees, organizations can create more inclusive and effective services. This not only enhances user experiences but also fosters a positive and inclusive organizational culture. As service design continues to evolve, the incorporation of cultural competence will be a key factor in delivering high-quality, culturally sensitive services.

### **2.4 The Fast Food Industry Context**

The fast food industry is a significant global economic sector known for its standardized food offerings, quick service, and convenient access. It has grown rapidly over the past few decades, with leading chains like McDonald's, KFC, and Burger King expanding to almost every corner of the world. As of 2024, the global fast food market was valued at approximately USD 931 billion, and it is expected to continue growing due to changing consumer lifestyles and increasing demand for quick-service meals (Statista, 2024). The industry is characterized by its emphasis on speed, efficiency, and

affordability, which appeal to consumers seeking convenience and value in their dining experiences (Jang et al., 2021).

Fast food chains typically operate under a franchise model, which has enabled them to expand rapidly across diverse geographical and cultural contexts. This model allows for a standardized brand and menu while providing some flexibility to adapt to local tastes and preferences. For example, McDonald's offers the McAloo Tikki burger in India, and KFC features rice bowls in its Asian outlets to cater to regional dietary habits (Alon et al., 2017). However, this global expansion presents challenges, particularly in managing cultural differences and maintaining consistent service quality across various markets.

In Finland, the fast food market has been expanding steadily, influenced by changing consumer preferences and increased urbanization. Major international chains like KFC have entered the market to cater to the growing demand for quick-service options. The Finnish fast food industry is also shaped by local food safety regulations and consumer demand for healthier, locally-sourced options (FoodNavigator, 2023). This presents both opportunities and challenges for international chains that must balance their standardized offerings with local consumer expectations.

The industry is also highly competitive, with businesses continually innovating to attract and retain customers. Technological advancements, such as the use of digital ordering platforms and delivery services, have transformed the fast food landscape, allowing businesses to reach customers beyond traditional dine-in and takeaway models (Harrington et al., 2017). Moreover, the growing awareness of health and sustainability issues has pushed fast food chains to diversify their menus, incorporating healthier and more sustainable options, such as plant-based alternatives and eco-friendly packaging (Mintel, 2022).

A unique aspect of the fast food industry is its workforce, which is typically young, diverse, and often part-time. This creates a dynamic and multicultural working environment, especially in international branches like KFC in Turku, Finland, where employees come from varied cultural backgrounds, including Finland, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. Managing such a diverse workforce requires a deep understanding of cultural differences and effective communication strategies to ensure smooth operations and high-quality service delivery (Janssens & Zanoni, 2014).

The Finnish fast food industry has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by changing consumer preferences, urbanization, and an increasing demand for convenient, quick-service meals. In 2022, the value of the Finnish fast food market was estimated at approximately €1.5 billion, and it is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.2% from 2023 to 2027 (Euromonitor International, 2023). Finnish consumers have a strong preference for local fast food brands such as Hesburger, which is the largest domestic chain, known for its locally-sourced ingredients and sustainability practices. Hesburger holds a significant market share, with over 300 outlets across Finland and a growing presence in the Baltic region (Hesburger, 2022).

Local fast food outlets in Finland focus on offering products that align with Finnish dietary preferences, emphasizing the use of high-quality, fresh ingredients. The industry has also responded to the increasing demand for healthier options, incorporating menu items such as plant-based burgers and salads, as well as providing detailed nutritional information to customers. Furthermore, Finnish fast food businesses are increasingly adopting sustainable practices, such as using eco-friendly packaging and reducing food waste, which resonates with the environmentally conscious Finnish consumers (Jalava, 2021).

#### Multinational Fast Food Chains in Finland

Multinational fast food chains such as McDonald's, KFC, and Burger King have also established a strong presence in Finland, catering to a diverse customer base. As of 2024, McDonald's operates around 65 restaurants across Finland, while Burger King, which re-entered the Finnish market in 2013, has over 50 outlets (McDonald's Finland, 2024; Burger King Finland, 2024). These international chains have adapted their offerings to suit local tastes, including menu items such as the "McVegan" burger, which was developed in collaboration with the Finnish company Orkla Foods, to cater to the growing number of vegetarian and vegan consumers (Orkla, 2019).

Multinational fast food chains face stiff competition from domestic brands like Hesburger, which emphasizes its Finnish roots and local ingredients. To differentiate themselves, these global players often introduce innovative menu items and promotions tailored to the Finnish market, such as seasonal products and localized marketing campaigns. Despite this competition, multinational chains have been able to

maintain a stable market share by leveraging their global brand recognition and operational efficiencies (Saarijärvi et al., 2021).

### Market Dynamics and Consumer Preferences

The fast food landscape in Finland is characterized by a strong emphasis on health and sustainability, reflecting broader societal trends. Finnish consumers are increasingly looking for options that align with their health and environmental values. This has led to a surge in demand for plant-based products, low-calorie options, and transparent sourcing information (Mintel, 2022). As a result, both domestic and international fast food chains have expanded their menus to include a wider range of vegetarian, vegan, and sustainably sourced options.

Another key trend in the Finnish fast food market is the integration of technology to enhance customer experience. Many fast food outlets now offer digital ordering kiosks, mobile apps for pre-ordering, and home delivery services through partnerships with delivery platforms like Wolt and Foodora. This digital shift has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly increased demand for contactless and convenient food ordering options (Kauppalehti, 2023).

Overall, the Finnish fast food market presents a unique blend of local and global influences. While local chains like Hesburger dominate, multinational chains continue to grow by adapting to Finnish consumer preferences and maintaining strong brand recognition. The market is expected to continue evolving, with a focus on sustainability, health, and digitalization.

In summary, the fast food industry is a complex and rapidly evolving sector that plays a significant role in the global economy. It faces various challenges, including adapting to local cultures, meeting changing consumer preferences, and managing a diverse workforce. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for businesses looking to succeed in this competitive environment.

## **3 Double Diamond design process**

The research methodology section outlines the approach and techniques used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to answer the research questions. This thesis employs a qualitative research methodology within the framework of the Double

Diamond design process to explore the impact of cultural differences on workplace dynamics and service delivery in KFC Turku. The methodology consists of several key components, including the research design, case study approach, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

The research design follows a qualitative approach, which is suitable for exploring complex social phenomena like cultural diversity in the workplace. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors within their specific cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The Double Diamond design process, which consists of four phases—Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver—provides a structured framework for this research (Design Council, 2019). Each phase guides the exploration, analysis, ideation, and implementation stages of the research.

In my thesis on cultural differences in the workplace at KFC Turku, I will utilize the Double Diamond method, a structured design framework developed by the Design Council in the UK. This approach consists of four distinct phases: Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver. Each phase allows me to systematically explore the complexities of cultural diversity and design effective solutions (see figure 3).

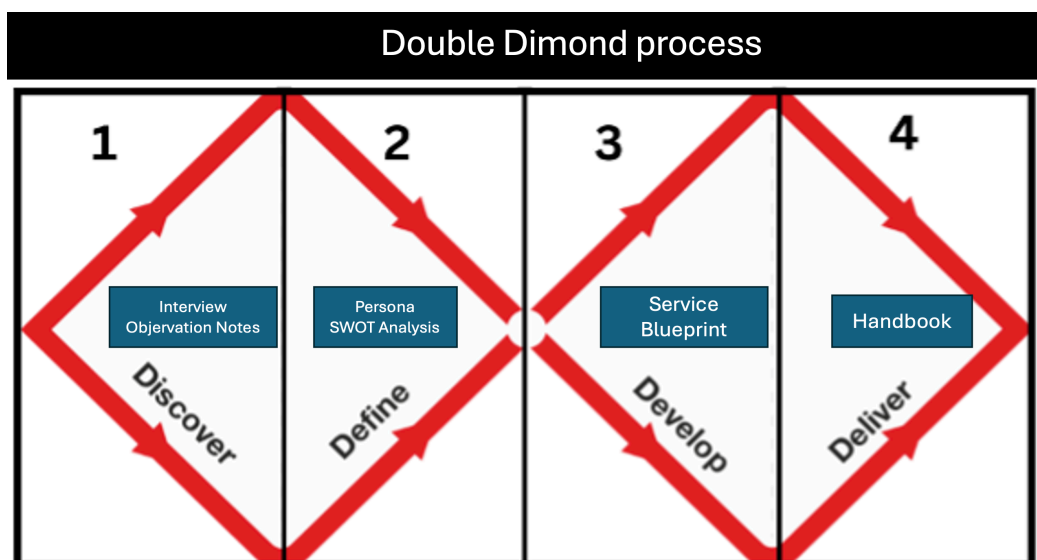


Figure 3 Double Dimond process (uxdesign,2014)

### 3.1 Discover (Divergence)

The Discover phase involved gathering insights and exploring the context of the problem. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees from diverse backgrounds,

including Finnish, Nepali, Indian, and Bangladeshi workers. These interviews provided a deeper understanding of their personal experiences and perceptions regarding cultural differences in the workplace. Additionally, interview questionnaires were distributed to a broader audience within KFC Turku, generating quantitative data on employees' attitudes towards workplace culture.

Observation notes were also utilized by spending time in the KFC environment. This allowed for the detailed documentation of day-to-day interactions and behaviors among staff and customers. These observations captured subtle cultural nuances and dynamics that employees might not have explicitly articulated. Together, these qualitative and quantitative data sources provided a comprehensive understanding of the cultural dynamics at play within KFC Turku.

Data for this research will be collected using a combination of semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. These methods are chosen to provide a comprehensive view of the workplace dynamics and to capture both the perspectives of the employees and the practical aspects of service delivery.

### **3.1.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with employees from different cultural backgrounds to understand their experiences and perceptions of cultural differences in the workplace. Questions will be designed to explore topics such as communication styles, conflict resolution, teamwork, and customer service practices (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

For my thesis on cultural differences in the workplace at KFC Turku, I will use both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather thorough insights. These methods will help me understand employees' experiences, identify cultural challenges, and suggest solutions.

I created a set of 10 questions focused on cultural differences in the workplace at KFC Turku created at November 4, 2024. I emailed these questions to all staff members and received 12 responses. I collected responses from employees over a period of 10 days, with each interview averaging around 19 minutes to complete. Based on the responses collected, here is a detailed analysis of the interview questions related to cultural differences at KFC Turku.



**Figure 4 Interview result**

Figure 4 shows that employees come from diverse backgrounds, including Nepal, Romania, and various other countries. This diversity brings a unique blend of perspectives to the team. For instance, some employees from Nepal felt their cultural background gave them a strong sense of hospitality, which positively influenced their interactions with customers. On the other hand, a Romanian employee shared that their background didn't significantly impact their work style, suggesting a more adaptable approach to Finland's work culture. Others, including students from technical fields, mentioned that their professional or educational backgrounds sometimes influenced their approach to teamwork and problem-solving, but not always in ways directly tied to their national culture.

Employees noticed several cultural differences in how their coworkers approached tasks and interacted. For instance, those from Asian backgrounds like Nepal and India observed that their Finnish and European colleagues tended to communicate more directly and were often more task-oriented. In contrast, some Asian employees preferred a more collaborative, relationship-focused approach. Additionally, language barriers were a common theme. While English served as the primary language, accents and differing proficiency levels sometimes led to misunderstandings. These variations influenced daily interactions, with some employees needing to adjust their communication styles to bridge cultural gaps.

Cultural differences sometimes presented challenges in teamwork, as each culture brought its own expectations regarding communication and collaboration. Some employees from Nepal and other Asian countries expressed that they valued maintaining harmony and might hesitate to disagree openly. In contrast, Finnish and other European employees were perceived as being more direct, which occasionally led to misunderstandings. Some employees felt this direct approach was helpful for efficient work, while others initially found it uncomfortable. Over time, however, most employees adapted, learning to appreciate each other's styles and finding a balance that worked for the team. This blending of cultures ultimately strengthened teamwork by combining varied approaches to problem-solving and communication.

Many employees faced challenges stemming from cultural misunderstandings, particularly around language and humor. For example, employees from Asian backgrounds like Nepal sometimes struggled with the Finnish sense of humor, which can be understated and may come across as reserved or overly direct. Some respondents also mentioned that certain jokes or informal language used by coworkers didn't translate well culturally, causing confusion. Language barriers were another challenge, especially for non-native English speakers, who sometimes found it difficult to keep up with fast-paced conversations. These challenges underscored the need for patience and clear communication to foster a more inclusive environment.

When asked how KFC could better support cultural diversity, employees suggested additional cultural awareness training. For instance, a respondent from Nepal felt that more inclusive practices, such as celebrating different cultural holidays or acknowledging dietary restrictions, could make the workplace more welcoming. Others suggested language support, particularly in Finnish, to help international employees integrate more fully into the Finnish work environment. Another idea was implementing a mentorship program where senior employees from diverse backgrounds could guide newcomers in navigating cultural differences, thus creating a more inclusive and understanding workplace.

Some employees felt that KFC provided general training on workplace conduct, but noted that it lacked specific cultural awareness sessions. Employees from diverse backgrounds, including Nepal and Romania, shared that structured cultural training could help break down barriers and reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings. Training that focuses on communication styles, conflict resolution, and awareness of cultural holidays or customs could foster a more respectful and cohesive team environment. By offering this kind of

training, KFC could help employees feel more comfortable expressing their cultural identities while working together effectively.

Employees overwhelmingly agreed that managers play a crucial role in promoting inclusivity. For example, an employee from Nepal felt that managers who were open-minded and approachable made a significant difference in creating a welcoming environment. Some employees believed that managers should receive cultural training themselves to better understand and support their teams. Finnish managers, in particular, were encouraged to learn about cultural norms that might differ from their own to foster inclusivity. This supportive management approach not only improved employee morale but also enhanced teamwork, as employees felt understood and respected.

Employees felt that customers had mixed perceptions of KFC's diverse team. Some respondents believed that Finnish customers, especially older individuals, might be less accepting of diversity, occasionally resulting in uncomfortable interactions. However, younger Finnish customers and international visitors were generally more open to the multicultural environment. One employee suggested that language barriers might contribute to certain customer frustrations, as some employees were still learning Finnish. They believed that if employees had more Finnish language skills, it could enhance customer interactions and improve customer perceptions of diversity within the team.

Experienced employees advised newcomers to embrace open communication, work hard, and be themselves. They emphasized the importance of learning basic Finnish phrases, as it helped build rapport with both colleagues and customers. One respondent from Nepal suggested that new employees actively participate in team activities to break down cultural barriers. Another common piece of advice was to observe and respect Finnish work culture, which often values punctuality, professionalism, and direct communication. By being open to learning and engaging with Finnish culture, new employees from diverse backgrounds could more easily integrate and succeed at KFC.

Many employees shared positive experiences working in a culturally diverse team, where they could learn about different traditions, languages, and viewpoints. One employee from Romania mentioned that sharing meals with colleagues from different backgrounds allowed them to learn about new cuisines and customs, creating a stronger team bond. Employees from Nepal appreciated opportunities to share their cultural heritage, such as preparing

traditional dishes during team lunches. These interactions fostered a sense of unity and appreciation for diversity, enhancing job satisfaction and teamwork.

This analysis highlights how cultural diversity shapes the work environment at KFC Turku, with both challenges and opportunities emerging from the diverse mix of backgrounds. Employees have identified ways to improve inclusivity, emphasizing the importance of cultural awareness training and supportive management to create a more harmonious workplace.

### **3.1.2 Observation Note**

In my role as an observer at KFC Turku, I focused on various aspects of the work environment, including employee interactions, cultural diversity, communication styles, and customer service quality. Using a scale of 1 to 5, I assessed each area to capture an objective view of the overall atmosphere, teamwork dynamics, and how cultural diversity influences daily operations.

Throughout my observations, I paid close attention to conflict resolution strategies, customer service interactions, and visible feedback from customers. I also evaluated training engagement, management support, and how cultural practices were acknowledged in the workplace. By recording these aspects, I aimed to gain a well-rounded understanding of the work environment and identify areas for potential improvement to enhance the experience for both employees and customers. These notes will contribute valuable insights for my thesis on improving service quality and navigating cultural differences in a multicultural fast-food setting.

Table 5. Observation

S.NO	Observation Aspect	(Scale 1-5)	Key Insights
1	Overall Atmosphere	5, 3, 5	Positive environment; mutual respect among diverse staff.
2	Employee Interactions	3, 3, 3	Communication gaps across cultures; moderate interaction quality.
3	Diversity of Staff	4, 4, 5	Appreciated; diverse cultural representation.
4	Communication Style	3, 4, 4	Varied styles; occasional misunderstandings due to cultural differences.
5	Collaboration Style	2, 3, 4	Inconsistent teamwork; some friction due to different work styles.
6	Collaboration Among Staff	3, 3, 4	Moderate collaboration; language barriers create some challenges.
7	Conflict Resolution	3, 3, 3	Inconsistent; cultural differences in handling conflicts (direct vs. indirect).
8	Customer Service Quality	4, 4, 4	Generally positive; delays at cashier due to language barriers.
9	Visible Customer Feedback	2, 3, 3	Mixed feedback; language and service consistency issues noted.
10	Training Engagement	2, 3, 4	Engagement varies; some feel training lacks clarity, especially regarding cultural awareness.
11	Management Support	4, 3, 3	Generally supportive, but room for improvement in addressing cultural challenges.
12	Cultural Practices	3, 2, 4	Occasional recognition of cultural practices; more celebrations could improve inclusivity.
13	Personal Impression	4, 4, 5	Positive overall, but staff seek more collaboration and support.
14	Areas for Improvement	—	Communication, training, and consistent management support could be enhanced.

### Figure 5 Observation Result

Figure 5 presents a detailed analysis of key aspects of KFC Turku's workplace dynamics, focusing on employee interactions, communication, collaboration, customer service, and cultural diversity. The overall atmosphere is generally rated highly, with staff appreciating the positive environment and mutual respect among employees from diverse backgrounds. However, communication between employees, especially from different cultural backgrounds, is rated moderately, indicating that while interactions

are generally positive, occasional communication gaps arise due to language and cultural differences.

In terms of diversity of staff, the ratings are consistently high, reflecting the diverse mix of cultures represented in the workforce, which is seen as a valuable asset. Communication style receives a mixed rating, with some employees reporting a more direct communication style (common in Finnish culture) while others from more indirect cultures (e.g., Nepali, Indian) find this challenging, leading to misunderstandings at times. Similarly, collaboration style is rated lower, suggesting that the team faces difficulties in working together harmoniously due to differing approaches to teamwork. This is compounded by cultural differences, with some employees preferring a more hierarchical approach, while others lean towards more egalitarian methods.

The ratings for collaboration among staff indicate that while there is moderate collaboration, language barriers and differing cultural expectations can hinder smooth teamwork. This is also reflected in the conflict resolution aspect, where staff members report inconsistent approaches to resolving conflicts, particularly with direct communication styles clashing with more subtle, indirect methods preferred by some cultures.

Customer service quality is generally rated positively, though delays at the cashier were noted when multiple languages were involved, indicating that language barriers impact the efficiency of service. Visible customer feedback showed mixed results, with some customers appreciating the multicultural team, while others found the service inconsistent, likely due to communication challenges. The training engagement scores vary, with some employees noting a lack of clarity in the training process, especially concerning cultural awareness, suggesting that training may need to be more comprehensive.

Management support is seen as generally supportive, but there are areas for improvement in addressing the cultural challenges that staff face. Cultural practices are acknowledged but not consistently celebrated or integrated into the workplace, with some employees suggesting that more regular recognition of cultural events would enhance inclusivity and morale. Personal impressions from staff are largely positive,

but many feel that better collaboration and more consistent support from management are needed to improve the overall work environment.

Finally, areas for improvement highlight key focus areas, such as improving communication, refining the training process to address cultural awareness, and providing more consistent management support. The feedback suggests that addressing these areas will lead to a more cohesive team, better service quality, and an overall enhanced work atmosphere.

This analysis reveals that KFC Turku has a generally positive and diverse workplace, but it faces challenges related to communication, collaboration, and training. Key recommendations include enhancing language support, improving team-building efforts, updating training programs to focus on cultural competence, and regularly celebrating cultural diversity to foster inclusivity. Addressing these issues will likely improve both employee satisfaction and customer service.

Insights drawn from observations and interviews with KFC employees in Turku provide a deeper understanding of how cultural dynamics influence both teamwork and customer service. Observations in the workplace revealed that employees from different cultural backgrounds interacted in distinct ways, especially during high-pressure situations such as busy shifts or dealing with difficult customers. For instance, employees from collectivist cultures such as Nepal or Bangladesh tended to work in a more collaborative manner, seeking consensus and harmony, while employees from more individualistic cultures, such as Finland, were more likely to take independent actions and focus on efficiency. These varying work styles sometimes led to misunderstandings or friction within teams, particularly when quick decisions were needed or when there was ambiguity about roles and responsibilities.

Interviews with employees further highlighted these challenges, with employees expressing that their cultural backgrounds influenced both their approach to conflict resolution and their perception of authority in the workplace. Finnish employees noted that they valued direct and honest communication, especially when addressing issues or providing feedback, which sometimes clashed with the more indirect or deferential communication styles of their colleagues from Nepali, Indian, or Bangladeshi backgrounds. Conversely, employees from these backgrounds often felt that Finnish colleagues were too blunt or lacked the patience to understand the nuances of

interpersonal relationships, especially when managing customer complaints. These cultural differences emphasized the need for training and awareness programs to bridge communication gaps and to encourage a more inclusive and understanding work environment.

Overall, the interviews revealed that while cultural diversity presents challenges in aligning communication styles and service expectations, it also offers opportunities to enhance customer service through diverse perspectives and problem-solving approaches. The ability to recognize and respect cultural differences within the team can lead to better collaboration, more creative solutions, and ultimately a richer customer experience.

## **3.2 Define (Convergence)**

In the Define phase, the insights gathered during the Discover phase were synthesized to identify key themes and define the core issues requiring attention. Personas were developed to represent the diverse employee groups within KFC Turku, capturing their unique needs, challenges, and cultural backgrounds. These personas provided a structured understanding of employees' perspectives and highlighted areas for improvement in workplace dynamics.

### **3.2.1 Persona**

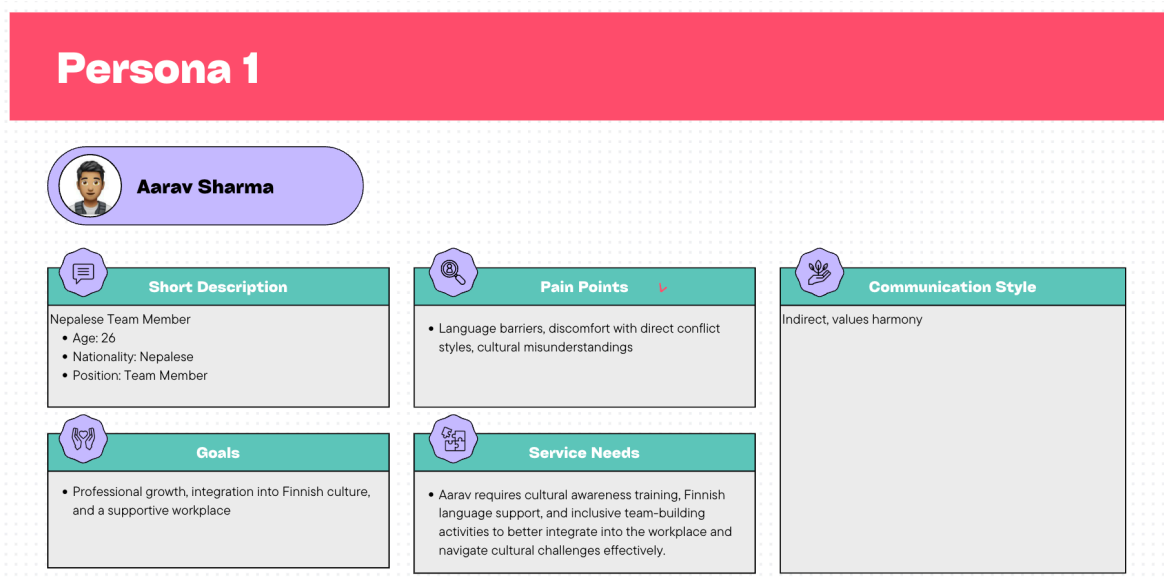
A persona is a fictional yet realistic representation of a specific user group, created based on research and insights into their behaviors, needs, goals, and challenges. Personas are commonly used in service design, user experience (UX), and product development to understand and empathize with the diverse perspectives of users or stakeholders (Pruitt & Adlin, 2020). They help decision-makers and designers focus on the needs of real people rather than making assumptions or relying on generalized data (Cooper, Reimann, & Cronin, 2007). Personas play a crucial role in creating user-centered designs that are tailored to the specific characteristics and behaviors of target groups, ensuring that products and services meet real user needs (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011).

In this thesis, personas are developed to represent the key employee groups within the multicultural environment of KFC Turku. These personas encapsulate the unique experiences, communication styles, cultural backgrounds, and professional aspirations of staff members, offering a structured way to analyze and address the workplace's cultural dynamics. By creating personas, specific challenges and opportunities, ensuring that the

solutions proposed are practical, inclusive, and tailored to the real-world context of the organization.

In this section, I introduce three key personas—Aarav Sharma, Sanna Virtanen, and Priya Patel—each representing distinct perspectives and cultural dynamics within the KFC Turku environment. These personas help to structure the understanding of the diverse needs, communication styles, and motivations of both employees and customers in this multicultural setting.

## Persona 1



**Figure 6 Persona 1**

Figure 1 describes Aarav as a dedicated worker who values maintaining harmony in the workplace, preferring indirect communication. He aspires to grow professionally and integrate into Finnish culture but struggles with language barriers and the direct conflict styles commonly seen in Finnish workplaces. These challenges often leave him feeling excluded or misunderstood. For Aarav to thrive, he needs support in improving his Finnish language skills and an environment that fosters inclusivity, where different communication styles are respected.

## Persona-2

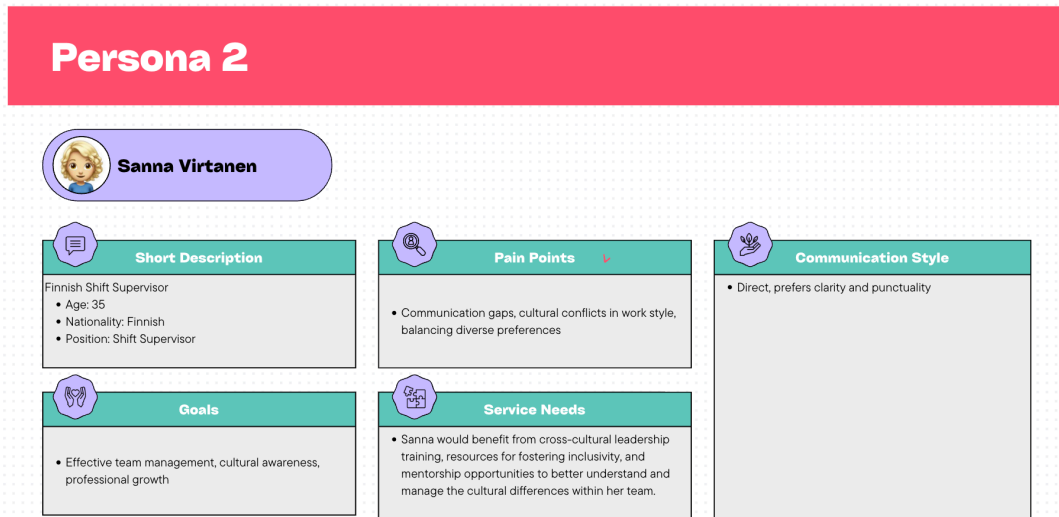


Figure 7 Persona 2

Figure 7 shows Sanna is a seasoned shift supervisor with a direct communication style and a focus on efficiency and clarity. However, she faces challenges in managing a culturally diverse team, where differences in communication styles and work preferences can create tension. Sanna aims to be a more effective leader, navigating cultural differences with sensitivity and balance. To support her, cross-cultural leadership training and resources that emphasize inclusivity are essential, helping her foster a more cohesive and harmonious team environment.

## Persona-3

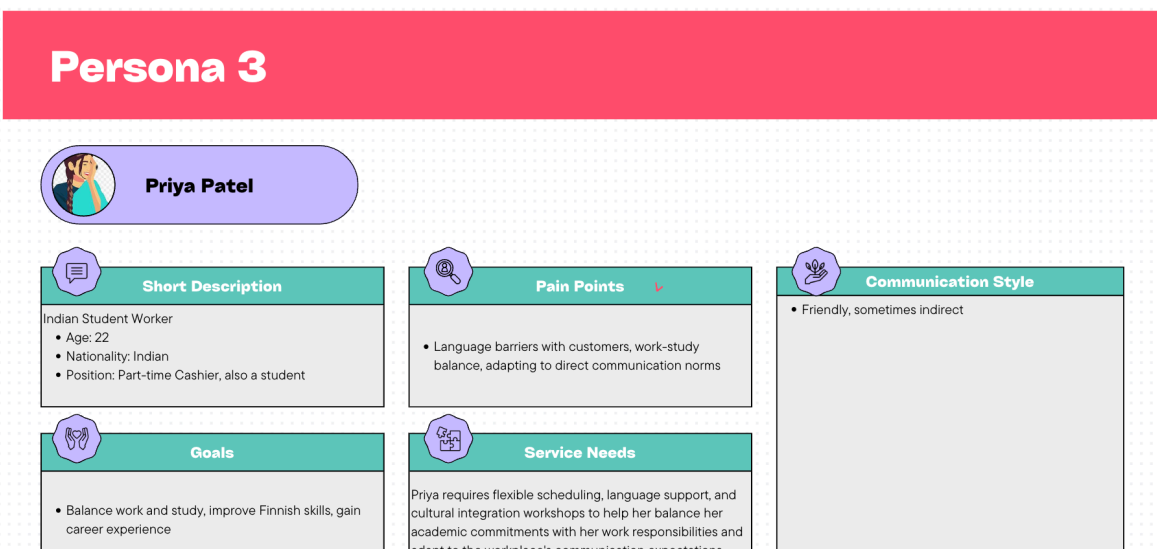


Figure 8 Persona-3

Figure 8 shows Priya as an Indian student working part-time as a cashier while pursuing her studies. She is motivated to gain professional experience but faces challenges in adapting to Finnish communication styles, especially when it comes to directness. Additionally, Priya struggles with language barriers, both in communicating with customers and in integrating into the team. To be more successful in her role, Priya needs flexible scheduling to accommodate her academic needs, along with language support and cultural integration workshops to help her adjust to the local workplace culture and improve her customer service skills.

The analysis of the three personas—Aarav Sharma, Sanna Virtanen, and Priya Patel—highlights the diverse cultural dynamics and challenges within KFC Turku’s workplace. Aarav, a Nepalese team member, is a dedicated worker who values harmony and seeks professional growth and integration into Finnish culture. However, his indirect communication style and discomfort with direct conflict make it difficult for him to fully engage with his team, particularly when faced with language barriers and cultural misunderstandings. Providing Aarav with Finnish language support, cultural awareness training, and inclusive team-building activities would help him overcome these challenges and enhance his contributions to the workplace.

Sanna, a Finnish shift supervisor, exemplifies strong leadership qualities, with her direct and punctual communication style driving her focus on efficiency and team management. However, managing a diverse team with varying communication styles and work preferences presents a challenge for her, leading to potential friction within the team. To help Sanna navigate these complexities, cross-cultural leadership training and resources for fostering inclusivity would enable her to balance diverse work styles more effectively and build a cohesive team.

Priya, an Indian student working part-time as a cashier, is motivated to gain professional experience while balancing her studies. Despite her friendly and approachable nature, Priya faces challenges in adapting to direct communication norms, managing language barriers with customers, and balancing work and studies. Flexible scheduling, language support, and cultural integration workshops would provide Priya with the tools to manage these challenges, boosting her confidence and productivity in the workplace.

Across these personas, recurring themes such as language barriers, cultural adaptation, work-life balance, and team dynamics emerge as key areas to address. Language training, cross-

cultural awareness programs, leadership development, and inclusive team-building activities are recommended to create a supportive and harmonious environment that caters to the diverse needs of KFC Turku's employees.

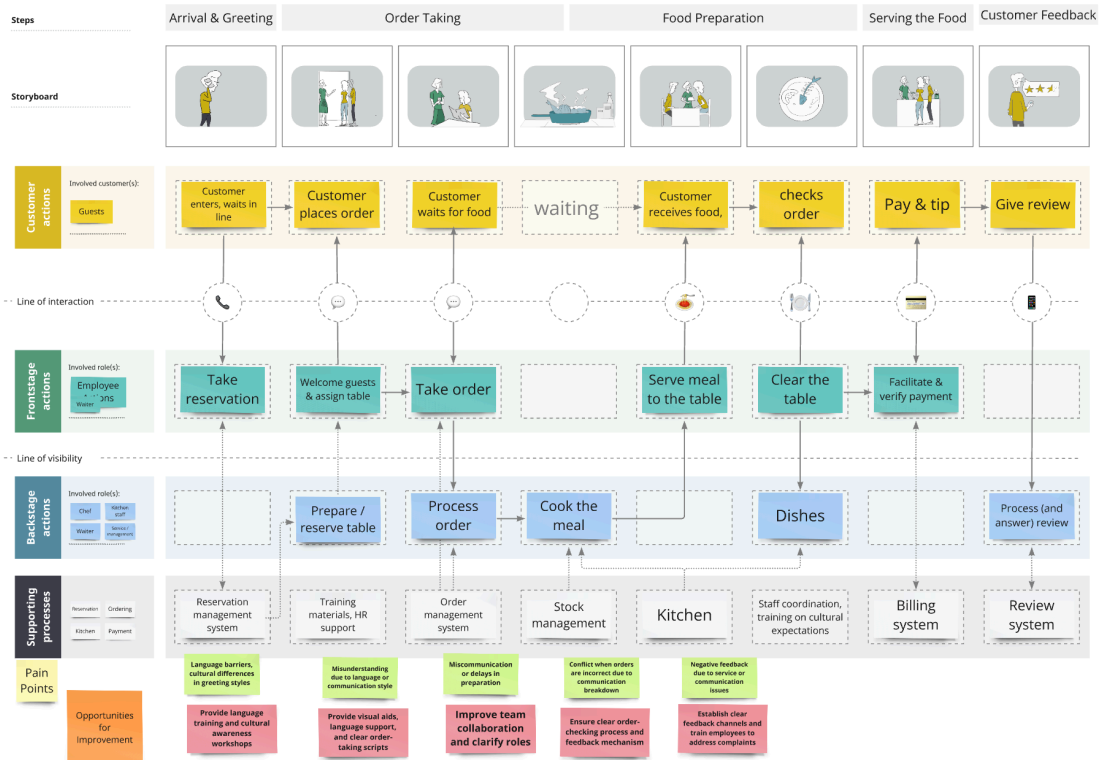
### **3.3 Develop (Divergence)**

During the Develop phase, the focus was on generating and exploring potential solutions based on the insights from the Define phase. A service blueprint was created to map out the service delivery process at KFC Turku. This blueprint identified key touchpoints where cultural differences influenced interactions among employees and between employees and customers. By visualizing the entire customer journey, the blueprint provided a clear framework for understanding how cultural dynamics impact workplace operations and service quality (figure 9).

#### **3.3.1 Service Blueprint**

The service blueprint highlighted areas requiring targeted interventions to improve cultural competence and enhance both teamwork and customer satisfaction. This comprehensive approach ensured that solutions addressed specific challenges while aligning with the overall service design goals.

## Service Blueprint | Service Blueprint for KFC Turku



**Figure 9 Service Blueprint**

The Service Blueprint for KFC Turku provides a comprehensive mapping of the entire service delivery process, highlighting key touchpoints where cultural differences, communication styles, and language barriers can impact both employee and customer experiences. The blueprint begins with the customer's arrival and greeting, where cultural differences in communication styles, such as direct versus indirect approaches, can create misunderstandings. Language barriers further exacerbate these challenges, especially when non-Finnish-speaking employees are involved. To address this, providing language training and cultural awareness workshops for employees is a critical opportunity for improvement, ensuring that greetings are more inclusive and effective.

As the customer places their order, potential miscommunications may occur due to differences in communication styles and language barriers. Employees may struggle to understand or convey customer needs, leading to errors in the order. Implementing visual aids, multilingual order systems, and clear order-taking scripts can help reduce these issues, providing employees with the tools they need to ensure accuracy and consistency in their interactions. Additionally, improving cross-cultural communication skills will help staff navigate diverse communication preferences, enhancing overall service delivery.

The food preparation phase involves coordination between kitchen staff and the counter employees. Miscommunication in this stage, whether due to cultural differences in expectations or language barriers, can lead to delays or errors. Cross-cultural communication training for the entire team and clear role definitions can improve collaboration, ensuring that the service is seamless from the kitchen to the customer. Regular team-building activities will also foster better understanding and trust among employees, enhancing teamwork and efficiency.

When it comes to serving food, if there are discrepancies in the order, conflicts may arise. Employees from cultures that favor indirect communication may feel uncomfortable dealing with direct feedback or complaints. To address this, implementing a clear order verification process where employees confirm the order with the customer before finalizing it can prevent such issues. Additionally, a structured customer feedback protocol will equip employees to handle complaints more effectively and diplomatically, reducing the likelihood of conflict.

Finally, in the customer feedback stage, handling complaints effectively is crucial for customer retention. Negative feedback is often tied to issues in the previous steps, such as poor service or miscommunication. Providing employees with training on how to manage customer complaints, particularly when feedback is direct or critical, will improve customer satisfaction. A structured feedback system, where customers can easily provide input, will also help in identifying recurring issues and improving service quality.

In summary, the Service Blueprint for KFC Turku not only maps out the key stages of service delivery but also identifies cultural and communication barriers that can hinder the customer experience. By addressing these challenges through language support, cultural training, clearer communication practices, and structured feedback systems, KFC Turku can improve both employee performance and customer satisfaction, fostering a more inclusive and efficient service environment.

### **3.4 Deliver (Convergence)**

In the final Deliver phase, the focus was on creating a comprehensive handbook to present the proposed solutions. The handbook Appendix 8.3 serves as a practical guide for addressing cultural differences and enhancing workplace dynamics and service delivery at KFC Turku. It consolidates insights from the research and provides actionable recommendations tailored to the unique cultural context of the organization.

The handbook includes strategies for improving communication, fostering teamwork, and delivering culturally competent customer service. It also outlines tools such as personas, a service blueprint, help managers and employees understand and navigate workplace challenges effectively.

This deliverable was designed to be user-friendly and accessible, ensuring it could be readily implemented within the organization. By providing a structured framework for addressing cultural diversity, the handbook supports continuous improvement and can be scaled for use across other KFC locations. This approach ensures that the findings of the thesis are both actionable and sustainable, aligning with the goals of the Double Diamond methodology.

### **3.4.1 Handbook**

KFC Turku is a dynamic, multicultural workplace with employees from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Finnish, Nepali, Indian, and others. This handbook provides practical strategies and solutions to address the cultural challenges and improve communication, collaboration, and customer service. By fostering an inclusive work environment, this handbook aims to enhance both employee satisfaction and customer experience( see figure 10).



**Figure 10 Cultural Competence Handbook**

The Cultural Competence Handbook for KFC Turku is a comprehensive yet practical guide aimed at addressing the cultural challenges within a multicultural workplace. It is designed to enhance communication, improve team collaboration, and elevate customer service quality by offering targeted strategies that align with the organization's goals of inclusivity

and efficiency. The handbook, as seen in figure 10, begins by introducing the multicultural environment at KFC Turku and outlining three key personas—Aarav Sharma, Sanna Virtanen, and Priya Patel—each representing distinct employee experiences, challenges, and needs. These personas highlight the diversity in communication styles, cultural backgrounds, and professional goals within the workforce.

The handbook is structured around three main focus areas. First, enhancing communication through Finnish language training, cultural awareness workshops, and visual aids to bridge language and communication gaps. Second, improving team collaboration by fostering understanding through team-building activities, clarifying roles, and providing conflict resolution training to create a cohesive and harmonious work environment. Third, delivering customer service excellence by equipping employees with the tools to handle language barriers, cultural sensitivities, and feedback effectively, ensuring a consistent and high-quality service experience for customers.

To ensure practical application, the handbook includes an implementation plan with training programs, feedback systems, and leadership development initiatives. These steps are supported by tools such as a cultural awareness checklist, customer service scripts, and guidelines for handling common workplace scenarios. The handbook is well-organized and actionable, addressing the specific challenges identified during research, such as language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and diverse work styles.

Additionally, the full handbook is included in the appendix for detailed reference, along with figures that illustrate its key components and strategies. These visual representations provide a clear overview of the handbook's structure, allowing readers to quickly grasp its focus areas and practical tools. While the handbook's tailored approach is highly relevant for KFC Turku, scaling it to other locations may require adaptation to account for different cultural dynamics. Furthermore, successful implementation depends on management's commitment to allocating the necessary resources for training and workshops. Overall, this handbook is a valuable resource for fostering cultural competence, creating an inclusive workplace, and enhancing the overall employee and customer experience at KFC Turku.

### **3.5 Handbook Feedback**

The handbook was presented to the team manager, branch manager, and coworkers at KFC, who appreciated the effort and thoughtfulness that went into its creation. They acknowledged its practical value in addressing the challenges of a multicultural working environment and

expressed enthusiasm about implementing its recommendations. The managers highlighted its potential as a vital tool for onboarding new international employees, ensuring they can adapt smoothly to the diverse workplace culture. They emphasized that the handbook would help foster better understanding, collaboration, and inclusion among team members from various cultural backgrounds, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and productive working environment.

## **4 Conclusion**

In a multicultural work environment like KFC Turku, teamwork and communication dynamics are central to both employee satisfaction and effective service delivery. With employees from varied cultural backgrounds, including Finnish, Nepalese, Indian, and Bangladeshi, the KFC Turku branch serves as a microcosm of global diversity, highlighting the benefits and challenges of working in a multicultural team. This section explores how cultural differences influence communication styles, teamwork approaches, and ultimately impact the day-to-day interactions among employees.

Communication styles vary significantly across cultures and play a crucial role in shaping interactions among team members. At KFC Turku, Finnish employees typically exhibit a direct and straightforward communication style, valuing clarity, brevity, and punctuality. This approach aligns with Finnish cultural norms, which emphasize transparency and efficiency in communication. In contrast, employees from Nepal, India, and Bangladesh often adopt a more indirect communication style, favoring politeness, non-verbal cues, and harmonious exchanges over direct confrontation. This indirect approach reflects a cultural preference for maintaining social harmony and avoiding open conflict.

The differences in communication styles can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, particularly in giving and receiving feedback. Finnish employees may perceive indirect communication as unclear or evasive, while employees from South Asia might view direct communication as overly blunt or confrontational. For instance, during team meetings or feedback sessions, Finnish supervisors like Sanna Virtanen might offer direct critiques to encourage improvement. However, employees with indirect communication preferences, like Aarav Sharma from Nepal, may interpret such feedback as overly critical, which could impact his comfort level in openly sharing ideas or concerns.

To bridge these communication gaps, fostering cultural awareness and implementing cross-cultural communication training are essential. Understanding and adapting to each other's communication styles can help build trust among team members and enhance overall team cohesion.

Language is another critical factor influencing teamwork and communication at KFC Turku. Finnish is the primary language for most local employees and customers, while English serves as a common language among the diverse staff. However, varying levels of English and Finnish proficiency can create challenges. For example, international employees like Priya Patel, who may have limited Finnish proficiency, sometimes face difficulties in fully understanding instructions or engaging with local customers.

Language barriers can lead to minor delays in service and misinterpretations during busy shifts, affecting the efficiency of teamwork. Additionally, language differences can inhibit social interactions and relationship-building among team members, potentially making it difficult for employees to form cohesive working relationships. Providing Finnish language support and encouraging simple, clear English communication can help alleviate these challenges, enabling smoother teamwork and fostering an inclusive work environment.

Cultural backgrounds also shape employees' attitudes toward teamwork, influencing how they approach collaboration, hierarchy, and decision-making. Finnish culture typically emphasizes independence, individual responsibility, and a relatively flat organizational structure, with team members expected to contribute equally and voice opinions openly. In contrast, South Asian employees may prefer a more hierarchical approach, showing deference to seniority and authority in the workplace. This can create situations where Finnish employees, like Sanna Virtanen, encourage open discussion and idea-sharing, while employees from South Asia may hesitate to voice differing opinions or assert their ideas directly.

These differing expectations of hierarchy can influence team dynamics, especially when it comes to decision-making and conflict resolution. Finnish employees might expect all team members to participate equally in discussions, while South Asian employees may look to a team leader or senior member for guidance. This difference can sometimes result in misunderstandings, as some employees may perceive a lack of

input from their colleagues as disengagement or lack of interest, when it may simply be a cultural preference for respecting authority.

To address these differences, promoting an inclusive teamwork environment that encourages diverse perspectives while respecting cultural preferences can be beneficial. Team-building activities that emphasize collaborative problem-solving and mutual understanding can help create a sense of unity and support within the team.

Approaches to conflict resolution differ across cultures, impacting how employees handle disagreements in a multicultural workplace. Finnish employees, accustomed to direct and assertive communication, may prefer addressing conflicts openly and resolving issues promptly. They are generally comfortable with constructive confrontation as a way to clarify misunderstandings and improve collaboration. However, employees from cultures that prioritize harmony, such as those from Nepal, India, or Bangladesh, may avoid direct confrontation, favoring indirect ways of resolving conflicts to preserve relationships and prevent tension.

This difference in conflict resolution styles can lead to challenges when misunderstandings arise among team members. For example, Finnish employees might interpret their South Asian colleagues' reluctance to address conflicts directly as a lack of engagement, while South Asian employees may feel uncomfortable with the directness of their Finnish colleagues, viewing it as overly confrontational. To minimize these misunderstandings, management can introduce conflict resolution training that respects different cultural preferences and promotes a balanced approach. Developing conflict resolution protocols that combine both direct and indirect approaches can help create a supportive environment where employees feel comfortable voicing concerns and resolving issues collaboratively.

The teamwork and communication dynamics within the KFC Turku team have a direct impact on service quality and customer satisfaction. When communication is clear, and teamwork is strong, employees are better equipped to work together efficiently, respond promptly to customer needs, and ensure a positive customer experience. Conversely, communication breakdowns or misunderstandings can lead to delays, errors, or inconsistent service, which can affect customer perceptions of the brand.

For example, language barriers and differences in communication style can sometimes slow down service during peak hours, leading to longer wait times and customer

dissatisfaction. Similarly, misunderstandings or reluctance to address conflicts within the team can affect employee morale and productivity, which in turn influences service delivery. By addressing these teamwork and communication dynamics, KFC Turku can create a more cohesive work environment that supports efficient service delivery and enhances the overall customer experience.

#### 4.1 Recommendations for Improvement

To strengthen teamwork and communication dynamics, several targeted strategies can be implemented:

- **Cultural Awareness Training:** Regular training sessions on cross-cultural communication can help employees understand and appreciate different communication styles, improving teamwork and reducing misunderstandings.
- **Language Support:** Offering Finnish language classes and English support can empower employees to communicate more effectively with both customers and colleagues.
- **Inclusive Team-Building Activities:** Organizing team-building exercises that encourage collaboration and cultural exchange can foster a sense of belonging and mutual respect within the team.
- **Balanced Conflict Resolution Training:** Implementing conflict resolution training that blends direct and indirect approaches can help employees navigate conflicts in ways that respect cultural preferences.

By implementing these strategies, KFC Turku can enhance teamwork and communication among its multicultural staff, leading to improved service quality, higher employee satisfaction, and a more inclusive and productive work environment.

#### 4.2 Challenges in Conflict Resolution and Authority Perceptions

In a multicultural work environment, such as KFC in Turku, Finland, managing conflict can be particularly challenging due to differing cultural norms and perceptions of authority. Employees from various cultural backgrounds bring diverse expectations and practices regarding authority, which can lead to misunderstandings or power struggles within teams.

For example, employees from hierarchical cultures, such as those from Nepal, Bangladesh, and India, might expect decisions to be made by senior figures or supervisors, whereas Finnish employees may be more accustomed to a flat organizational structure where authority is shared. This divergence in perceptions can create tension, especially in situations where authority figures attempt to resolve conflicts in ways that seem either overly authoritative or insufficiently directive. Such differences can lead to frustration, a lack of engagement, or resistance to authority, making it more difficult to achieve effective conflict resolution.

Communication also plays a critical role in how authority is perceived. Employees from collectivist cultures often communicate indirectly to preserve harmony, which may be interpreted as evasiveness or a lack of transparency by those from more direct communication cultures like Finland. These cultural differences can cause friction when addressing conflicts, as some employees may avoid confrontation, while others may expect straightforward and immediate resolution. Thus, the way authority figures manage and resolve conflicts must take into account these cultural communication preferences to avoid exacerbating tensions and to foster a more collaborative and understanding environment.

### **4.3 Impact of Cultural Variations on Customer Service**

Cultural diversity among KFC employees in Turku directly influences the customer service experience, as employees' cultural backgrounds affect their approach to customer interactions and problem-solving. Cultural norms around service delivery, communication, and customer expectations vary widely across cultures. For instance, employees from collectivist cultures may prioritize maintaining positive relationships with customers, often focusing on being polite, patient, and empathetic in their interactions. This can result in a more personalized and customer-centric approach to service. In contrast, employees from more individualistic cultures may place a higher emphasis on efficiency and directness, aiming to resolve issues as quickly as possible. These differences in service styles can create variability in the customer experience, as some customers may appreciate the personal touch and attentiveness, while others may value speed and decisiveness.

Additionally, employees from cultures with strong hierarchical structures may follow strict protocols in service delivery, ensuring that procedures are followed meticulously. On the other hand, employees from cultures that encourage more autonomous decision-making may adapt their service approach more freely, potentially offering creative solutions or

personalized experiences. This variation can impact the consistency of service, as customers might experience different levels of attention or responsiveness depending on which employee serves them. Ensuring a balance between these diverse approaches is key to maintaining consistent and high-quality service across shifts and teams.

The conclusion summarizes the key findings, contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research derived from this study on cultural challenges in KFC Turku's multicultural workplace. The research highlighted that while cultural diversity at KFC Turku enriches the work environment, it also creates challenges in communication, collaboration, and customer service. Language barriers and varying communication styles, such as direct versus indirect approaches, were significant issues that impacted both employee interactions and customer experiences. Team collaboration was hindered by differing cultural expectations, work styles, and conflict resolution approaches, while employees struggled to meet diverse customer expectations due to language barriers and limited cultural sensitivity. This study addressed these issues by developing a Cultural Competence Handbook, which provided practical solutions like language support, cultural awareness training, and structured feedback mechanisms to improve workplace dynamics and service delivery.

This research makes several contributions. It offers a practical framework for addressing cultural challenges in multicultural workplaces and provides actionable strategies to enhance communication, teamwork, and customer service. The development of the Cultural Competence Handbook is a key output of the study, serving as a practical resource that can be applied not only at KFC Turku but also in similar organizations. Additionally, the study showcases the effectiveness of service design tools, such as personas and service blueprints, in analyzing and addressing workplace dynamics. These contributions provide valuable insights for management, emphasizing the critical role of cultural competence in improving employee satisfaction and customer experiences.

However, this study has certain limitations. The sample size was limited, which may not fully represent all perspectives within KFC Turku. Moreover, the focus on a single location restricts the generalizability of the findings to other branches or regions with different cultural contexts. Implementing the recommendations in the handbook requires significant management commitment, which may pose challenges to adoption




and effectiveness. Furthermore, while this study provided rich qualitative insights, it relied less on quantitative data, which could have offered broader statistical validation.

Future research could expand the scope to include multiple KFC branches or other multinational fast-food chains, providing a comparative analysis of cultural dynamics across different contexts. Additional studies could also incorporate larger sample sizes and use a mixed-methods approach to combine qualitative and quantitative data for more robust findings. Research into the long-term impact of implementing cultural competence strategies, such as those outlined in the handbook, would also be valuable. These avenues for future research could build on the insights provided by this study, further advancing understanding and solutions for managing cultural diversity in the workplace.

## **5 Appendices**

### **5.1 Interview Questions**

### Responses Overview Active

Responses <b>12</b> 	Average Time <b>19:04</b> 	Duration <b>10</b> Days 
--	--	--

#### 1. Can you tell me about your background and how it affects your work at KFC?

**12**  
Responses

Latest Responses

- "I am originally from Nepal and have been living in Finland ..."
- "I am from Romania. I don't see my background affecting ..."
- "I am a Master's student specializing in Biomedical technol..."

...

8 respondents (67%) answered work at KFC for this question.



2. What cultural differences do you see among your coworkers here?

12 Responses

Latest Responses

"Working at KFC, I've noticed several cultural differences a... "  
"I see that other coworkers have different expectations fro... "  
"There are some cultural differences among my co-workers ..."

...

7 respondents (58%) answered work for this question.

differences among my coworkers language differences  
**work**  
cultural differences

3. How do these cultural differences impact teamwork and collaboration?

12 Responses

Latest Responses

"Cultural differences can significantly impact teamwork and... "  
"I think these differences affect the expectations we have fr... "  
"Our cultural differences are not that significant or noticeab..."

...

5 respondents (42%) answered cultural difference for this question.

communication styles significantly impact communication at work  
team **work teamwork and collaboration**  
culture people **cultural difference** ways  
work tasks **communication** mode of communication  
communicate politely English **language** differences are not  
lack of worker preferred communication misunderstandings  
English between coworkers

**4. Have you faced any challenges or misunderstandings because of cultural differences? Can you give an example?**

12  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Yes, cultural differences can sometimes lead to challenges ... "  
 "Some language can be a barrier."  
 "Jokes or having fun talks can be a little different among pe..."  
 ...

5 respondents (42%) answered example for this question.



**5. How do you think KFC could do better in supporting cultural diversity and inclusion?**

12  
Responses

Latest Responses

"KFC could enhance its support for cultural diversity and inc..."  
 "I am not sure."  
 "KFC teaches us about the culture of our work place. And w..."  
 ...

6 respondents (50%) answered KFC for this question.



6. What do you think about the training KFC provides regarding cultural awareness?

12 Responses

Latest Responses

"I think the training KFC provides regarding cultural awaren... "  
 "We don't have any such teaining"  
 "KFC provides important advices to maintain our cultural va... "  
 ...

4 respondents (33%) answered cultural awareness for this question.



7. What role do you think managers have in creating a welcoming environment for all cultures at KFC?

12 Responses

Latest Responses

"Managers play a crucial role in creating a welcoming envir... "  
 "I think managers need to be more open to other cultures a... "  
 "Managers guide us while working and sometimes they nee... "  
 ...

8 respondents (67%) answered Managers for this question.



8. How do you think customers view the cultural diversity among employees at KFC?

12 Responses

Latest Responses

"Customers likely view the cultural diversity among employ... "  
"Perhaps, they might have a negative view if employees do ... "  
"Customers coming at KFC can be also from different cultur... "

...

5 respondents (42%) answered customers for this question.



9. What advice would you give to new employees from different cultures to help them fit in at KFC?

12 Responses

Latest Responses

"I would advise new employees from different cultures at K... "  
"I don't know."  
"I can advise to be just they are. Here, team members are li... "

...

4 respondents (33%) answered help for this question.



10. Can you share a positive experience related to cultural diversity while working at KFC?

12 Responses

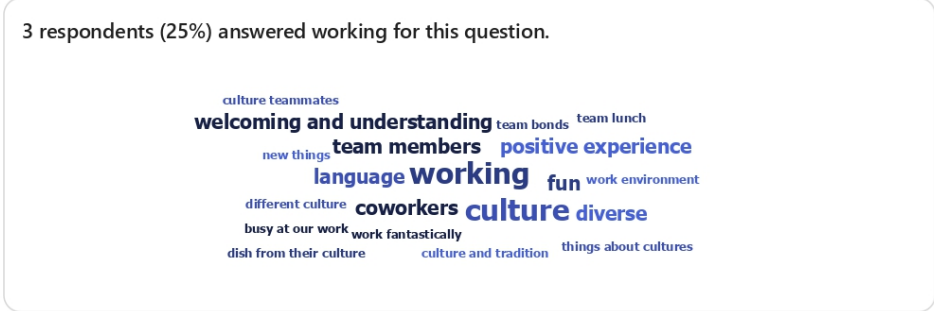
Latest Responses

"Many employees have positive experiences working with d..."

"Not really."

"There are a lot of good experiences of mine while working ..."

...



## 5.2 Observation Notes

Observation Notes:			
S.NO	Observation Aspect	Scale(1-5)	Notes
1	Overall Atmosphere	5	good communication
2	Employee Interactions	4	gets along well and respect
3	Diversity of Staff	5	from 4-5 different countries
4	Communication Style	4	everyone expl
5	Collaboration Style	3	
6	Collaboration Among Staff	4	
7	Conflict Resolution	3	<sup>everyone</sup> Try to talk about
8	Customer Service Quality	2	If more people speak firm's language
9	Visible Customer Feedback	5	customers come to cashier if they have problem
10	Training Engagement	5	is really taken care good
11	Management Support	3	
12	Cultural Practices	7	No cultural practice in work
13	Personal Impression	2	not in work
14	Areas for Improvement	3	communication

Nadeem Akhase  
kfc staff

Observation Notes:			
S.NO	Observation Aspect	Scale(1-5)	Notes
1	Overall Atmosphere	3	
2	Employee Interactions	3	
3	Diversity of Staff	4	
4	Communication Style	1	
5	Collaboration Style	2	
6	Collaboration Among Staff	2	
7	Conclit Resolution	3	
8	Customer Service Quality	4	
9	Visible Customer Feedback	2	
10	Training Engagement	2	when people is going to Boh training good / when other feel like
11	Management Support	4	training proses time - forgot
12	Cultural Practices	3	
13	Personal Impression	2	
14	Areas for Imporvement	2	

Ena ~~Stk~~ Kallonen Shift manager

Observation Notes:			
S.NO	Observation Aspect	Scale(1-5)	Notes
1	Overall Atmosphere	5	Good environment overall station.
2	Employee Interactions	3	Need to communicate positively
3	Diversity of Staff	3.	
4	Communication Style	4	
5	Collaboration Style	4	
6	Collaboration Among Staff	4	
7	Conflict Resolution	4	
8	Customer Service Quality	4.	
9	Visible Customer Feedback	4.	
10	Training Engagement	3.	
11	Management Support	3	Management should more focus on their employees providing benefits
12	Cultural Practices	3.	
13	Personal Impression	4	
14	Areas for Improvement	4	Need to be change all the employees of their own station while doing in the work. From BOH to MOH, MOH to FOH FOH to BOH.

Dipendra Khital  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
 KFC Staff.

### 5.3 Handbook



# CULTURAL COMPETENCE HANDBOOK

ADDRESS

CONTACT

## INTRODUCTION



KFC Turku is a dynamic, multicultural workplace with employees from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Finnish, Nepali, Indian, and others. This handbook provides practical strategies and solutions to address the cultural challenges and improve communication, collaboration, and customer service. By fostering an inclusive work environment, this handbook aims to enhance both employee satisfaction and customer experience.

# OBJECTIVES

PAGE 03



## PROMOTE CULTURAL AWARENESS

Understanding and respecting cultural differences in communication, work styles, and customer expectations

## IMPROVE TEAM COLLABORATION

Foster a cohesive and harmonious work environment despite varying communication and work styles.

## ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

Ensure clear and effective communication between employees and customers from different cultural backgrounds.

## BOOST CUSTOMER SERVICE QUALITY

Deliver exceptional customer service by addressing language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and conflict resolution.

## KEY PERSONAS

PAGE 04

In order to understand the needs and challenges of KFC Turku's diverse workforce, we have developed three key personas:

- Aarav Sharma (Nepalese Team Member)
  - Needs: Language support, cultural integration, inclusive team-building activities.
  - Challenges: Language barriers, discomfort with direct conflict, cultural misunderstandings.
  - Goal: Professional growth and integration into Finnish culture.
- Sanna Virtanen (Finnish Shift Supervisor)
  - Needs: Cross-cultural leadership training, resources for inclusivity, mentorship opportunities.
  - Challenges: Communication gaps, balancing diverse work styles, managing cultural conflicts.
  - Goal: Effective team management and cultural awareness.
- Priya Patel (Indian Student Worker)
  - Needs: Flexible scheduling, language support, cultural integration workshops.
  - Challenges: Adapting to direct communication styles, balancing work and study, language barriers.
  - Goal: Gain professional experience and improve Finnish skills.



# STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

PAGE 05

## A. Enhancing Communication

- **Language Support:** Provide language training and visual aids to help non-Finnish-speaking employees communicate with customers.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Conduct cultural awareness workshops to help employees understand and respect diverse communication styles.
- **Communication Guidelines:** Develop clear communication protocols to avoid misunderstandings.



## B. Improving Team Collaboration

- **Team Building:** Organize team-building activities that celebrate cultural diversity and foster collaboration.
- **Role Clarity:** Define roles clearly to avoid confusion and enhance teamwork.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Train staff on managing conflicts, especially with differing communication styles (direct vs. indirect).



## C. Customer Service Excellence

- **Handling Language Barriers:** Provide training on basic multilingual phrases for staff and improve communication systems.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Educate employees on customer expectations based on cultural norms (e.g., greetings, formality).
- **Managing Feedback:** Train employees to handle complaints effectively, especially when feedback is direct or critical.

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PAGE 06

- *Training Program: Offer language and cultural training for all staff and conduct quarterly team-building workshops.*
- *Feedback Systems: Use customer surveys and employee feedback sessions to identify areas for improvement and ensure continuous learning.*

**Sharmila Tamang**



# APPENDICES

PAGE 07



- CULTURAL AWARENESS CHECKLIST
- CUSTOMER SERVICE SCRIPTS FOR MULTILINGUAL INTERACTION
- TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY GUIDE

## CONCLUSION

This handbook helps KFC Turku improve communication, collaboration, and customer service in a multicultural workplace. By embracing cultural diversity and providing the necessary tools and training, KFC can create an inclusive environment where both employees and customers thrive.

THANK YOU

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Date

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Signature Of Employee

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